

City of Olivet
Public Hearing & Regular Council Minutes
January 13, 2025 – 6:45 p.m.

Council Call to Order

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

Absent: Larry Marsh for the Public Hearing. Marsh arrived at 6:55 pm for the Regular Council Meeting.

Public Hearing – ORV Ordinance Amendment

Mayor Laura Barlund-Maas asked if there was any public comment regarding the ORV ordinance amendment. No comments were made.

Visitors' Section:

Visitor Dale Barr suggested that a "Pedestrians Only" and a "LaPoint's Walkway" sign be placed on each end of the walking bridge, for a total of four signs. Barr stated that he is working with resident Mike Judd to create the 36" X 5" signs. There would not be a cost to the City other than the installation.

Olivet resident Dan LaPoint stated that a 4" post should be installed on the west side of the bridge to keep motorized vehicles off the bridge, and he volunteered his time to install the post. Commissioner Joe Davis asked if the County should be contacted regarding what can legally be on the bridge. Mayor Barlund-Maas agreed that the County should be contacted. Clerk/Treasurer Amy Huepenbecker asked if the post should be installed on the bridge's east side as it is more accessible. DPW Director Jerry Staggs agreed that the post should be installed on the bridge's east side. Mayor Barlund-Maas stated that the Council would look into the legalities regarding the post, signs, and wheelchair accessibility.

Mayor Barlund-Maas called on Eaton County Commissioner Jim Mott regarding Eaton County updates. Mott stated that the dedicated public millage did pass the Eaton County Board 13-1 and will be on the ballot in May. He said one of the things the millage would be used for is the Sheriff's Department Road Patrol. He stated that ten cadets are currently in training and would be available in July 2025 if the millage passes, putting the road patrol back in full force. Mott said the millage would also help fund the Prosecutors Office for more prosecutors and help fund Animal Control. Mott informed the Council that Eaton County is asking for two mills and reminded everyone that Eaton County has the tax mill calculator on its website showing what each homeowner would have to pay if the millage passes. Commissioner Gary Peterson asked Mott what the cost to the County was to hold this election for the millage. Mott stated the election would cost \$120,000.00. Mott said if the dedicated millage does not pass, road patrol will be eliminated except for emergencies with possibly one or two Michigan State Police officers to help pick up the slack. Davis stated that it would be nice to see an easily accessible form/pamphlet from each department outlining what they intend to do if the millage passes versus not passing. Mott explained that the County would have information, but issuing campaign mailers would be expensive. Mott identified other areas that would be affected by the millage such as the IT department, who fix technical issues on 200+ vehicles. He said currently this work is done outside and the millage would help fund a building for IT to work inside. Peterson

asked Mott what happens to the ten cadets if the millage does not pass. Mott said the cadets would have to seek employment elsewhere.

Approval of Agenda

MOTION by Walker, supported by Davis, to approve the agenda with the addition of Item G. Tanker Pumper Truck #813 Repair. Motion carried 7-0.

Approval of Previous Minutes

MOTION by Walker, supported by Hoffdahl, to approve the December 9, 2024, minutes as written. Motion carried 7-0.

OLD BUSINESS:

A. Project Update

1. Ordinance Book Amendments

Mayor Laura Barlund-Maas stated that it's in progress.

2. City Policies (Handbook) – Lexipol

Clerk/Treasurer Huepenbecker stated that she is still reviewing City policies. She informed the Council that as she reviews a section of policies, she will email those policies to the Mayor, Commissioners, and Department Heads for review. When everyone agrees on a policy, the Council can adopt the policy and then the policy can be released.

3. Police Department Policies – Lexipol

Davis stated that there are no changes to report.

4. Parks Master Plan

Davis stated that his initial goal was to have the first draft of the Parks Master Plan by January, but it is not 100 percent complete. He said the completed draft along with the feedback from the Parks Survey will be presented at the April 1 Parks Board meeting.

5. Fire Station Committee

Mayor Barlund-Maas stated that she has contacted the President of The University of Olivet and Walton Township regarding a representative from each of these entities to be part of the committee. She informed the Council that she is continuing to pursue a few more representatives for the committee.

6. Sign Ordinance Amendment

Huepenbecker stated that there has been no change to report.

7. Emergency Plan – City

Huepenbecker stated that there has been no change to report.

8. Event Form

Davis stated that there has been no change to report.

9. New Attorney

Mayor Barlund-Maas informed the Council that she has spoken with one attorney who has done work for us and has much experience in City government. She said the attorney had asked for more details regarding how much and the type of work the previous attorney had done for the City of Olivet and this information was provided. Peterson said he would like the Council to meet the potential attorney before hiring. Mayor Barlund-Maas agreed.

10. Removal of Parking Spaces – Engineering Firm

Mayor Barlund-Maas stated that recommendations had been made for parking spaces near crosswalks, fire hydrants, and intersections that should be eliminated. Staggs stated that the parking spaces in front of the New Cutler Student Center are the priority. He said he is waiting for the signage from Police Chief Shawn Garcia and should be able to start the project this spring. Commissioner Don Walker asked Staggs if he spoke with The University of Olivet regarding the dedicated parking spaces for the Police Department and Campus Safety. Staggs stated that he has not received an answer from The University regarding the dedicated parking spaces. Huepenbecker asked Staggs if the City had received the proposal from Wolverine on traffic engineering. Staggs stated that Wolverine has been here regarding the removal of parking spaces, but has not yet evaluated the City as a whole to provide a proposal for the traffic engineering services. Davis stated that it would make sense to separate the parking space removals from the traffic engineering services.

