

**City of Olivet
Regular Council Minutes
January 10, 2022 – 7:00p.m.**

Council Call to Order

Present: Mayor Laura Barlund-Maas, Gary Peterson, Joe Hoffdahl, Steve Penny, James Frohm, Don Walker, and Larry Marsh.

Mayor Barlund-Maas reminded everyone present that it is important to keep our masks on, even while talking, because COVID-19 numbers are again rising. Wearing our masks is how we show we care about each other. If you cannot hear at any point, raise your hand, and those speaking will repeat what was said.

Visitors' Section

Dan LaPoint informed Council that the plaque for the Veterans Memorial will be finished in approximately eight weeks. He stated that when the plaque arrives, he will grind the stone down and attach the plaque along with finishing the concrete sidewalk to the parking lot. LaPoint asked Council if the metal benches that were approved for the memorial site on September 13, 2021, could be changed to recycled plastic benches due to rising cost and freight on the metal benches. Mayor Barlund-Maas asked that he take pictures of the recycled plastic benches to give to Council for approval. LaPoint is also requesting the approval of a steel veteran silhouette. The steel silhouette will be added to the agenda under item G.

Approval of Agenda

MOTION by Penny, supported by Hoffdahl, to approve the agenda with the addition of Agenda Item G. Veterans Memorial - Steel Veteran Silhouette. Motion carried 7-0.

Approval of Previous Minutes

MOTION by Walker, supported by Penny, to approve the December 2021 minutes as written. Motion carried 7-0.

OLD BUSINESS: None.

NEW BUSINESS:

A. Audit Presentation -Gabridge – Informational

Auditor Neil Hammerbacher presented the audit findings and financial summary to Council. Hammerbacher discussed key points within the report and stated that the City did a good job providing all the information for the audit. Per Hammerbacher, the result of the audit shows that the City is in a healthy and positive financial position with no budget exceptions, and this is to be commended. He thanked Clerk/Treasurer Amy Huepenbecker and Plante Moran for their cooperation with the audit. Commissioner Don Walker asked about the custodial credit risk for the City.

Hammerbacher stated that funds are FDIC insured and the City is at a safe ratio for custodial risk. Walker also asked about the City assets vs. debt ratio. Hammerbacher stated the City has no problem with its debt to asset ratio. He also informed Council that Clerk/Treasurer Huepenbecker has his contact information and is available for any questions.

B. Olivet College Student Activity Center – Ryan Shockey - Informational

Olivet College Vice President and Chief of Staff Ryan Shockey furnished packets to Council showing design concepts for the Olivet College Collegiate Center/Student Center. Shockey informed Council that the strategic plan for this student center started ten years ago. The project has been on hold due to COVID-19 for the past two years. Olivet College Board of Trustees voted to get the project construction-ready. Shockey reiterated that this does not mean the Board approved the final project, but it allows the College to engage with architects and construction companies to get cost projections to take back to the Board of Trustees. The student center will be located where McKay Gymnasium sits currently. Shockey pointed out that the College is working with the State Historical Preservation Society and they would like a historical marker dedicated to McKay Gymnasium incorporated into the design of the new student center. He said the College hopes to break ground in the fall of 2022. The student center is projected to take eighteen months with completion in December 2023. He stated that the lawn in front of Blair Hall will be used as a staging area for construction. An additional driveway and water/sewer lines will be addressed with the City.

C. Fire Department - Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Grant - Action Item

Fire Chief John Collins stated that the Fire Department has applied for a DNR grant for gear. The department has to provide documentation consisting of three bids. The Fire Department's portion of the 50/50 grant would be \$5,000.00 out of the department's personal equipment budget 336-743. He expressed to the Council that he would like to purchase wildland gear to outfit fifteen firefighters with their budgeted funds and the matching grant funds. Wildland gear is easier for firefighters to wear. It consists of single covers, slip-on boots, and hard hats.

MOTION by Walker, supported by Marsh, to approve appropriating \$5,000.00 for the purchase of personal equipment as the required match for the DNR grant. Motion carried 7-0.

