

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

**Council Call to Order**

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

**Visitors' Section:**

Olivet Chamber of Commerce President Jamie Kita informed the Council that the Oli-Ween event was successful with approximately 150 participants. She stated that the haunted buses that Dean Transportation provided had a good turnout, and the Olivet Post Office won the decorating contest. She thanked the Olivet FFA for providing straw bales and thanked the other businesses for decorating.

**Approval of Agenda**

Mayor Laura Barlund-Maas asked to switch agenda items C and D, moving City Attorney's Concerns before the Project Updates. Commissioner Don Walker asked to add item F, Fire Truck Repairs, to the agenda. Commissioner Joe Davis requested that item E Police Department Status Update be discussed in Executive Session. Clerk/Treasurer Amy Huepenbecker clarified that the Fire Truck Repairs would move to item E on the agenda and the Executive Session would occur after the Department Head Reports.

**MOTION** by Frohm, supported by Davis, to approve the agenda with the following changes: Items C and D will be switched. Item E will be changed to Fire Truck Repairs, and the Police Department Status will be discussed in the Executive Session after the Department Head Reports. Motion carried 7-0.

**Approval of Previous Minutes**

**MOTION** by Walker, supported by Davis, to postpone the approval of the October minutes until the December meeting to allow adequate time for those minutes to be reviewed. Motion carried 7-0.

**OLD BUSINESS:** None.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

**A. Chamber Oli-Day Light Parade Road Closures – Action Item**

Olivet Chamber of Commerce Chairperson Julie Harmon provided the Council with a map showing the requested parade route for Oli-Day. She stated that the route is the same approved route as the Olivet High School "Homecoming Parade". She asked Police Chief Shawn Garcia if he had any concerns with the route and staging area. Garcia advised Harmon to contact Olivet High School teacher/advisor Brityn Rabakon with any questions or help Harmon may need regarding the parade

as Rabakon has experience organizing the school's homecoming parade. Harmon stated that the "Oli-Day Cheer Light Parade" event would take place on Friday, December 6, with activities around town from 4:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. if approved. She discussed the activities that would take place during the event and stated that she has flyers if anyone would like them. Harmon invited everyone to come and join the fun. Discussion took place regarding barricades for the road closures. Davis asked how many participants would be in the parade this year. Kita stated she does not know yet, but there were 27 participants last year.

**MOTION** by Davis, supported by Hoffdahl, to approve the plan for the Oli-Day Cheer Light Parade road closures for Friday, December 6, with the suggestion that Harmon speak with Rabakon regarding the parade route and coordinate with Fire Chief John Collins, DPW Director Jerry Staggs and Garcia regarding barricades and road closures. Motion carried 7-0.

### **B. Appointment of City Assessor – Jason Kohagen – Informational Item**

Huepenbecker said she had a phone interview with the potential new Assessor Jason Kohagen. She stated Kohagen would perform the assessor's duties in the same manner that we were used to with Randy Jewell. She stated that the interview went well, and she did not see any reason not to hire Kohagen as the new assessor. Mayor Barlund-Maas appointed Kohagen to a one-year contract.

### **C. City Attorney Concerns – Informational Item**

Mayor Barlund-Maas read a resignation letter from the City of Olivet Attorney Ken O'Deen. Discussion took place regarding the process of hiring a new attorney.

### **D. Project Updates – Items in Old Business – Informational Item**

Davis stated that he believes that the Council and residents would find value in receiving updates regarding City projects and where they stand. He explained that by providing updates, discussions can take place and everyone is kept informed. Mayor Barlund-Maas agreed that updates are a good idea and should be placed under Old Business as they have already been discussed. Walker agreed that updates should be under Old Business.

- 1) **2023 Ordinance Rework** – Davis stated that prior to him serving on the Council he had heard the ordinances were being edited. He said that he understood that the Council members had read assigned sections of the ordinances making notes of any corrections that should be made. Davis asked for an update on the rework of the ordinances. Mayor Barlund-Maas stated that the Council members had read their assigned sections and now it's a matter of making the corrections and sending it to Municode to edit.
- 2) **ORV MCL Correction** – Mayor Barlund-Maas stated that the MCL corrections to letter i) of the ORV Ordinance had been made and the amended copy has been provided to each Council member. The ORV Ordinance amendment was presented tonight. There will be a public hearing at the December council meeting to discuss any feedback before voting to amend the ordinance. Commissioner Gary Peterson voiced his concern regarding the wrong wording of the ORV Ordinance that was previously published in the paper. Mayor Barlund-Maas stated that the ordinance will again be published in the paper once the amendment is approved.
- 3) **City Handbook** – Huepenbecker stated that she has had a few meetings with Lexipol regarding moving forward with the City policies. She said she has a schedule of assigned

policies to review and turn in weekly. Huepenbecker believes she will be through the policies by mid-December.

