



CITY OF OLEAN

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

Amy B. Sherburne

February 23, 2026

Dear Council Members and City of Olean,

The reaction from residents over the past several days, following the publication of the first draft of the budget, underscores why transparency is so essential. For too long, the full financial reality facing the taxpayers of Olean was not clearly presented. Difficult decisions were delayed, and the consequences of unsustainable budgeting practices were allowed to grow.

Years of irresponsible spending, overly optimistic revenue projections, a shrinking property tax base, rising inflation, and a “wait and see” approach despite repeated warnings in outside audits contributed to a financial crisis and a spending freeze as recently as last year. These challenges did not emerge overnight, and they will not be resolved overnight.

The people of Olean elected change, and with that comes a commitment to transparency even when the truth is uncomfortable. It is my responsibility to confront the financial realities we face, to correct the course, and to rebuild a strong and sustainable foundation for our city’s future.

I am confident that together we will restore our financial stability, invest responsibly in our aging infrastructure and position Olean for long-term success. But meaningful progress begins with honesty. We must move forward with clarity, accountability, and a shared commitment to doing what is right.

I ask for your patience and understanding as we work through this process. The Common Council and I will continue to work diligently to produce a fair, responsible, and sustainable budget, always with the best interests of the people of Olean at the forefront of every decision.

Amy B. Sherburne
Mayor