

**City of Olivet
Regular Council Minutes
January 08, 2024 – 7:00 p.m.**

Council Call to Order

Present: Mayor Laura Barlund-Maas, Don Walker, Gary Peterson, Joseph Davis, James Frohm, and Larry Marsh.

Absent: Joe Hoffdahl

Visitors' Section:

Jenny Heisler and Leslie Murphy addressed the Council asking for an update regarding the Utility Terrain Vehicle (UTV) ordinance. Mayor Laura Barlund-Maas stated that there is nothing new to report regarding the ordinance at this time. Mayor Barlund-Maas reiterated that the City Attorney is continuing to work on correcting the issue regarding the definition in the ordinance and the goal is to have the ordinance properly written and completed by spring.

Olivet Chamber of Commerce Vice President Dan Hayes introduced himself to the Council and stated that he would be attending more City Council meetings.

Approval of Agenda

MOTION by Peterson, supported by Frohm, to approve the agenda. Motion carried 6-0.

After the motion was made and supported, Walker inquired why the Eaton Area Emergency Medical Services (EMS) budget amendment and the bids for the City Hall security recommendations were not on the January agenda as stated in the December minutes. Mayor Barlund-Maas stated that once the invoice with the corrected amount is received for the EMS agreement, the budget amendment will be made. Staggs stated that he is waiting on the three required bids for the City Hall security recommendations.

Approval of Previous Minutes

MOTION by Walker, supported by Marsh, to approve the December 11, 2023, minutes as written. Motion carried 6-0.

OLD BUSINESS: None.

NEW BUSINESS:

A. Audit Presentation - Gabridge – Informational Item

Auditor Joe Verlin from Gabridge & Company presented the audit findings and financial summary to the Council. Verlin discussed key points within the report and stated that Clerk/Treasurer Huepenbecker and Plante Moran did a great job providing all the information for the audit. Per Verlin,

the result of the audit shows that the City is in a healthy financial position due to sound fiscal accounting practices.

B. 2024 Property Tax Poverty Exemption Resolution – Action Item

Mayor Barlund-Maas stated that poverty guidelines and asset levels for the 2024 Property Tax Poverty Exemption are included in the packet. She said that on page two is a chart showing the income and asset poverty guidelines for the prior year and 2024. Mayor Barlund-Maas informed the Council that the Federal Government sets the income guidelines, but the City Council has the right to determine the asset level for the poverty guidelines. A suggested 5% increase in the asset level is shown on the chart for the Council's consideration to either keep the prior year's asset level or increase the asset level shown in 2024.

MOTION by Walker, supported by Marsh, to adopt the 2024 Property Tax Poverty Exemption Resolution using the 2024 asset level as presented. Motion carried 6-0.

C. Life Insurance – Informational Item

Mayor Barlund-Maas informed the Council that the current employee handbook states that term life insurance is offered to all employees, but this is not the case. The minutes that were found regarding term life did not record any reason for the change. The motion that was brought forward in those minutes was for renewing/updating a policy of the term life, but the minutes do not record much relevant discussion. The motion that was made instead was in support of adopting an accidental death and disability policy. Mayor Barlund-Maas stated that she is updating the employee handbook and will have the personnel committee look at the cost of both a term life policy and an accidental death and disability policy and bring its findings and information back to the Council.

D. Fire Truck Purchase – Informational Item

Fire Chief John Collins provided the Council with informational materials regarding the purchase of a fire truck. He stated that the State of Michigan budget began in October, and it has taken this long to begin the process of ordering the chassis and other components for the fire truck using the state grant. Collins informed the Council that the truck committee will be meeting on Thursday to discuss the necessary equipment that will be needed for the fire truck while also considering pricing and the grant objectives. Collins expressed his goal to stay under \$1 million for the cost of the fully equipped truck. He provided the Council with information regarding timelines of building the chassis and adding equipment along with discussing a 3% reduction from Spencer Manufacturing if payment is made at the time of the order. Collins also discussed the reimbursement process from the State of Michigan grant. Mayor Barlund-Maas requested Collins to provide her with a copy of the contract from the State. She also said it was possible to hold a Special Council meeting to make the decision and then sign the contract.