- 4) **Police Department Policies** – Garcia stated that he had been reviewing five to seven policies but due to other priorities, he has had to put the policies aside. Davis reiterated that the Police Department will continue to review policies as time allows.
- 5) **Parks Master Plan** – Davis stated that he had given an update at the October meeting. He said there is now a template for the Parks Master Plan that he is filling out as a first draft. He stated that there is a parks survey that will help drive what the Master Plan will look like.
- 6) **Fire Department – New Station Committee** – Mayor Barlund-Maas stated that a committee that includes residents needs to be assembled to discuss the needs and wants of the proposed fire station plans so we can move forward with grant opportunities. Walker asked if the committee should include someone from both townships. Mayor Barlund-Maas stated that both townships and the City should be represented on the committee. Huepenbecker suggested someone from the Olivet Community School and The University of Olivet be represented on the committee. Davis stated support for including representation from those entities. Mayor Barlund-Maas agreed stating that both townships, the City, The Olivet Community Schools, and The University of Olivet should be represented on the committee. She stated she would further discuss with Walker who would make up the committee. Commissioner James Frohm stated his concern regarding the long-term maintenance cost should the City move forward with the fire station. Mayor Barlund-Maas stated that the City has looked into the maintenance cost regarding the proposed fire station and this is one of the things the committee would have to consider. Frohm stated the new fire station could benefit others by hosting training events for other departments. Mayor Barlund-Maas said to let her know if the Council members have ideas regarding people who may be contributing members to the committee.
- 7) **Sign Ordinance Amendment** – Huepenbecker stated that City Hall had several phone calls on election morning with angry residents regarding all of the political signs placed around town and specifically behind City Hall. She stated since the City does not have an ordinance regarding temporary signs, the signs could not be removed. Mayor Barlund-Maas stated this issue was discussed at a previous meeting with no action being taken at that time. She recommends moving forward on a sign ordinance. Huepenbecker stated she has been reviewing a copy of Eaton County's new sign ordinance and plans on discussing the issue with Brandy Miller, of Eaton County Building Codes for her opinions and will update the Council when she has the information. Peterson asked for clarification regarding what types of signs and where they can be placed on City-owned property. Huepenbecker said that is why she wants to talk with Miller. She stated that Miller had previously suggested that any temporary sign on City property should have to be approved by the Council. Huepenbecker stated that because approval of signs can't be based on content, this raised the question of whether we should say "no signs" on City property or in the right-of-way or choose to say "temporary signs" on public property such as City Hall, the ball field, parks, or the Fire Station need to have Council approval. Huepenbecker said Garcia stated if the City said "no signs" it may become a freedom of speech issue. Peterson suggested contacting the Michigan Municipal League for advice as well. Seasonal Inspirations owner Jamie Kita stated that if the City were to say "no signs" it would hurt the small businesses in town as they use signs as an economical way to advertise. Huepenbecker stated private property could still have signs. Discussions took place regarding where other cities are allowing their signs to be placed, placing signs on private property versus public property, types of signs that can be placed, what signs would need approval, and signs that have the potential to block or obstruct traffic.

## **E. Fire Truck Repairs – Action Item**

Fire Commissioner Walker stated that trucks #813 and #817 need to be taken to Spencer Manufacturing for repair of electrical issues and emergency lights. He stated the Fire Department does not have the cost for the repairs, but estimates approximately \$3,000.00 per truck and the money is available in their budget.

**MOTION** by Walker, supported by Davis, to allow Spencer Manufacturing to repair the electrical issues on trucks #813 and #817 at a cost not to exceed \$3,000.00 per truck. Motion carried 7-0.

