

**City of Olivet
Regular Session Minutes
January 11, 2021 – 7:00 p.m.**

This meeting was held virtually due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Council Call to Order

Present: Mayor Laura Barlund-Maas, Gary Peterson, Joe Hoffdahl, Steve Penny
James Frohm, Pam Steward-Bess, Don Walker.

Visitor's Section Welcome:

Eaton County Commissioner Jim Mott stated that after the election in November, the majority party switched to Republican in Eaton County. The new Chairperson is Jeremy Whittum of Eaton Rapids and Vice Chairperson is Brian Lautzenheiser of the Charlotte area. Mott also stated that he had met earlier today with the Barry-Eaton District Health Department (BEDHD) regarding COVID-19 vaccinations. The County has approximately 500 doses of the vaccine with more on order. After getting the first dose, you are placed on the list for the second dose, but it is unclear at this time if it will be available within the 28-day period recommended. Director of Public Works, Jerry Staggs, asked if the DPW staff should contact the BEDHD about getting vaccines. Mott directed Staggs to call the BEDHD for answers.

Approval of Agenda

MOTION by Steward-Bess, supported by Hoffdahl, to approve the agenda. Motion carried 7-0.

Approval of Previous Minutes

MOTION by Walker, supported by Steward-Bess, to approve the December 2020 minutes as written. Motion carried 7-0.

Mayor Laura Barlund-Maas stated that the remainder of the votes would be taken by roll call.

OLD BUSINESS: None

NEW BUSINESS:

**A. Presentation of FY 19/20 Audit – Neil Hammerbacher, CPA, Gabridge & Company
-Kelly Hanna, Senior Accounting Consultant, Plante Moran**

Auditor Neil Hammerbacher presented the audit findings and financial summary to the Council. Hammerbacher stated that the City and Plante Moran did a good job providing all the information needed for the audit. Per Hammerbacher, the result of the audit shows that the City is in a stable financial position and the operations of the City, as a whole, had improved financially. He noted that Gabridge & Co. had encountered no significant difficulties with being off-site for the audit because of the constraints of COVID-19. Commissioner Don Walker asked if the City should make any changes to our audit procedures. Hammerbacher did not have any recommendation for changes. He also informed Council that Clerk/Treasurer Huepenbecker has his contact information and is available for any questions.

Accounting Consultant Kelly Hanna was also present at the meeting. Hanna commented that it has been a pleasure working with Olivet. She stated that financial processes are well-organized, the annual budget process we have put in place is going well, and we try to improve the procedures every year. She looks for input from the mayor for the needs of the City's budget. Commissioner Gary Peterson asked if the City was receiving income on the Butterfield property. Clerk/ Treasurer Huepenbecker confirmed that the City has received farm rental payments from Jeff Heisler. Peterson asked what account the monies are deposited. Huepenbecker indicated that it was received as Miscellaneous Income in the General Fund. Peterson stated that the property had been purchased with funds from the Water Department for a well field, and it had been agreed at the time of purchase

that because the Water Fund paid for the land, the revenue should stay with the Water fund. Huepenbecker made note of this information.

Commissioner Frohm noted that the Fire Station is in need of improvements. He would like to figure out a way to fund a new Fire Department building even if the plan spanned a period of 5-10 years out. Commissioner Walker indicated that subject had been part of the discussion at the OFD Officers' meetings. Hanna stated that this expense is listed on the City's developing Capital Schedule.

B. Police Department purchase – Radar for Ford Explorer – Action Item

Police Chief Shawn Garcia asked for Council's approval to purchase a radar for the new police vehicle. Commissioner Steward-Bess asked if the radar system was the last item needed for the Explorer. Garcia stated that this should be the last of the equipment needed. Commissioner Penny asked when Chrouch Communications should have the equipment installed. Garcia stated that he had spoken with Chrouch and the equipment is on back order. Chrouch indicated they would let him know as soon as they received any information on the arrival of the equipment.

MOTION by Penny, supported by Frohm, to approve the purchase of a dual two antennae radar system for the new police vehicle as presented at a cost not to exceed \$1,895.00. Motion carried 7-0. ***

Approval of the Bills

MOTION by Hoffdahl, supported by Steward-Bess, to pay the bills as presented. Motion carried 7-0. ***

Department Head Reports

Police Chief Shawn Garcia – Garcia stated that, as mentioned earlier, the new police vehicle is waiting for Chrouch Communications to install the equipment. They will upfit the Explorer with both new equipment and other usable equipment from the old police vehicle. He was hoping to have the all-wheel drive SUV available for the wintery weather ahead. Since the departure of Officer Sean Bailey in November, he had conducted interviews and has made a conditional offer of employment to one applicant. He is in the process of completing the background check and is waiting for the results.

