

**City of Olivet
Regular Council Minutes
December 9, 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: None.

Approval of Agenda

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

Approval of Previous Minutes

MOTION by Walker, supported by Hoffdahl, to approve the October 14, 2024, minutes with the following change in the wording on page three to read: Walker suggested reducing the minutes and keeping the meeting recordings in perpetuity. Motion carried 6-0. Marsh abstained.

MOTION by Walker, supported by Hoffdahl, to approve the November 11, 2024, minutes as written. Motion carried 7-0.

OLD BUSINESS:

A. Project Update

1. Ordinance Book Amendments

Mayor Laura Barlund-Maas stated that she has started looking at the ordinances again. She will begin reviewing the feedback that the Council members have made.

2. City Policies (Handbook) – Lexipol

Clerk/Treasurer Amy Huepenbecker stated that she is currently reviewing City policies and meeting with Lexipol weekly with two meetings scheduled for this week.

3. Police Department Policies – Lexipol

Police Chief Shawn Garcia stated that the department's policies are still on hold due to other priorities and a lack of personnel.

4. Parks Master Plan

Police Commissioner Joe Davis stated that the Parks Master Plan is still progressing. He will have an update in January accompanied by a copy of the first draft. He said the Parks Master Plan survey will go out in the winter newsletter.

5. Fire Station Committee

Mayor Barlund-Maas stated that she and Fire Commissioner Don Walker have asked resident and business owner Mike Judd to chair the committee. She said that a person

from each township along with a person from The University of Olivet and the Olivet Community Schools would be asked to represent those entities on the committee. Mayor Barlund-Maas explained that Huepenbecker and Fire Chief John Collins will be present at the committee meetings as they can provide valuable information regarding finances, Fire Department operations, and Fire Station needs to the committee to move forward.

6. Sign Ordinance Amendment

Huepenbecker stated that there has been no change regarding the sign ordinance at this time due to other priorities.

7. Emergency Plan – City

Huepenbecker stated that there has been no change regarding the emergency plan due to other priorities.

8. ORV Ordinance

Huepenbecker stated that the public hearing notice was not placed in the paper due to time constraints. She said the public hearing will take place at the January meeting.

NEW BUSINESS:

A. Proclamation Jennifer Miller and Mary Thayer

Mayor Barlund-Maas read a proclamation honoring Olivet residents Jennifer Miller, who served the City of Olivet as an Election Official for over thirty years, and Mary Thayer, who served the City of Olivet as an Election Inspector for over twenty years. Mayor Barlund-Maas presented the proclamations to Miller and Thayer, who were in attendance, and both received the Oaks of Olivet Award.

B. Assessor Jason Kohagen Introduction

Huepenbecker said that Jason Kohagen came highly recommended by the City's previous assessor, Randy Jewell. She stated that she had met Kohagen in person earlier in the day and communications between the City office and Kohagen have been exceptional. Kohagen stated that it has been a seamless transition and is working well. Kohagen stated that he has been an assessor since 2011 and works full-time for BS&A in the assessing department. Kohagen encouraged people to call or email him with any questions or concerns. Commissioner Gary Peterson asked if Kohagen would be performing lot line adjustments. Kohagen stated that he had gotten away from doing lot line adjustments years back, but he is not opposed to it and will look into it on a case-by-case basis. Peterson asked if Kohagen would be the one to contact regarding homestead issues. Kohagen said that homestead issues would be directed to him.

C. Employee Holiday Bonuses – Action Item

Huepenbecker stated that in the past full-time employees received an extra paid full day off, part-time employees received an extra paid half day off, and fire department employees received a \$35.00 Milligan's Whitetail Farms gift card.

MOTION by Walker, supported by Davis, to approve the same bonuses as last year as presented above. Motion carried 7-0.

