



## **Agenda**

City Council Work Session Meeting  
Oelwein City Hall, 20 Second Avenue SW, Oelwein, Iowa  
6:30 PM

September 22, 2025  
Oelwein, Iowa

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**Mayor:** Brett DeVore

**Mayor Pro Tem:** Matt Weber

**Council Members:** Karen Seeders, Anthony Ricchio, Lynda Payne, Dave Lenz, Renee Cantrell

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### **Pledge of Allegiance**

### **Discussions**

- [1.](#) Discussion on FY2026-2027 Budget Cuts.
- [2.](#) Discussion on Utility Assistance Program.

### **Adjournment**

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In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, those requiring accommodation for Council meetings should notify the City Clerk's Office at least 24 hours prior to the meeting at 319-283-5440



To: Mayor and City Council  
From: Dylan Mulfinger  
Subject: Budget Cut Act of 2025  
Date: 9/22/2025

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The city council discussed thoroughly the budget reductions for FY2026-FY2027. After several work sessions and meetings with stakeholders, the city council will vote on the budget cuts on October 13, 2025. This vote will help guide the city administrator and staff in preparing the FY2027 budget. Some of the anticipated budget cuts are already happening while some will be implemented July 1, 2026.

The city council is voting on the following major budget decisions:

- Retaining the code enforcement position
- Retaining road funding when available from local option sales tax and franchise fee
- Removing the Administrative Assistant position from Community Development
- Removing a Police Patrol Position
- Removing one cemetery and one park part time employee
- Eliminating \$30,000 from the library funding

The city council will vote on the following minor budget decisions:

- New phones, started September 2025
- Lower cost internet
- Drop big leaf in buildings and get fiber
- Work to lower attorney fees
- Less mowing with prairie plantings
- No downtown hanging baskets
- Remove downtown street scape when applicable
- Reduce city cell phones
- Cancel snow text alerts
- End funding for the farmer's market
- Reduce junk house removal to \$50,000 from \$60,000
- Move bulk sticker item cost to landfill fund

The cuts do fall short by \$100,000 which will require the city to revisit the cuts next year instead of in three years. The city administrator will continue to monitor revenues and expenditures to assure the city is in a financial position which ensures all services are provided to the public. With the state of Iowa still working to reduce property taxes, the city must continue to be diligent with spending and monitoring revenues. The city has consistently provided a balanced budget to the state of Iowa and will continue to do so regardless of the circumstances.



	Total Expenditure	Cut	Percent
<b>Police</b>	\$ 1,347,326	\$ 60,000	4.45%
<b>Fire</b>	\$ 108,316	\$ 5,000	4.62%
<b>Inspection</b>	\$ 217,300	\$ 44,928	20.68%
<b>Inspection LOST</b>	\$ 78,750	\$ 57,928	73.56%
<b>Airport</b>	\$ 60,600	\$ -	0.00%
<b>Library</b>	\$ 351,774	\$ 30,000	8.53%
<b>Parks</b>	\$ 265,250	\$ 15,000	5.66%
<b>Campground</b>	\$ 23,600	\$ -	0.00%
<b>Rec</b>	\$ 30,000	\$ -	0.00%
<b>Pool</b>	\$ 131,800	\$ -	0.00%
<b>Cemetery</b>	\$ 90,750	\$ 15,000	16.53%
<b>General Admin</b>	\$ 333,200	\$ -	0.00%

Should the city council want to reduce the number of cuts, I have provided some information to show the direction of the general fund. FY2025 ends June 30, 2025.