## **Approval of the Bills**

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

## **Department Head Reports**

**Police Chief Shawn Garcia** – Garcia stated he had nothing to add.

**DPW Director Jerry Staggs** – Staggs reported that the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE) has finished the inspection of the lagoons. Staggs said his concern is the duckweed in the lagoons which is a constant fight but he will know more when the report comes back next week. Staggs stated that D&J Excavating is doing a great job picking up the leaves in the City. He said the DPW would like to get the holiday lights up before the Holiday Light Parade possibly the week of November 25<sup>th</sup> or the week of December 2nd. Staggs informed the Council that Josh Hulsebos, owner of Top to Bottom Tree Service has taken down a few trees in the city and made note of how bad the tops of the trees are looking. Hulsebos suggested planning which trees to remove and planting new trees in their place. Discussion took place regarding working with Consumers Energy and The Arbor Foundation for a list of preferred trees to replace old trees. Staggs said the plow truck is ready for the season and the department continues to stay busy.

**Fire Chief John Collins** – Collins provided the Council with a monthly fire report with the breakdown of the calls. He said the department has a new member. He stated he has been busy this month as he attended Campus Connection at The University of Olivet, three township meetings, and the Fire Department had four meetings in-house. Collins informed the Council that he attended the Olivet High School career day and provided public education at six facilities.

**Clerk/Treasurer Amy Huepenbecker** – Huepenbecker informed the Council that City Hall was busy on Election Day. She stated that the City of Olivet registered voters voted the following ways: 45 participated in early voting, around 100 voted on absentee ballot, and 350 voted in the precinct on election day totaling just under 500. Huepenbecker thanked resident Jennifer Miller for working elections for over 30 years and wished her well as this was Miller's last election. Huepenbecker stated that Walker had asked for clarification regarding the death and dismemberment benefit at last month's meeting. She said Jason Orton, our insurance agent with the David Chapman Agency was unable to attend tonight's meeting and will attend the December meeting. She stated there were two death and dismemberment policies, one of those policies being a 24-hour one, meaning whether the accident occurs at work or home, and that policy pays \$50,000.00. The second policy pays \$250,000.00 for an accident while on duty performing City business. She said City offices are preparing winter taxes that will go out at the end of the month.

## **Commissioner Comments**

**Joe Hoffdahl** – Hoffdahl thanked Dan LaPoint with D&J Excavating for the great job of picking up leaves and thanked the employees for their hard work.

**Joseph Davis** – Davis stated that he would like an update regarding the Charlotte Community Library Board. Olivet representative on the Charlotte Community Library Board Sarah Thomson was present and informed the Council that she had attended the board meeting and there are no new updates to report. The Board discussed its budget and stated that they were happy to have Olivet join. Davis said that he thought that Halloween was great and the weather was nice. He liked that the Post Office had won the decorating contest as he thought they spent a lot of time decorating. He said the election went smoothly and he got the opportunity to talk with people. He thanked the Olivet Firefighters Association President Justin Southern for letting his family ride in the fire truck during the Eaton Rapids 60<sup>th</sup> celebration parade. Davis thanked D&J Excavating for the leaf pick-up and thanked the City for providing this valuable service.

**Don Walker** – Walker stated he likes the idea of having the fire station committee and their support. He feels one of the ways to receive the support is by having the fire station plans and he feels another means of support would be to have the land purchased which shows credibility and sincerity to move forward with the plan. Walker believes that having the plans and purchasing the land would show the City's commitment when applying for appropriations from the State. Mayor Barlund-Maas said she agreed and asked Walker if the fire station committee could talk about where that land would be.

**Larry Marsh** – Marsh stated he had nothing to add.

**Gary Peterson** – Peterson expressed that he had hoped that Eaton County Commissioner Jim Mott would be in attendance this evening as Peterson feels that the way City employee Police Chief Garcia was treated at the September meeting was appalling. Peterson feels that Mott should have put a stop to the situation and Garcia is owed an apology.

Mayor Barlund-Maas stated that she would like to appoint Peterson to the Eaton Area Transportation Authority (EATRAN) Board. Peterson thanked Mayor Barlund-Maas and accepted. Discussion took place regarding advertising and making EATRAN known to The University of Olivet community.

**James Frohm** – Frohm stated the nice thing about coming back to Olivet is seeing all the people and Council people who have given years of service and continue to do so.

**Laura Barlund-Maas** – Barlund-Maas stated she had nothing to add.

**MOTION** by Davis, supported by Walker, to go into Executive Session to discuss the Police Department. Motion carried 7-0. The Council entered executive session at 8:18 p.m.

Council meeting resumed and adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

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Laura Barlund-Maas, Mayor

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Amy Huepenbecker, Clerk/Treasurer