

Council Member Frederick, on behalf of the Committee on Finance, Assessment, and Taxation, introduced the following, which was approved:

RESOLUTION 132.112.25R (Updated 11/17/2025)

A RESOLUTION OF THE COMMON COUNCIL OUTLINING ITS ACTIONS AND EXPRESSING ITS FINDINGS AND INTENT CONCERNING THE CITY OF ALBANY 2026 BUDGET AS PROPOSED IN ORDINANCE 27.101.25

WHEREAS, on October 1, 2025, the Common Council received the Mayor's proposed budget for the City of Albany for the fiscal year 2026 and the accompanying Mayor's budget message; and

WHEREAS, after receipt of such budget, the Finance, Taxation and Assessment Committee and the full Common Council engaged in an extensive review of the proposed budget, which included over eleven meetings, discussions with thirteen Department heads, two public hearings, and requests for additional information; and

WHEREAS, the Common Council has identified multiple areas of concern, amendments that are needed, and matters that warrant further action;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Common Council adopts the following statement outlining its findings, intent, and recommendations for future action concerning the Proposed City of Albany Budget for Fiscal Year 2026:

Proposed 2026 City of Albany Budget

Statement of Common Council Actions, Findings, Intent, and Recommendations

Prior to the presentation of the proposed budget for Fiscal Year 2026, individual Common Council members met with the Mayor and her staff to advocate for the specific needs and desires of their Wards that should be addressed in the budget. After the release of the proposed budget, Common Council members met with department commissioners and office heads to discuss their budgets and how planned projects and expenditures will affect their Wards and the City of Albany as a whole. During these conversations, Common Council members highlighted several items for further review, discussion, and consideration, as explained below.

Common Council Public Comments/Hearings

In addition to the public comment periods during regular meetings of the Common Council, two public hearings were held – one on October 20, 2025 and another on November 17, 2025 – for residents to provide input on the budget as presented by the Administration. During those public hearings and public comment periods, Common Council members heard from constituents on the following: concern about unsupported revenue and expenditure increases, concern about increased borrowing, concern about affordability, concern on open collective bargaining agreements, support for increased funding to the Community Police Review Board (CPRB), and support for increased funding to Channel Albany.

Common Council Review of the 2026 Proposed Budget

During its own review of the 2026 Proposed Budget, the Finance, Assessment and Taxation Committee, alongside other council members, identified the following issues and concerns, including some that can be addressed by the Council's amendments to the budget, others over which the Council has no authority, and more still that will require commitments from the Administration to implement:

Affordability of our City

Property Tax Levy and Revenue Streams

The 2026 proposed budget includes a 3% increase in the property tax levy, which would generate approximately \$1.9 million in additional revenue. The proposed budget also includes a doubling of the Curbside Waste Collection Fee, which would generate approximately \$2.3 million more in revenue compared to anticipated earnings in 2025. We recognize that we are entering a period of greater uncertainty regarding municipal revenue streams, from instability in our federal funding to the impending closure of the Rapp Road Landfill and the loss of \$2.1 million in Landfill Usage Charges, however this combined \$4.2 million increase in costs for our residents at this time places a significant burden on our residents. As part of its deliberations, the Finance, Assessment and Taxation Committee determined that it would reduce the property tax levy increase from 3% to 2.5% and seek expenditure reductions where appropriate to maintain City-services while also prioritizing affordability for our residents.

Curbside Waste Collection Fee

The Common Council acknowledges that the proposed budget includes a 100% increase to the curbside collection fee, effectively doubling the annual cost of trash collection for both homeowners and renters, who often bear this cost through their rental obligations. The curbside collection fee statute requires that revenue generated from the fee offset the expenditures associated with curbside collection.