E. Police Officer New Hire/Recruit – Action Item

Police Chief Shawn Garcia asked the Council's permission to hire a civilian employee who would job shadow him and work on much-needed record maintenance. Garcia said this trainee would attend Kellogg Community College (KCC) Regional Training Academy from July 2024 through December 2024. He stated that there is currently a grant of \$24,000.00 that pays for the academy which is approximately \$13,440.99. The remainder of the grant can be used to pay any wages for the trainee

until the academy is completed. Peterson stated that he believed Lansing Community College (LCC) was the least expensive of the two academies. Garcia stated that the grant amount of \$24,000.00 is the same no matter what academy the trainee attends. Walker asked about the liability of the trainee being in the police car. Garcia said that civilians are allowed on ride-along, but he will ask the City insurance agent Jason Orton. Mayor Barlund-Maas stated that the trainee would not have a weapon nor have any authority. The trainee would be learning record maintenance and other office duties to assist Chief Garcia until the academy starts. Walker asked if there would be a privacy issue having the trainee working with sensitive police information. Garcia stated that he would have the trainee trained in security awareness and LEIN-certified. Clerk/Treasurer Amy Huepenbecker asked if the trainee would be paid hourly and the number of hours. Garcia stated that the trainee would work forty hours per week for the City with an hourly rate of \$23.00. The trainee would attend the academy from July to December for eight hours a day. Once the trainee has graduated from the academy and is hired as a full-time officer, the regular probationary period will begin. When the probationary period ends, the hourly wage will increase to \$25.00. Mayor Barlund-Maas informed the Council that an agreement would be made between the City and the civilian trainee regarding expectations and rate of pay. Garcia informed the Council that if the trainee does not complete or pass the academy, the grant money does not have to be paid back. Peterson stated that the City cannot “require” the trainee to stay after graduating from the academy.

MOTION by Davis, supported by Walker, to allow the Police Department to hire a civilian employee with the expectation that the civilian will attend the KCC Regional Training Academy from July 2024 to December 2024, funded by a state grant. The hourly wage is \$23.00 until the probationary period ends, then the hourly wage will increase to \$25.00. Motion carried 6-0.

Approval of the Bills

MOTION by Frohm, supported by Peterson, to pay the bills. Motion carried 6-0.

Department Head Reports

DPW Director Jerry Staggs – Staggs reported that the DPW is getting ready for the snow predicted for this evening. He said the reliability study has been sent to EGLE. The DPW workers have been busy taking down the holiday lights and decorations, maintenance on the well houses is underway and the rebuilt pump for the lift station should be delivered this week.

Police Chief Shawn Garcia – Garcia stated that he had nothing to add. Peterson addressed Garcia concerning traffic on Butterfield Hwy. in front of Fern Persons Elementary School when school is released. Peterson said the traffic was terrible and considered the situation to be “an accident waiting to happen.”

Fire Chief John Collins – Collins thanked the Council for the firefighters’ Whitetail Farms Market holiday gift cards. He stated that the department had a busy month with mutual aid calls and structure fires.

Clerk/Treasurer Amy Huepenbecker – Huepenbecker stated the office has been busy taking water and tax payments and collecting absentee ballot applications and ballot selection forms. She informed the Council that budget discussions have begun. She is setting up budget meetings with department heads and commissioners at the end of January when accountant Kelly Hanna will be here. Huepenbecker stated that there are still American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds available, and suggested purchasing Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs) for all City buildings.

Commissioner Comments

Joe Davis – Davis stated he had nothing to add.

Don Walker – Walker stated he had nothing to add.

Larry Marsh – Marsh stated, “Go Blue.”

Gary Peterson – Peterson stated that Eaton Area Transportation Authority (EATRAN) will be starting their route from either courthouse in Charlotte to Delta Township on Monday. He also stated that the west side of Eaton County and Olivet have a low amount of EATRAN riders.

James Frohm – Frohm stated when the Utility Terrain Vehicle (UTV) ordinance is in place, he believes the Police department should consider getting a UTV.

Laura Barlund-Maas – Barlund-Maas reminded the Council that there are a couple of events going on at The University of Olivet this month that require road closures. She stated the Martin Luther King (MLK) March is on Monday, January 15 from 3:30 pm to 6:00 pm, and the Running Night Relay Race is on Friday, January 12 from 7:30 pm to 9:00 pm. Both events will be held around the University Square. She said final touches are being made at the Cutler Student Center. It should be open to the students on Monday, January 22, and open to the public in February.

Council meeting adjourned at 8:20 p.m.

Laura Barlund-Maas, Mayor

Amy Huepenbecker, Clerk/Treasurer