

**City of Olivet
Regular Council Minutes
March 11, 2024 – 7:00 p.m.**

Council Call to Order

Present: Mayor Laura Barlund-Maas, Commissioners: Don Walker, Gary Peterson, Joseph Davis, James Frohm, and Joe Hoffdahl.

Larry Marsh – Absent.

Visitors' Section:

Resident Jennifer Miller asked if the City of Olivet Charter has an age limit or mandatory retirement age for any of the City employees. Mayor Laura Barlund-Maas said she would double-check but believes there is no maximum age limit. Commissioner Gary Peterson stated that would be age discrimination. Commissioner Don Walker stated that due to Federal Law, it is illegal to impose a mandatory retirement.

Parker, a nine-year-old visitor, stated that the Charlotte Library has more than just books. He said that he and his friends can benefit from the library computers and programs. Parker hopes the millage passes so everyone will have the opportunity to use the Charlotte Library.

Approval of Agenda

MOTION by Hoffdahl, supported by Frohm, to approve the agenda as written. Motion carried 6-0.

Approval of Previous Minutes

MOTION by Walker, supported by Davis, to approve the February 12, 2024, minutes with the correction on page five under Item J. Fire Department Ice Rescue Suit Purchase that three other fire departments, not four, attended the Olivet ice rescue training. Motion carried 6-0.

OLD BUSINESS: None.

NEW BUSINESS:

A. Charlotte District Library – Action Item

Assistant Director of the Charlotte Community Library Ann Goeman provided the Council with a draft resolution and amendment. She stated the Council voted to add the millage language to the August 2024 ballot at the December 11, 2023, Council Meeting. Goeman stated that if the millage goes through in August, this resolution will be the amendment to the existing district library agreement and is the next step to join as a new participating municipality in the Charlotte Community Library District. Peterson asked if Walton Township would be participating. Goeman informed the Council that Walton Township and Brookfield Township did approve to participate in December 2023, but both have rescinded. Peterson stated that the Charlotte Community Library receives state penal fines from Olivet and asked where that money goes and what it does for the City of Olivet. Goeman explained

that the Charlotte Community Library was able to collect state penal fines and state aid from contracted cities such as Olivet to fund the library: however, the state penal fines have decreased by over 70% over the last five years. She said currently all the contracted areas only contribute \$17,000.00 through penal fines.

Commissioner Joseph Davis stated that he had spoken with the Library Board regarding the 1.4 millage for Olivet as he feels this amount is high for the area. Goeman stated that according to the District Library Establishment Act, any municipality within the district must pay the same millage that has already been established. Peterson stated that taxes are already on the rise, and he feels a 1.4 millage is excessive compared to other millages for services that are a necessity. Goeman reiterated the decline of state aid and penal fines and stated the fact that the 1.4 millage was overwhelmingly supported to keep the Charlotte Community Library doors open. She again expressed that the library is only asking to put the millage on the ballot and let the voters decide. If the voters pass the millage to continue with the library services, then the resolution and amendment are the legal formality that will go into effect. This resolution and amendment must be signed by the beginning of April so that all paperwork can be submitted to the County for the ballot language, and it must also go to the State Librarian to be agreed upon. Resident Pam Bess addressed the Council and suggested that we let the residents vote.

Peterson stated that other libraries are seeing a decline in their services. Goeman declared the Charlotte Community Library has not experienced a decline but rather quite the opposite. She summarized the Charlotte Community Library 2023 statistics regarding the number of visitors, computer usage, number of books checked out, and the number of programs the library offers. Visitor Shelly Collins stated that in December 2023, David Votta said that residents could purchase a library card for \$80.00 per year per household. Collins asked if the voters turn this millage down would the Olivet residents be able to purchase the card to continue to use the library? Goeman explained that residents can purchase an out-of-district card for a fee. Discussion took place regarding clarification on page 12 #9 of the resolution, how many potential municipalities will be involved in the district, the price of library cards, how often the millage will renew, and what the increased revenue will be spent on if all municipalities join the district.