We recognize that this increase is necessary to remain in compliance with statutory requirements and understand that, with the impending closure of the Rapp Road landfill, curbside waste collection expenses will continue to rise in future years. However, the Council emphasizes that doubling a City fee within a single year places an undue burden on residents, particularly those who are cost-restricted or living on fixed incomes. Therefore, the Council strongly urges the administration to implement smaller, more gradual future increases to the curbside collection fee on a regular basis to make such adjustments more manageable for residents.

Furthermore, the Council urges the administration to explore incentive-based strategies that promote waste reduction among City residents including enhanced household source separation of recyclables and reduced reliance on non-recyclable packaging. In addition, we support piloting curbside organic waste collection and evaluating credit mechanisms against the curbside collection fee for residents who compost or pay for third-party services, such as those offered by Radix. The Council further advocates state-level action on packaging reduction legislation and recommends an annual citywide mailing to households with practical waste reduction tips and service options. Finally, we encourage a reexamination of recycling contracts to ensure competitive pricing for

recyclable materials and suggest consideration of alignment of curbside collection practices with market demand to maximize environmental and economic benefit.

The cost of waste disposal is directly tied to the amount of waste produced. By implementing initiatives that motivate residents to reduce their waste output, the City can realize long-term cost savings while also advancing important environmental goals.

Safety in our Communities

The Common Council took action this year to address the vacancy issue within the Albany Police Department by temporarily expanding the residency requirement to make it easier for the department to fill positions and reduce the burden on our already strained staff. The thin staffing situation was having a significant effect on the City's ability to prevent and confront crime but combined with more community-oriented policing, crime rates have now been reduced to pre-COVID levels.

The Common Council, however, remains cognizant of public safety concerns amongst residents. A series of shootings and fires over the past year have raised concerns as the potential for collateral damage has been high. The firing of a flare gun during a July 4th gunfight among teenagers led to a structure fire on Madison Avenue that displaced several residents and led to the demolition of two buildings. This occurred shortly before a mass shooting that same night in our Arbor Hill neighborhood. In no uncertain terms, this was intolerable violence that led to the death of a teenager, injured ten others, displaced several residents, and, ultimately, depressed a community. Events like these highlight the need for the City to reach at-risk youth and provide a safe space for all to congregate.

We also ask that the Administration continue to pursue strategies to more effectively recruit residents to our police force and closely collaborate with the Community Police Review Board to shape the Albany Police Department into a department that maintains a strong community focus. While progress has been made, a police force that our communities can truly trust and rely on is one that can help prevent the sorts of tragedies we have witnessed over the past several years. It is in that vein that we renew our call to the Mayor's Office to secure appointments to the Community Police Review Board to fill their vacancies so that their important work can continue.

The Council additionally recognizes that the City of Albany is constrained in what it can do to prevent violent crime and while we investigate solutions locally through the Council's re-established Violence Prevention Task Force and the proposed Youth Safety Support Hub, the assistance of other stakeholders is of the utmost importance. The Council invites federal and state stakeholders to work with and support Albany County and the City of Albany to improve every party's response to crime within Albany and address the root causes of that crime.

Finally, during the budget season, the Common Council was made aware that any insurance funds recouped from damaged police vehicles automatically gets routed to 2680- Insurance Recoveries within the operating budget. The Common Council highly encourages the Administration to allocate insurance funds recouped back to the Albany Police Department's budget, so that the recoveries can offset the costs of future vehicle purchases and allow for less bonding of vehicles in future years.

Office of the City Clerk

The City Clerk's Office remains a key point of contact for residents visiting City Hall. Over the years, as the responsibilities of the Clerk's Office have expanded, so too has the volume of resident visits that has resulted in increased wear and tear on the front desk area. After reviewing quotes obtained for front desk replacements, the committee determined that the City Clerk's Office will require an additional \$3,000 to accommodate this request in the current budget year. Accordingly, this small increase has been included as part of our proposed budget amendments.

Furthermore, we want to bring attention that in recent years, the responsibility for administering animal control license fees has shifted to the City Clerk's Office. We recommend that the Administration explore ways for the Albany Police Department's Animal Control Division to reimburse the City Clerk's Office for these licensing costs in the new year.