D. 2022 Property Tax Poverty Exemption Resolution - Action Item

Mayor Laura Barlund-Maas presented poverty guidelines and asset levels for the 2022 Poverty Tax Poverty Exemption.

MOTION by Marsh, supported by Penny, to approve the 2022 Property Tax Poverty Exemption Resolution 22-01 as presented. Motion carried 7-0.

E. American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Expenditure Ideas – Informational

Mayor Barlund-Maas presented a document showing ways in which the ARPA funds could be used. She asked Council to bring their ideas on how to use these funds to the next council meeting.

F. Eaton County Transportation Authority (EATRAN) - Appointment

Mayor Barlund-Maas appointed Gary Peterson to continue representing the City of Olivet on the EATRAN Board of Trustees. Peterson accepted.

G. Veterans Memorial – Steel Veteran Silhouette – Action Item

Dan LaPoint is requesting to place a steel veteran silhouette at the Veterans Memorial. He stated the steel silhouette will be constructed as to not have sharp edges. The silhouette will be at no cost to the City as it is being donated. He would like the Council's help to install the steel silhouette when weather permits. The placement of the silhouette will be determined in the spring.

MOTION by Frohm, supported by Penny, to approve the addition of the steel silhouette to the Veterans Memorial as presented above. Motion 7-0.

Approval of the Bills

MOTION by Penny, supported by Frohm, to pay the bills as presented. Motion carried 7-0.

Eaton County Commissioner Jim Mott – Mott informed Council that he also serves on the Eaton County Historical Commission, and they have created an Eaton County Vietnam book. He stated that if anyone is interested in the book, they can contact him directly or the Eaton County Historical Commission.

Department Head Reports

Clerk/Treasurer Amy Huepenbecker – Huepenbecker stated the Annual Workmen's Comp audit is tomorrow. She said the office has had steady foot traffic with utility and tax payments. City Hall is waiting on the new copier which is on backorder. Huepenbecker informed Council that she and Deputy Clerk Drema Emerson have a Zoom meeting with Shumaker Technology Group to get started on the foundation of the new website. They are looking forward to having an updated website.

Police Chief Shawn Garcia – Garcia stated that the new police recruit has left the Police Academy, so we will not have to pay the tuition. The City must still pay \$400.00 for his uniforms. He suggested that future recruits pay for uniforms up front and be reimbursed when they complete the academy. Garcia explained that Olivet is not the only municipality having difficulty hiring police officers. He said that another ad will be placed with M-Coles.

DPW Director Jerry Staggs – Staggs stated that DPW workers John Krohn and David King have had time to get caught up on cleaning the barns and equipment maintenance. He said all equipment has been running well and Krohn is studying for his CDL test. Mayor Barlund-Maas complimented the DPW for their efforts in clearing the snow from our roads.

Fire Chief John Collins – Collins reported the department has four personnel attending fire school in Calhoun County. He informed Council that the department is finalizing the FEMA grant that has been extended another 36 days. The department is working on a AAA grant for highway safety. The grant of up to \$15,000.00 would allow the department to purchase an extrication tool. The department would like to try to purchase another tool with a fundraiser at the Firefighters' Festival.

Commissioner Comments

Joe Hoffdahl – Hoffdahl stated the DPW is doing a great job on the roads. He also thanked all employees for their hard work.

Larry Marsh – Marsh congratulated Clerk/Treasurer Huepenbecker on the audit.

Gary Peterson – Peterson suggested using some of the ARPA funds to reward the employees.

Steve Penny – Penny stated town has been quiet with the college out for the holidays and I-69 road construction stopped for the winter. He acknowledged the decisions that were made that impacted the financial stability of the City making for a great audit outcome.

James Frohm – Frohm stated he had nothing to add.

Don Walker – Walker stated he had nothing to add.

Laura Barlund-Maas – Barlund-Maas thanked all the employees for a successful audit. She stated that budget meetings are underway. She also thanked everyone for being responsible to wear their masks and distance as the COVID-19 numbers are increasing

Council meeting adjourned at 7:56 p.m.

Laura Barlund-Maas, Mayor

Amy Huepenbecker, Clerk/Treasurer