Cuts	FY2025 Year End	FY2026 Year End	FY2027 Year End	FY2028 Year End
0	\$ 845,141	\$ 365,512	\$ (114,117)	\$ (593,746)
\$100,000	\$ 845,141	\$ 465,512	\$ 85,883	\$ (293,746)
\$200,000	\$ 845,141	\$ 565,512	\$ 285,883	\$ 6,254
\$390,000	\$ 845,141	\$ 755,512	\$ 665,883	\$ 576,254

Here is a general breakdown of the cuts:

General Fund Cuts	\$ 271,759
Local Option Sales Tax Economic Development	\$ 70,000
Franchise Fee	\$ 50,000
	\$ 391,759



In FY2025 staff already accomplished the following to respond to less revenue for city services:

- Did not fill a police patrol position
- Raised building permit fees
- Cut the Fixed Based Operator (FBO) position
- Raised cemetery fees
- Cut fire equipment line
- Cut library page position
- The pool concession has been more aggressive in sales

It is important to recognize what has been done, and what needs to be done. The first out first in rule allows for prioritized items to be brought back once funding becomes available.

First out:

1. Police Patrol Position
2. Park and cemetery part time workers
3. Library funding
4. Code Enforcement officer
5. Community Development Administrative Assistant
6. City Hall reorganization

First in:

1. Police Patrol Position
2. Park and cemetery part time workers
3. Library funding
4. Code Enforcement officer
5. Community Development Administrator Assistant
6. City Hall reorganization

Budget cut Narrative

- Police Patrol Position
  - The city will hold back on hiring a police officer position which was already authorized by the city council. The opening comes from a retirement of a police officer in 2024. This will place a strain on the department as current shifts are already tight, and the flexibility of the department will be strained. Having a full staff of officers allows the city to take on work at a reasonable level for all employees
    - Cut= \$60,000
    - Started in 2024
- Park and cemetery part time workers
  - The city will cut \$30,000 from Parks and Cemetery. This will result in fewer part time employees at each department. There is potential for parks to be mowed less, the cemetery to be mowed less, and maintenance on all of our facilities to be delayed. Each department will not be able to take on additional projects and will force the department



to prioritize maintenance over new services for the community. You cannot get as much mowing down with six employees when the city had eight. This will also affect the downtown and Depot Park.

- Estimated Cut= \$30,000
  - Starting April of 2026
- Library funding
  - The city council will need to reduce the library department by \$30,000. This is to ensure the general fund will be balanced in FY2027. The city will need to make this cut and provide time for the library board to determine what moves they will make to absorb the cut. This could result in less services at the library. Once we take away all our public places, people will no longer be able to go anywhere.
    - Estimated cut \$30,000
    - Starting July 2026
- Community Development Administrator Assistant
  - With the reduction of Community Development, the city will not fill the administrative assistant position in Community Development. While the city was hoping to absorb this position over time, this position became open in April of 2025. All of these tasks are being divided up amongst staff. We will have some employees in Community Development take on tasks along with City Hall front office staff. All foot traffic will go through the front door of City Hall and Community Development will no longer have someone assisting for only Community Development matters. This places more tasks on City Hall and will reduce the availability to tackle City Clerk and City Administrator tasks or projects. This also places an additional workload on the existing Community Development employees.
    - Estimated Cut- \$44,928
    - Started April 2025
- Code Enforcement officer
  - The city will need to cut the code enforcement officer to create space in the general fund. This position was created by the city council in 2021. The City Administrator understood Community Development was at a high level of staff, because staff were needed to address the critical job of improving housing in Oelwein. With the city finishing up the first round of rental inspections and moving onto the second round. New software and longer tenure of staff should allow for more time for the Building Official and Building Inspector. This will reduce the city's ability to address code enforcement. This cut is not supported by the department head or the Mayor.
    - An alternative would be to move this position to a part-time April-November. The position would cap out at 1040 hours.
    - Estimated Cut- \$52,915
    - Alternative cut- \$26,457
    - Starting December 1, 2025
- City Hall reorganization
  - This move will start with the retirement of the City Clerk/Treasurer. City Hall will be evaluated, and staffing levels will be studied.
    - Cut costs unknown
    - Starting July 2026



