



MEMORANDUM

ERIE COUNTY CAPITAL PROJECTS COMMITTEE

DATE: August 14, 2025

TO: Mark C. Poloncarz, Erie County Executive & Chair of the Capital Projects Committee

FROM: Natalie Nitsche

RE: 2026 Capital Projects Committee Meeting #6

Attendance: County Executive Mark Poloncarz, Comptroller Kevin Hardwick, Budget & Management Director Mark Cornell, Commissioner William Geary, Commissioner Troy Schinzel, Deputy Commissioner Thomas Baines, Legislature Chair Tim Meyers, Minority Leader John Mills, Legislator Lawrence Dupre, Erich Weyant, Justin Rooney, Tim German, Dominic Musilli, Nathan Lippitt, Myseon Scott, and Natalie Nitsche

Virtual attendees: Deputy County Executive Lisa Chimera, Tim Callan, and Jessical Schuster.

The County Executive called to order the sixth and final meeting of the 2026 Capital Projects Committee and confirmed there was a quorum.

The first item up for discussion and approval are the previous meeting's minutes. Chair Meyers motioned to approve the minutes, and Comptroller Hardwick seconded. The vote to approve the minutes was unanimous.

Next, the County Executive discussed the proposal worksheet for 2026 Capital Projects which amounts to \$98.2 million with \$24 million being pay as you go and \$74 million will be bonded. About \$20 million will be set aside for the new correctional facility instead of \$30 million. After receiving new information regarding the trunked radio system, \$15 million will be the County's contribution. It is anticipated that NFTA will also contribute \$15 million. The additional portions of the funding will be awarded in subsequent years.

Publics Works was awarded as follows:

- Highways - \$12.7 million pay as you go; \$21 million bonded. A breakdown of the individual projects was discussed.
- Buildings & Grounds - \$28 million. A breakdown of the individual projects was discussed.

Comptroller Hardwick expressed concerns with the correctional facility cost. The Comptroller feels that the cost of the facility and that the amount of increased annual debt service, and he proposed postponing this funding for one year. Minority Leader Mills discussed his concerns regarding structural issues witnessed during a tour. The County Executive discussed the rationale for not

funding certain Sheriff projects at the current facility in anticipation of a new jail facility.

Director Cornell discussed his concerns with the County's debt service. The average existing debt service over the past ten years has been approximately \$61 million. Based on the final cash flows for the 2025 program, the debt service expectation for 2026 is approximately \$53.5 million. In 2027, it is expected that debt service will be approximately \$55.5 million. The County is \$5 million below the ten-year average debt service and \$13 million below the highest debt service.

Comptroller Hardwick next discussed the \$400-\$500 million debt that will be acquired in a year or two. Director Cornell stated that the tax cap will have to be exceeded by an equitable amount to cover the additional debt service. The Comptroller stated that the County has been successful in not exceeding the tax cap and would like to see that trend continue and again expressed the desire to slow this project down. The County Executive assured the Committee that funding for other departments will not be sacrificed.

Central Police Service – approval of the refresh of the E911 system and create a back-up 911 call center. Commissioner Geary and the County Executive discussed SUNY Erie providing space for training as well as Buffalo moving into 45 Elm.

Environment & Planning – the money is set aside for the Agri-business Park and Renaissance Commerce Park.

Three of the four external agencies' requests are being recommended: Roycroft \$175,000; Spectrum Health \$100,000; and the Jewish Federation \$300,000. These are all pay as you go.

Health Department - \$353,000 to replace a spectrometer. Director Cornell advised that this project, if approved, will be funded through the operating line instead of as a capital project.

Homeland Security – the EOC expansion and trunked radio system are being recommended. It is estimated that \$30 million will be the total cost of the trunked radio project. There may be additional funding required depending on how much money NFTA can put toward the project.

Information & Support Services – finishing up the SAP upgrade and telecommunication/core replacements.

Village of Hamburg playgrounds – this was not recommended. The County Executive expressed concerns about the County funding municipal government projects.

Library – this award is 50% of the requested amount for various improvements as well as full funding for their shipping vehicle.

Parks – various projects discussed.

Personnel – funding for \$625,000 will be a one-time ask and will enhance the use of the new SAP system.

Sheriff – The County Executive explained the reasoning why the video surveillance system at the current facility as well as why the multi-use fleet facility will not be funded.

SUNY Erie – there are conversations taking place currently with SUNY Erie regarding money they currently have set aside. Director Cornell said that they are in violation of their fund policy as they have too much money set aside.

Director Cornell discussed the public art contribution which is required by local law.

County Executive Poloncarz noted that Horizon Health submitted a proposal for a \$1 million request, but it was too late.

Chair Mills inquired about the surplus plan for ECC South. The County Executive explained that the County will sell the property, and the proceeds will be used toward the infrastructure at the remaining campuses. The State will match those funds. There are still some classes being taught out of the building as well as some leases. All but one of the buildings are in the Town of Hamburg.

Comptroller Hardwick motioned to delete the \$20 million for the correctional facility from the program. There was no second. Motion Failed.

Budget Director Cornell motioned to approve the 2026 Capital Projects Program, and the motion was seconded by Chairman Meyers. The motion carried unanimously.

The County Executive confirmed no public comment.

Motion to adjourn by Chairman Meyers, and Comptroller Kevin Hardwick seconded the motion.