DPW Director Jerry Staggs – Staggs informed Council that the James Clark Tree Service quote from last month did include removal of five trees. Clark's started today with the removal and plans to finish Wednesday. Staggs said he would be away for a week, and DPW employee Chail Gentile would be handling the work in his absence. Commissioner Walker asked Staggs about the water project on Washington Street that was postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Staggs indicated that he still plans to complete the project when possible, but because of the COVID-19 situation, it is not advisable/recommended to shut down the wells at this time.

Commissioner Peterson expressed his concern about COVID-19 affecting the budget and how the water and sewer revenue might decrease without the normal Olivet College usage. Mayor Barlund-Maas stated that COVID-19 admittedly did play a part in decreasing revenue from the College due to the two-week closure last semester and an extra week of winter break during the pandemic. However, the decrease in revenue should be much smaller than last spring when nearly all students and employees left campus during the shutdown. She stated most students were currently taking classes on-campus and that the majority of the students would be returning when classes resume the following Monday. She agreed it remains uncertain what could happen in the future and how it could affect the budget.

Fire Chief John Collins – Collins said that December had been busier than normal with Walton Township requiring the most service. The fire department experienced a busy year in 2020 with 245 calls. He expressed his appreciation for the purchase of the Fire station washer and dryer using funds provided by the CARES grant and stated that the facility is open to all the departments for their use. Collins reported that Jerry Hennessy is wiring the back-up cameras on the fire department vehicles, noting this improvement will provide extra safety.

Clerk/Treasurer Amy Huepenbecker – Huepenbecker indicated that the office was busy with utility and tax payments. She is currently working on the budget and finalizing some of the grants. She noted that it was difficult at times with four active grants—and many associated deadlines—but appreciates the grants nonetheless.

Commissioner Comments

Joe Hoffdahl – Hoffdahl thanked Kelly Hanna and all employees for their hard work.

Pam Steward-Bess – Steward-Bess stated that she and Commissioner Frohm had talked about the naming of the bridge a few times and is familiar with the project. She asked Frohm to email her a draft of the request before the next meeting to look over the wording.

Gary Peterson – Peterson stated that the new Police car decal looks wonderful. Chief Garcia informed the Council that he designed it himself. Peterson suggested it would be nice to have the same decal on the Charger if the cost would allow. Garcia agreed with the recommendation.

Steve Penny – Penny stated he is looking forward to working with everyone another year. He warned Council of suspicious activity around town. He asked everyone to let Chief Garcia know if anything seems unusual or suspicious.

James Frohm – Frohm indicated that during the last month he had been working on the proclamation to name the walking bridge. He is hoping to add this to the agenda for the February meeting. Commissioner Steward-Bess requested a draft be e-mailed to her prior to the meeting and Frohm agreed. Mayor Barlund-Maas also requested a copy of the draft before placing it on the agenda to assist in editing.

Frohm also noted that the Public Works building is in need of a new walk-in door and door frame repair. Mayor Barlund-Maas suggested that he work with DPW Director Staggs to put that information together, so that it could be placed on the next agenda. Clerk/Treasurer Huepenbecker confirmed with Staggs of their discussion about the door repairs and this year's budget. Staggs indicated that it could wait until next fiscal year to complete the project. Mayor Barlund-Maas indicated it would be necessary to get information as it relates to cost, and if money could be found in the budget to complete the project. She stated that it may be necessary to wait until July and the next fiscal year.

Don Walker – Walker thanked Chief Garcia for the instructions, complete with illustrations, for the laptops. They made the set-up process much easier.

Laura Barlund-Maas – Barlund-Maas expressed her good wishes for the New Year ahead of us. She stated if you need to get ahold of her you can either leave a message with Clerk/Treasurer Huepenbecker or can call her directly. She remains hopeful that all goes well in 2021.

Meeting Adjourned at 7:39 p.m.

Laura Barlund-Maas, Mayor

Amy Huepenbecker, Clerk/Treasurer

*** Roll call vote was taken.