Office of the Common Council

While no increases were made to the Common Council's budget as part of this year's amendments, we recognize the growing need for additional staff to effectively carry out our responsibilities on behalf of City residents. Additionally, the Council expresses interest in rejoining the National League of Cities, which provides valuable guidance, resources, and professional development opportunities for local legislators. We respectfully request that the Administration consider these needs as part of next year's budget planning process.

Commission on Disabilities

In October of 2025, the Common Council passed Local Law A establishing the Albany Commission on Disabilities which is intended to provide individuals with disabilities a greater voice with regard to the decisions made by City Departments that directly impact their ability to fully participate in civic life. Due to the timing of the passage of this legislation, no line items were reserved in the budget for this new board. The Common Council has proposed an adjustment to the Common Council's Training and Conference line item to ensure that sufficient funding is available to provide any needed accommodation to facilitate board interviews and board meetings.

The Council notes that further funds may be needed to provide reasonable accommodations to board members going forward and that the legislation noted a potential fiscal impact of \$5,000. It is anticipated that once the board is established, there will be a greater understanding of the fiscal needs to support the board going forward. The Council however, notes this transfer of funds is necessary to ensure that Council staff have the resources needed to support board participation without having to utilize the Board of Estimate and Apportionment in order to provide necessary accommodations.

Addressing Equity and Inclusivity in Playgrounds

The City of Albany has taken great strides to upgrade and invest in our City parks and playgrounds, which has resulted in improved overall compliance with Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards and improved access to our City parks for those with differing abilities. There is, however, a gap between minimum federal standards and full inclusivity. Our new playgrounds and equipment upgrades do not address the need for wheelchair-accessible play equipment that encourages independent play without transfer assistance. Furthermore, the surface material we

choose to lay in our playgrounds creates an additional barrier for our mobility-impaired children and caregivers. The Council notes the City has continued to build with these standards since this was first addressed in our budget intent memo in 2022, despite additional funds being provided in 2024 to engage consultants who would assist the City in this process.

Moving forward, the Council is requesting that all new playground installations include equipment that is accessible via wide, graded access routes that allow for those with wheelchairs and other types of adaptive equipment to participate directly in play. This should include ramped equipment with accessible play features and free-standing equipment with accessible features. The Council encourages the Administration to adhere to the design and equipment standards exemplified in the memo issued by Council Member Keegan in 2023.

The Council further recommends that the City utilize more accessible surface materials such as poured rubber, which would reduce the risk of serious injury related to falls as well as provide a level surface that would improve access to equipment for those relying on adaptive equipment. In addition, the Council encourages the City to consider installing free-standing, wheelchair-accessible equipment to improve pathway access to our recently completed playgrounds as budgetary constraints allow.

The Council acknowledges and commends the Department of General Services for undertaking a review of City Park equipment and walkways to improve access to our City Parks. The proposed audit and goal of ensuring that parks have wheelchair-accessible benches, pathways, and picnic tables is fully supported by the Council.

The Council asks that the City embrace the goal of ensuring that all children and caregivers have equitable access to play within our City parks.

Recreation

With the expansion of our recreation initiatives in our communities, the Common Council hopes that the incoming Administration will join the Council in advocating for and developing an additional South End Community Center. The South End has been disproportionately impacted by historic disinvestment, including the closure of Bathhouse #2. While we appreciate the recent investments and current renovations taking place at the Hoffman Community Center, now known as Albany South, and the South End Connector, we strongly encourage the Administration and other stakeholders to look for new indoor recreation opportunities within the South End.

Bleeker Stadium and Swinburne Park have also long been central to Albany's recreational and community landscape. We understand the Swinburne Park will receive new roofing as part of this year's budget. To maximize their potential, the Council additionally proposes the transformation of these spaces into a modern multi-use complex that can serve a wide range of recreational, community, and event purposes. Such a complex may then be used throughout the year, increasing local economic activity and promoting deeper community participation and engagement. This vision aligns with Albany's goals to create inclusive, versatile public spaces that enhance quality of life, community cohesion, and address historic disinvestment. Revitalizing Bleeker Stadium and Swinburne Park into a multi-use complex offers Albany a dynamic and inclusive space that meets the needs of a diverse community.

