

**A Citizen's Report**  
on  
**A Meeting of the Corning City Council**

**January 5, 2026**

The Council for the City of Corning, New York held its regular meeting at 6:30 p.m. at Council Chambers, Civic Center Plaza, Corning, New York.

All Councilmembers attended the meeting. Counting City of Corning employees, 20 members of the public were in the audience. It was the first meeting of the Council chaired by newly elected mayor, Pam Walker.

**New Business –Acceptance of a Capital Grant to Purchase New Buses.**

*Background: The City of Corning is a subrecipient of Federal Transit Administration funds through the State of New York. The funds support a bus service to the towns of Corning and Erwin through the Corning-Erwin Transit System (CEATS). CEATS previously offered transport along five routes through the area, Monday through Friday, from 8:30 a.m. to 5:45 p.m.*

*At a Council meeting held on February 3, 2025, the Council authorized an application for a grant from the State of New York Transportation Department for up to \$1,164,575. Of this amount \$338,320 was to defray CEATS operating costs and \$825,255 was to replace the five CEATS buses which all have reached their maximum useful life. The third-party subcontractor operating the mass transit system in Southeast Steuben County, TransDev, originally committed to pay the local share.*

The amount of the grant awarded was \$456,619. The Council unanimously adopted a resolution to accept the grant and to authorize the City Manager to implement the process of buying new buses.

*Further Background: This writer learned that the accepted grant would allow for the purchase of only three buses, not the five requested, probably because CEATS now runs only three bus routes that serve 20 stops. Furthermore, the third-party subcontractor, TransDev, is running a deficit and is unable to pay the local match. The city will use previously awarded state money to pay the local match.*

**New Business - the Council Unanimously Approved the Appointment or Reappointment of:**

- **Jeff Clark**, Councilmember from Ward 3, as deputy Mayor for a term expiring on December 31, 2026. Mr. Clark accepted position and took the oath in a ceremony led by Mayor Walker.
- **Todd Martin** to the Design Review Committee for a term expiring December 31, 2027. Before the vote, Mr. Martin told the Council that he is a practicing registered architect in the State of New York, having received a Master of Architecture degree from UPenn. Born and raised in the City of Corning, he looks forward to giving back by serving on the Design Review Committee.
- **Darryl Heckle** to the Planning Commission for a term expiring December 31, 2030. Before the vote Mr. Heckle, who is a Senior Procurement Manager at Corning Incorporated, having been with the company for 17 years and a resident of Corning for nine years, expressed his desire to serve on the City Planning Commission.
- **Tricia Leath** to the Board of Assessment Review for a term expiring December 31, 2030.
- **Gretta Tomb** to the Board of Health for a term expiring December 31, 2028.
- **Bonnie Harrau** to the Board of Health for a term expiring December 31, 2028.
- **David Moses** to the Zoning Board of Appeals for a term expiring December 31, 2030.
- **Anita Sementelli-Mellusi** to the Board of Assessment Review as a temporary member for a term to last until December 31, 2026. She is temporary as it will be for the purpose of serving on one of two assessment review committees this year during the city's real estate reassessment process.

### **New Business – Easement Agreement**

The Council Unanimously approved granting an easement to Brent and Anne Tracy pertaining to 264 Walnut Street, on condition that the Tracys bear legal fees and filing fees for the negotiation and implementation of the easement.

*Background: This writer learned that this easement encompasses a part of the garage and a stone wall, both of which encroach on city property and have done so, without objection, for many decades. The city grants the easement conditionally on a release of liability if the city damages the Tracy property during any city work on its own property.*

During consideration of the easement, Councilmember Paterson said that it would be capricious to change the rules at this point for this property in view of the decades-long acceptance of the encroachment. But for the future, she hopes that the city will develop design rules that it can rely upon and use effectively to make sure that encroachments do not occur.

**New Business - the Council Unanimously:**

- Named The Leader (Also known as The Corning Leader) as its official newspaper for 2026.
- Named the following financial institutions as official repositories for city funds:
  - JP Morgan Chase
  - Chemung Canal Trust Co.
  - M & T Bank
  - Five Star Bank
  - Bancorp Bank
  - New York Cooperative Liquid Assets Securities System (NYCLASS)

**Visitors' Comments**

Ethan Bolt a Pennsylvania-based Chapter President of 50501, read the names of persons arrested and detained by ICE claiming that each named person is a U.S. Citizens and that ICE nonetheless held them in detention facilities for days and weeks. He requests that the City of Corning not cooperate with ICE or other federal forces and expressed the hope that the city will become a sanctuary city.

Hilda Lando, Steuben County Legislator representing the City of Corning, reported that:

- The county held an oath-taking ceremony this morning for four newly elected legislators and four incumbents who were re-elected. The Legislator re-elected Kelly Fitzpatrick as chair and Jeffrey Horton as vice-chair.
- The comprehensive plan for the county discusses both the problems of and possible solutions for providing improved public transport in the county. She hopes that the county and city will work together to strengthen public transport systems.

The meeting adjourned at 6:54 p.m.

## NOTES

- The writer of this report has presented items in an order different than the order at the meeting.
- The writer has, except as specifically noted, amended, or cut comments and attribution for them. Unless the writer uses quotation marks anything reported is not verbatim.
- For brevity, the writer has not included all items on the agenda of the meeting.
- The writer has added material for context or clarity and where it is extensive, is in italics and labeled "Background."