- New phone contract October 2025
  - The city will move away from RingCentral and work toward a new plan which costs less and uses more function on computers.
    - Cut unknown
    - Starting October 2025
- Lower cost internet Summer 2025
  - The City will sign up for fiber internet through Hawkeye Telephone for the police station and city hall.
    - Cut= \$2,000 annually
    - Starting in late fall of 2025
- Drop bigleaf contracts which prioritize bandwidth
  - With fiber internet, the city will no longer need bigleaf to prioritize bandwidth within the police station and city hall.
    - Cut= \$4,800
    - Starting in late fall of 2025
- Work to lower attorney fees
  - This is an ongoing project the city will need to prioritize. Attorney fees have climbed up with the focus being on code enforcement and nuisance abatement. Since brining on Lynch Dallas, the city is nearing back-to-back years of \$100,000 attorney fees. This is much higher than any comparable city.
- Less mowing in the parks department with prairie plantings
  - The city will start placing prairie wherever prairie can be planted.
    - Cut unknown
    - Starting unknown
- No downtown hanging baskets
  - The city will no longer water the downtown hanging baskets. This will most likely result in the end of this program.
    - Cut 4 hours of staff time a day
    - Starting May of 2026
- Remove downtown streetscape
  - This will happen gradually as the downtown sidewalks are repaired. This will require less staff time, equipment, and supplies.
    - Cut unknown
    - Starting Summer of 2026
- Reduce city cell phones
  - The city has invested in VoIP which works on desktops and laptops. The city has also invested in radios. The need for cell phones is not as crucial as it once was for city staff. Any staff who needs to report to work must provide a cell phone or form of contact. Once the employee gets to work, they can use the city phone or the radio. The city's VoIP allows for an app which forward calls to a cellphone and allows the cellphone to make calls through the app. Staff is still evaluating this cut as it may not be large enough of a cut to make a complete switchover.



- \$3,243.24 annual cut general fund
  - \$2,157.84 annual cut other funds
  - Starting November 2025
- Snow text alerts
  - This service has been underutilized by residents and the city. The city currently has 263 or four percent of the population signed up for the service. City hall has only used this for snow alerts and has not ventured into other notifications. The problem from the staff's perspective is events don't happen enough for this app to be useful. Plus, when it comes to snow, the snow ordinance has been in effect for six years. The residents who get towed are not signed up for the service. I believe the process is now simple, if it snows, check the website and you will know if it is a snow emergency. The snow emergency is almost always called the night before as it is based on the anticipated amount of snow and not actual snow amounts.
    - Cut=\$2,544.10
    - Fall of 2025
- Back track on funding for the farmer's market
  - This funding was never officially approved because the City Administrator was working out the details with the farmer's market. The farmer's market still wants funding and was willing to work with the city on any funding amount. The city has no obligation to provide funding, but with the resurgence of the farmer's market, this was an investment the city wanted to make.
    - Cuts= \$5,000
    - Timeline= Current
- Move funding for the chamber to the hotel motel tax
  - The city would reduce the amount of available hotel motel funds from \$20,000 to \$10,000 each year with the chamber receiving \$10,000, of their \$50,000, from hotel motel funds. This would not include the payback clause should the chamber run a profit on their events. This frees up local option sales tax to be used for other general fund needs.
    - Cut= \$10,000
    - July 1, 2025
- Take junk house removal to 50,000 instead of 60,000
  - This cut is straightforward. The city would do less tear downs.
    - Cut \$10,000
    - July 1, 2025
- The housing tax abatement program will start to fall off each year eventually providing \$20,000
  - The city is slowly ending their five-year tax abatement plan. The new plan abates taxes but does not offer city reimbursement. The current reimbursement are paid for using the local options sales tax.
    - Cut \$10,000
    - Ongoing and will end in Spring of 2027
- End the reduced priced stickers for bulk items during the summer from local option sales tax