Public, Education and Government Access

The Common Council recognizes local support and enthusiasm for Public-access television (often referred to as PEG) and acknowledges its ability to disseminate important information and goings-on in the City.

The Council encourages the PEG Access Oversight Board (PEGAOB) to present future budgetary needs to the Council if above the current funding levels. Furthermore, the Council encourages PEGAOB to work towards adding new media types to disseminate important government and city information, in addition to television, to help ensure we are maximizing outreach to our residents.

Albany Fire Department Communications

The Albany Fire Department is one of our city's largest and most critical departments, performing life-saving work every day. Going beyond firefighting, the Albany Fire Department also provides advanced life support care for medical emergencies and can respond to hazardous materials incidents and maritime emergencies. Given the breadth of services the department offers the City of Albany, it is of paramount importance that the department expand its communication efforts to ensure that residents are aware of what the Albany Fire Department can assist with.

Stronger communication between the Albany Fire Department and city residents will play a key role in the department's recruitment and education efforts while also reducing the number of missed opportunities to engage the public. We would recommend that the department seek to centralize their communications to enhance transparency, distribute educational materials, and strengthen community trust through timely updates on department activities and emergency response efforts.

Council Budgetary Authority and Charter Reform

The Council notes its continued concern over its limited ability to amend the Mayor's proposed budget. The Council acknowledges our post-budget oversight and involvement through having members of the Common Council, including the Council President and the Chair of Finance, be involved in the Board of Estimate and Apportionment process. The Common Council also acknowledges the need to review the Council's budgetary authority under the Charter to potentially develop and place Charter amendments on forthcoming ballots.

Conclusion

With the adoption of this resolution, we complete action on the Fiscal Year 2026 City of Albany budget.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that a copy of this resolution be transmitted to the Mayor, Chief of Staff, Budget Director, and all other department heads; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that a copy of the "Statement of Common Council Actions, Findings and Intent" as herein adopted be printed in the final bound document constituting the "City of Albany 2026 Budget" immediately following the Mayor's transmittal message.

To: **Shaniqua Jackson, City Clerk**

From: **Bryan Jimenez, Legislative Director**

Re: **Supporting Memorandum**

Date: **November 7, 2025**

Sponsor: **Council Member Frederick, on behalf of the Committee of Finance, Assessment and Taxation**

RESOLUTION 132.112.25R (Updated 11/17/2025)

TITLE

RESOLUTION OF THE COMMON COUNCIL OUTLINING ITS ACTIONS AND EXPRESSING ITS FINDINGS AND INTENT CONCERNING THE CITY OF ALBANY 2026 BUDGET AS PROPOSED IN ORDINANCE 27.101.25

GENERAL PURPOSE OF LEGISLATION

To adopt an explanatory resolution to be read in conjunction with the actions of the Common Council concerning the budget.

FISCAL IMPACT

None.

Passed by the following vote of all the Council Members elected voting in favor thereof:

Affirmative – Anane, Adams, Balarin, Clarke, Conti, Farrell, Flynn, Frederick, Hoey, Johnson, Keegan, Kimbrough, Love, Robinson, and Zamer

Affirmative: 15 | Negative: 0 | Abstain: 0

Clerk of the Common Council

President of the Common Council

Mayor

Date

I, Shaniqua Jackson, City Clerk and Clerk of the Common Council, do hereby certify that Resolution 132.112.25R was passed at a meeting of the Albany Common Council on November 17, 2025.

In affirmation thereof, I hereto set my hand and affix The Seal of the City of Albany this 5th day of December, 2025.

Shaniqua Jackson, Clerk of the Common Council