D. 2025 Proposed Council Dates – Action Item

Mayor Barlund-Maas stated that the packets contain a list of the proposed 2025 City Council Meeting dates. She explained that the October 2025 City Council Meeting date would fall on Columbus Day/Indigenous Peoples' Day which is a recognized federal holiday. Mayor Barlund-Maas asked for the Council's opinion on keeping the October 2025 meeting date or switching it to another day. Walker stated that if a City Council Meeting falls on a recognized holiday, the meeting should be postponed to the following day. Davis and Commissioner James Frohm agreed with Walker.

MOTION by Walker, supported by Frohm, to approve the 2025 City Council Meeting dates with the following change: Monday, October 13, 2025, City Council Meeting to Tuesday, October 14, 2025, due to the 13th being a federal holiday. The motion also includes adopting a policy that when a City Council Meeting falls on a recognized government holiday, the City Council Meeting would be postponed to the following day. Motion carried 7-0

E. Compensation Committee

Mayor Barlund-Maas stated that some questions have been raised regarding compensation for Council Members and employees who attend Council meetings. She said in light of these questions, it would be wise to start the compensation committee again. Mayor Barlund-Maas stated that she has started talking to people in different parts of the town to be on the compensation committee. She said if anyone has any suggestions on people for this committee to let her know. She explained that according to the ordinance book, the Mayor would appoint the committee members, but she would bring the appointed list to the Council for final approval. Peterson asked how many people make up the compensation committee. Mayor Barlund-Maas stated five people. Frohm stated that when compensation is discussed, he would like to address the compensation for department heads. Mayor Barlund-Maas stated that the conversation regarding compensation for department heads should be addressed at a budget meeting.

F. Firewall Subscription – Action Item

Davis stated that the City IT company, VC3, did not address the extra costs associated with the newly installed firewall. Davis explained that when a firewall is purchased, it is the unit. The unit is capable of simple functions, but the real purpose and value of a firewall is all the extra software that can be applied to its basic functions. Without the additional functions of the firewall, the City's security is more vulnerable to hackers. The basic unit manages the data in and out of our systems, whereas the SonicWall full-service protection package filters data in and out and can analyze and see any potential danger. Davis confirmed that the SonicWall full-service protection package function is important and said the price that VC3 is asking for its two-year contract is fair. Davis said the areas of vulnerability are important to manage and recommends paying for the two-year contract and then having the flexibility to move on using other firewall vendors if we choose. Commissioner Joe Hoffdahl asked how the full-service protection package can help protect against the City being vulnerable. Davis explained that the full-service protection package provides warranty coverage along with firmware and software level updates that are significant against some means of cyber-attack. Discussion took place regarding the cost of VC3's two-year and three-year renewal contract versus other firewall vendor costs, what is VC3's role should the City find itself under a cyber-attack, and insurance coverage for a cyber-attack.

MOTION by Davis, supported by Peterson, to purchase the two-year SonicWall Advance Protection service subscription at a cost not to exceed \$950.00 with the cost to be split between departments. Motion carried 7-0.

Approval of the Bills

MOTION by Peterson, supported by Davis, to pay the bills with the one additional late bill.
Motion carried 7-0.

Department Head Reports

Police Chief Shawn Garcia – Garcia stated that the Oli-Day Light Parade had a great turnout and was a success. He said the department heads have been working together on the parades and other events making the process all run smoothly.

DPW Director Jerry Staggs – Staggs thanked the Council for the Christmas bonus. He thanked Fire Chief Collins and Police Chief Garcia for setting out barricades for the Oli-Day Light Parade in his absence. Staggs thanked DPW workers John Krohn and Dave King for the extra help they have provided as Staggs has been continuing to work on the groundwater monitoring plan for The Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes and Energy (EGLE). Staggs appreciated the service from D&J Excavating during the water main break at The University of Olivet Mott building.

Fire Chief John Collins – Collins stated that he had received two applications for the fire department and the applicants looked promising. He informed the Council that the department took part in three different parades recently and he saw firsthand the dangers of candy being thrown to the crowd during the parade as children ran out in front of vehicles to gather the treats. The Department Heads and Police Commissioner had a meeting to discuss the parade/event application form earlier this year. Further discussion took place regarding event/parade forms where the rules outline what is and is not acceptable during the event.