- The city would stop using local option sales tax to fund this program and use fees from the landfill fee. The Fayette County Solid Waste Commission returned a fees to the city as they were sitting on too much funding. We will buy down this funding each summer to help reduce the cost of large items stickers. Once the funding runs out, the city will stop this program.
  - Cut= \$5,000
  - Starting May 2025
- The tech spec payment ends in July of 2026 \$35,000
  - The city partnered with the school district on the tech spec building which created the Regional Tech Complex. The city entered an agreement to pay \$35,000 for 10 years. This payment ends in FY2026.
    - Cut= \$35,000
    - Starting July 1, 2026
- Police Loan Shift
  - Move the police station loan payment away from franchise fees to debt service as allowed each year
  - Free up franchise fee for supplementing public safety
    - This would be three transfers of \$100,000.
    - This money could also be used for library HVAC or pool floor
- Reduce road spending in Franchise Fees
  - Franchise fees can be used for public safety. Any time we offset the cost of public safety it allows the city to spend money on other general fund departments. While the city needs to maintain the streets, cuts are needed to ensure the city functions.
    - \$50,000 transfer from franchise to the general fund
    - The city already transfers \$30,000 for public safety from franchise fees

#### Large moves

- Vote on local option sales tax language to change to all government purposes
  - This is needed to allow for general fund operations to be charged to local option sales tax

The goals for these cuts was \$300,000. Completing all these cuts would result in \$391,759 savings to the general fund. It is important to know even with all of these cuts made, the future is still bleak as the state of Iowa only wants to reduce property taxes.



To: Mayor and City Council  
From: Dylan Mulfinger, City Administrator  
Subject: Oelwein Utility Assistance Program  
Date: 9/22/2025

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The city council has conducted three work session and one public forum session to discuss and consider the Oelwein Utility Assistance Program. The City Administrator is now seeking approval to move forward and provide an opportunity for the city council to vote on the program. The city council must decide if they want to adopt the program as presented or make changes to the program before voting.

The current program will cost the city \$5,000 annually with \$2,500 coming from water, and \$2,500 coming from sewer. The City Administrator anticipates that the \$5,000 will be matched by private donations on the utility bill. The City Administrator recommends approving the program as shown with a full review in December of 2026.



## Oelwein Leak Assistance Program (OLAP)

Adopted by City Council Resolution #####-####

### Program Information

The city of Oelwein has developed a plan to work with local plumbers to offer free leak repair services for income-qualified homeowners in Oelwein. Through this program the city will arrange to repair leaking toilets, faucets, or other fixtures. Sewer repairs are not eligible. The goal of this program is to ensure the homeowners who are in need do not face a high-water bill due to a water leak. The city utility understands that the best practice is to charge users for the water they need, not the water that comes from a leak. This program benefits all users of the system as it prevents unnecessary high bills that may go unpaid. Minimizing water loss is a benefit to all users on the utility.

- Meet the income requirements
  - Participation in one of the following programs:
    - SSI (Supplemental Security Income), or SSDI (Social Security Disability Insurance)
    - SNAP Benefits
    - Elderly Tax Credit
- Be 18 or older
  - Anyone signed up for water has to be this old, I believe
- Own the home (home must meet structural, meter size and residential qualifications)
  - Beacon
- Applicant must currently live on the property for which they are requesting assistance and the water service must legally be on.
  - Proved through mailing if we have issues
- Have lived at the residents for six months.
  - Utility Account
- Have a single residential water account with the city of Oelwein that has completed six (6) billing cycles.
  - Utility Account
- Water/Sewer accounts cannot be more than two months past due.
  - Utility Account
- Provide all requested documentation to the City of Oelwein to be considered for the program.
  - Application
  - Proof of income requirements

### City Procedures

As needed the Public Works department receives bids from local plumbing contractors to secure a per hour price.

- Utility Clerk calls resident with a suspected leak, or a customer comes in complaining of a leak
- Resident fills out an application and submits it to city staff
- City Clerk verifies all things on the form (Utility Clerk, Treasurer, Administrative Assistant)



- SSI (Supplemental Security Income), or SSDI (Social Security Disability Insurance)
  - Ask for verification letter or bank statement
- SNAP Benefits and WIC
  - Ask to see card
- Elderly Tax Credit
  - Check on beacon
- One or more missed payments in a calendar year
- On rare occasions the City Administrator may provide approval should the applicant be enrolled in a low-income program not listed by the city of Oelwein
- Utility Clerk calls in to selected contractor providing all information needed to the contractor
- Contractor repairs said home
  - If the amount of funding will not cover the repair, the contractor must work with the homeowner. The city will only pay to \$350.
- The contractor will submit an invoice to the city
- Treasurer sends out check with claims and tracks activity of the program