MOTION by Frohm, supported by Walker, to adopt the resolution to become a participating municipality in the Charlotte Community Library District. Motion carried 5-1 with the following roll call vote:

Hoffdahl-yes Davis-yes Walker-yes Peterson-no Frohm-yes Barlund-Maas-yes Marsh-absent

B. Fire Contract – Lee Township – Action Item

Fire Commissioner Don Walker stated that the fire contracts are renewed every two years. The contract with Lee Township remains the same as the 2022 contract with only the annual contract fee increasing by 5% due to inflation.

MOTION by Walker, supported by Hoffdahl, to approve the new fire contract for Lee Township as presented. Motion carried 6-0.

Peterson stated that the increase should be more on future contracts to help support future fire department purchases. Mayor Barlund-Maas and Davis both agreed.

C. Fire Contract – Walton Township – Action Item

Fire Commissioner Don Walker stated that the fire contracts are renewed every two years. The contract with Walton Township remains the same as the 2022 contract with only the annual contract fee increasing by 5% due to inflation.

MOTION by Walker, supported by Hoffdahl, to approve the new fire contract for Walton Township as presented. Motion carried 6-0.

D. Black Lives Matter Road Closures – Action Item

University of Olivet employee and ELITE member Da'Quarius Johnson stated that ELITE is holding its annual Black Lives Matter March on Tuesday, April 16, 2024, from 5:30 pm to approximately 7:45 pm. He is asking the Council's permission to use the City's barricades and to close East, College, and Cottage Streets around the University Square for the march with Main Street to remain open to the public.

MOTION by Walker, supported by Frohm, to allow the above road closures around the University Square for the Black Lives Matter March on Tuesday, April 16, from 5:30 pm to approximately 7:45 pm. with the understanding that the University will be responsible for placing and removing the barricades at the stated times.

E. OHS Choir Car Wash – Action Item

DPW Director Jerry Staggs stated that he received an email from Olivet High School Band Booster Melissa Ryan. Staggs stated that the choir wants to hold a car wash fundraiser on Saturday, May 4, 2024, from 11:00 am. to 3:00 pm. to raise money for the Olivet High School Choir to go to Washington DC. He said Ryan is requesting to use the City's water and the City's parking lot in the back of Olivet City Hall for this fundraising event. Davis asked how much water would be used. Staggs assumes between 1,000 and 5,000 gallons of water will be used and he will request the choir to have a hand trigger attached to the hose to help control water usage as much as possible.

MOTION by Hoffdahl, supported by Frohm, to allow the Olivet Community High School Choir to use the City water and City parking lot to hold a car wash fundraiser on Saturday, May 4, 2024, from 11:00 am. to 3:00 pm. Motion carried 6-0.

F. City Hall Parking Lot Lighting Project – Informational Item

DPW Director Staggs stated that Commissioner James Frohm informed the DPW of a Small-Town Enhancement Grant that is available through the Lansing Economic Area Partnership (LEAP). Staggs said the City plans on applying for the grant by the deadline of April 15, 2024. He stated the grant total is a minimum of \$10,000 to a maximum of \$25,000 with no match required. Staggs suggested installing two lights in the back parking lot behind City Hall for security purposes, adding boulders or trees around the lights to stop the vehicles from passing through to the adjacent parking lot, and the possibility of installing EV charging stations. Discussion took place regarding types of vehicle EV charging stations.

Approval of the Bills

MOTION by Peterson, supported by Hoffdahl, to pay the bills as presented. Motion carried 6-0.