Clerk/Treasurer Amy Huepenbecker – Huepenbecker informed the Council that winter tax bills were mailed out and utility billing is next week. She stated she continues to work on the Workers' Compensation audit that is due next week. Huepenbecker thanked the Council for the Christmas bonus and thanked Miller and Thayer for their years of service with elections.

Mayor Barlund-Maas called on Eaton County Commissioner Jim Mott to give an Eaton County update. Mott confirmed that the millage did not pass and Eaton County now must look at ways to balance the budget. He stated that Eaton County does have a budget for the 2025 year as their budget cycle is from October 1 through September 30. However, they may start discussions regarding the 2026 budget cycle early. Mott stated that Eaton County held a Ways and Means meeting last Thursday to give the new Eaton County Board members ideas on where to make possible cuts. He divulged that some of the discussions during the meeting revolved around leasing or selling buildings that Eaton County owns, eliminating Animal Control, eliminating 100-employee jobs, and discontinuing the appropriations that Eaton County gives to various organizations. He said the recycling program will be kept due to the state's new mandate with the Material Management Plan that Eaton County is now required to have. Mott stated that tensions are high among employees, and this is understandable. Peterson stated that FOX 47 News had said that the ballot wording for the proposal was terrible, and Peterson asked if Eaton County approved the wording. Mott confirmed that Eaton County normally approves the wording, but the County did not approve this particular proposal wording because this proposal was a state constitutional amendment, and because of that, Eaton County had to follow the language the state put on that ballot back in 1963. Peterson stated that the Eaton County Controller said that in 2019 Eaton County was broke and the budget was balanced using COVID money. Mott confirmed that the COVID money was one of many things that helped

solve some of the budget problems. Mott stated that there is talk of a dedicated Public Safety Millage that would go on the ballot in May and Eaton County would draft that language.

More discussion took place regarding the language of the millage proposal and the reasoning behind the amount of the proposed millage. Walker stated that he believed the people voted against the proposal due to the language and not understanding what they were voting for. Walker asked why Eaton County wouldn't request the full three mills again rather than just the Public Safety millage in May. Mott stated that Eaton County certainly needs the three mills, but he does not see that passing. Mott feels that people would be more apt to vote for a dedicated Public Safety Millage at a smaller amount but with more clear and precise language. He said the Public Safety millage would definitely help the Sheriff's Department and the Prosecuting Attorney's office, but cuts would still have to be made. Davis said he would have liked to see a detailed plan on how the money would be used in each department should the millage have passed. Mott said on July 26, 2024, every department head was brought before the Eaton County Board in a special meeting to discuss what the responsibility of each department is and what their needs are to move forward. He said the County had done its best to direct people to this meeting to get the information out. Mott stated that the situation is worse than people realize, and he expects the County could go bankrupt without the revenue from the millage. Peterson asked Mott if he would tell the Council what Eaton County's long-term liability is for retirement. Mott stated that retirement is a huge portion of the budget and Mott explained the situation that led to the pension deficit.

Commissioner Comments

Joe Hoffdahl – Hoffdahl congratulated Miller and Thayer on their Oaks of Olivet Award. He thanked all employees for their hard work and wished everyone a Merry Christmas.

Joseph Davis – Davis stated that he enjoyed the Oli-Day Light Parade and is glad to see it growing and continuing. He reiterated the problem of throwing candy during the parade and stated that he would continue to work on a parade/event application that could help solve some of these issues.

Don Walker – Walker wished everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Larry Marsh – Marsh stated he had nothing to add.

Gary Peterson – Peterson stated he had nothing to add.

James Frohm – Frohm wished everyone a Merry Christmas.

Laura Barlund-Maas – Barlund-Maas thanked everyone for keeping our City running and she appreciates everything that the City is doing and accomplishing.

Council meeting adjourned at 8:14 p.m.

Laura Barlund-Maas, Mayor

Amy Huepenbecker, Clerk/Treasurer