#### **Program Information**

- The annual cap for any single property is set at \$350.00 in plumbing assistance.
  - Tracked by City Hall on the utility bill account
- The city of Oelwein will solicit licensed plumbers to do any work performed.
  - The City will bid this work out each year and request and hourly rate
- The city of Oelwein will coordinate and schedule plumbing calls after proper documentation is completed.
  - The Utility Clerk will call the plumber
- The city of Oelwein will pay the Plumbing company directly after a proper invoice is submitted.
  - City Hall

#### **Eligible Leaks**

- Toilet
- Faucets (Kitchen, bathroom, bath)
- Shower/tub spout
- Outdoor spigot
- Leak in wall pipes
- Water softener bypass issues

#### **Non eligible leaks**

- Drain leaks
- Any sewer related leak
- Leaking roof
- Irrigation system
- Water heaters (some water heater leaks may be eligible for repair)



## **Oelwein Water Line Assistance Program (OWLAP)**

**Adopted by City Council Resolution #####-####**

### **City Procedures**

- The resident would contact the city to inform them that they are replacing their water line that is damaged or not functioning.
- Public Works or Community Development will verify that the water line is faulty or failing
- The resident will contact a contractor for the repair/replacement
- The contractor will follow all city rules and regulations
- The contractor will submit an invoice to the city
- Treasurer sends out check with claims and tracks activity of the program

### **Policy**

The city owns the portion of the water service line from the water main to the curb stop, the property owner is responsible for the service line from the curb stop to the meter. This policy was developed to lessen the burden of homeowner portion service line replacement. Funding is limited to the extent of money budgeted for the fiscal year.

The city will allot \$5,000 annually for this program out of the city utility. The city will allow \$2,500 annually per property/per person.

No income verification is needed as water line failures have commonly occurred in low valued homes. This failure has been tracked for the last 10 years with the largest number of failures in one year being three.

### **City Rules and Regulations**

- This program is available only to owner occupied properties, no rental properties or commercial/ industrial properties will be considered.
- All work must be performed by licensed and approved contractors.
- Two competitive quotes will be submitted for consideration.
- Community Development or Public Works staff will inspect and approve all work.
- Acceptable materials will include Type K  $\frac{3}{4}$ " copper or CTS PEX, in the case of PEX there will be a 12-gauge copper tracer wire installed and terminated at the curb box cap. All brass fitting will be clearly marked as no lead "NL" fittings.
- The work will include site restoration including any concrete removed for work performed.



## **Oelwein Sanitary Sewer Assistance Program (OSSAP)**

**Adopted by City Council Resolution #####-####**

### **City Procedures**

This program would provide funding for any home who experiences a failed, collapsed sanitary sewer line, or repeated sewer backups.

In all new sewer lateral installations, a properly installed and approved backflow device is required.

Given the condition and susceptibility of some sanitary sewer mains, as identified by Public Works throughout the city, a backflow device installed in the home can limit the damage caused by sewer backup.

### **Policy**

The city owns the sanitary sewer, the homeowner is responsible for the sewer lateral from the house up to and including the connection to the city main.

The city of Oelwein will offer dependent on available funds, up to \$2500 for the installation of a sanitary sewer backflow device, repair to a sewer lateral, or replacement of a sewer lateral.

The city will allot \$5,000 annually for this program out of the city utility. The city will allow \$2,500 annually per property/per person.

The funds will be available to homes that are susceptible to backup caused by the city sewer, as determined by the Public Works Director or their designee.

### **City Rules and Regulations**

- The home must be owner occupied and zoned residential.
- The home must have a current water/sewer account in good standing with the city of Oelwein.
- The home must have a history of city caused backups, or the potential for backup.
- The device will be installed by a licensed plumber
- The device will be approved by the Public Works Director or his designee.
- The property owner is required to sign a full and complete release of any and all claims against the City arising from the sewer backup incident in order to be eligible for the program.