Mayor Barlund-Maas called on Eaton County Commissioner Jim Mott for an update on Eaton County happenings. Mott asked Clerk/Treasurer Amy Huepenbecker if she received the Eaton County Community Parks Grant application. Huepenbecker stated she had received it. Mott stated that Eaton County is experiencing budget problems, and they are looking at two possible options with which to help solve these budget issues. Option one is to do a dedicated public safety millage or option two is to do a tax allocation. Mott explained what a tax allocation is and how it works. He also broke down how the County currently uses its tax allocations. Mott discussed how the increase in millage revenue would be used towards future technology and long-overdue building maintenance issues. He also stated that Eaton County employees have the lowest wages comparatively and good employees are leaving. Mott informed the Council that the Eaton County Sherriff Department contracts with Delta Township providing Delta with sheriff deputies. If the dedicated proposed millage or proposed tax allocation does not pass, Delta Township would have to develop its own Police Department and they do not have the funds. He stated that Eaton County will decide in May which option will go on the November ballot.

Department Head Reports

Police Chief Shawn Garcia – Garcia was absent.

DPW Director Jerry Staggs – Staggs reported that Don Heck with Wolverine Engineering is working on a Category B Road Grant. If awarded, this grant will help resurface Spruce, Yale, and part of East Street. He stated the DPW has been busy discharging the lagoons, taking water samples, and completing the required Consumer Confidence Report (CCR) which is an annual report regarding the quality of the drinking water. Staggs informed the Council that Shrontz Memorial Park has equipment that needs repairing and replacing. He said he is looking for a grant so playground equipment can be replaced, but, in the meantime, the DPW has been making repairs on what they can. Staggs also stated that mulch needs to be added at the park and he has contacted Brad Shrontz for mulch pricing. He said The University of Olivet is having its service day on March 27 and 28 and he plans on having college student volunteers spread the mulch during this time. Peterson asked if the Family Dollar/Dollar Tree store has the water/sewer hooked up. Staggs stated that the water and sewer are hooked up along with the gas.

Fire Chief John Collins – Collins stated that the department had 24 calls in February. He provided the Council with a monthly fire report that shows what types of calls the department responded to. Collins thanked Mayor Barlund-Maas for authorizing the repair of the compressor located on the engine. Collins informed the Council that lower Michigan is abnormally dry, and he will assess the situation regarding burn permits and keep in touch with City Hall regarding any burn bans. Collins inquired about setting a date for the special meeting with the architect to discuss the proposed fire station.

Clerk/Treasurer Amy Huepenbecker – Huepenbecker stated that Kingdom Builders has done a great job on the wall and door security improvements. She said the windows should be in next week to finish all security measures at City Hall and the Police Department. She informed the Council that the elections went well. There were 49 absentee ballots and 72 in-house ballots for a total of 121 ballots cast. Huepenbecker said that water billing will start in two weeks. She reiterated to Collins to keep City Hall informed on any burning restrictions.

Commissioner Comments

Joe Hoffdahl – Hoffdahl thanked all employees for their hard work.

Joseph Davis – Davis stated that the Police Department is moving forward with Lexipol and meetings have been scheduled this week to gather information to build a profile that will be used to generate policies and terms. The following week will be the implementation of the new platform. He said the gun safe for the School Resource Officer (SRO) is in place at the school where the rifle to be purchased will be kept at all times. The body camera has been ordered and Police Chief Shawn Garcia and SRO Marco Hernandez have continued to discuss preferences on what style of rifle to purchase. Peterson asked when the new hire for the Police Department would start. Davis stated that progress is being made and he will keep the Council informed.

Don Walker – Walker stated he had nothing to add.

Larry Marsh – Marsh was absent.

Gary Peterson – Peterson gave an update on the Eaton Area Transportation Authority (EATRAN).

James Frohm – Frohm stated that the City needs grants and he is thankful for the grants applied for and thankful to the grant writers.

Laura Barlund-Maas – Barlund-Maas stated that she has appointed Parks Commissioner Larry Marsh, Police Commissioner Joseph Davis, and Resident Erin Pavolski to the Parks Board. She thanked DPW Director Staggs for the work he had done to get Consumers Energy to install the light on Cottage Street. She said it lights up nicely and is appreciated.

Council meeting adjourned at 8:43 p.m.

Laura Barlund-Maas, Mayor

Amy Huepenbecker, Clerk/Treasurer