11. Compensation Committee

Mayor Barlund-Maas stated that the Compensation Commission is responsible for determining the salaries of the mayor, members of the city council, and other elected city officials. She said that she has three of the five members and will continue to look for two others to serve on this committee.

NEW BUSINESS:

A. Audit Presentation – Gabridge, Matt Holland

Auditor Matt Holland from Gabridge & Company presented the audit findings and financial summary to the Council. Holland discussed key points within the report and stated that the audit results show that the City is in a healthy financial position due to sound fiscal accounting practices and honoring the budget.

B. Walton Twp. Fire Service/Contract – Action Item

Walton Township supervisor Doug Thering addressed the Council regarding contracting with the City of Olivet Fire Department to cover fire and medical services including an additional ten square miles of northern Walton Township. Thering stated that Rural Fire is currently covering the 10 square mile area which had 23 total runs in 2023. Peterson asked Thering how many square miles is Walton Township and when would the new contract start. Thering stated Walton Township is 35 square miles and the contract would start May 1, 2025, if approved.

Fire Commissioner Walker informed the Council that he and Fire Chief John Collins had met with the representative from Walton Township regarding their proposal and it was determined that the fire department could cover the additional territory without extra equipment.

Mayor Barlund-Maas stated that she had spoken with Thering regarding the yearly fire contract change and the need for an equipment fund. It was discussed that Walton Township would keep an equipment fund on hand so that when the Olivet Fire Department needs to purchase equipment, Walton Township would contribute. Thering stated that Walton Township would have a regular line-item fire fund that would pay for the services and a separate line-item equipment fund. Thering said if the Council approves the additional coverage area, he will draw up the contract. Mayor Barlund-Maas stated that discussions will need to take place with the City Accountant. Discussion took place regarding the number of runs, types of runs, and response times.

MOTION by Walker, supported by Davis, to approve the Olivet Fire Department to add the Northern third of Walton Township for fire and medical service coverage pending the agreement that is to be drawn up by Walton Township. Motion carried 7-0.

C. ORV Ordinance Amendment Adoption – Action Item

MOTION by Davis, supported by Peterson, to adopt the ORV ordinance amendment as written. Motion carried 7-0.

D. 2025 Property Tax Poverty Exemption – Resolution 25-01 – Action Item

Huepenbecker stated that the poverty guidelines and asset levels for the 2025 Property Tax Poverty Exemption are included in the packet. She said the adoption of the poverty exemption has to be done every year for the assessor. Huepenbecker stated that this is the same resolution only the numbers change. She 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 as shown for 2025.

MOTION by Frohm, supported by Peterson, to adopt the 2025 Property Tax Poverty Exemption Resolution 25-01 using the 2025 asset level as presented. Motion carried 7-0

E. Police Department Tire Purchase – Action Item

Police Commissioner Davis provided the council with a quote from Indian Creek Acres, Inc. for four new tires for the Police Department Charger. Davis stated that Indian Creek is a vendor that participates with MIDeals and can offer a better rate.

MOTION by Davis, supported by Walker, to purchase four new tires for the Police Department Charger from Indian Creek Acres, Inc. at a cost not to exceed \$660.00. Motion carried 7-0.

F. Police Department New Position Proposal – Informational Item

Police Commissioner Davis provided the Council with documents showing the Police Department's state of operations and the Police Department's service proposal for a new position that he is requesting the Council to consider. He stated that a committee was formed to discuss the outlook of the Police Department and to find staffing solutions. Davis noted that one possible solution would be to move Chief Garcia into an administrative role in the department. The City would need to hire a Chief instead of a Patrol Officer, and advertising for a Chief could be better received than advertising for a Patrol Officer and result in more candidates. Davis and Mayor Barlund-Maas asked the Council

to read the documents for consideration regarding the proposal for a new position and bring any ideas, comments, or questions to the February Council meeting.

G. Fire Truck #813 Repair – Informational Item

Fire Commissioner Walker informed the Council that tanker pumper truck #813 broke down in Battle Creek due to engine problems while driving back from Spencer Manufacturing who had just repaired electrical issues and emergency lights. He said the truck was towed to Bruce Hamilton who services the fire trucks.

Fire Chief Collins stated that tanker pumper #813 is 32 years old with a rusted frame that needs to be inspected. He said he has researched available used trucks listed for sale, but unfortunately, the trucks listed are older than the trucks the Fire Department currently has or too big to fit in the fire station bays.

Captain Tom Parker stated that he spoke with Hamilton regarding the engine and unfortunately due to the extensive repair and time constraints, Hamilton is not able to make the repairs. Parker said that truck mechanic Pete Dadow highly recommended D & K in Lansing. Parker stated that an engine is approximately \$40,000.00 plus other parts and towing would be approximately \$65,000.00. He said it could take between six and eight weeks for a remanufactured engine from Detroit Diesel and three months to repair versus a new truck at \$1,025,000.00.

Collins stated that he has reached out to The Shyft Group (formally Spartan Motors) regarding an estimate for the repairs. He said another option would be to purchase a \$600,000.00 demo truck from Spencer Manufacturing that would be completed within 60 days. The demo truck would not be equivalent to the current truck, but it would be a short-term fix. The tanker pumper truck would have to be replaced in the future.

Mayor Barlund-Maas stated that we would speak with City Accountant Kelly Hanna regarding options.

Approval of the Bills

MOTION by Peterson, supported by Frohm, to pay the bills with the four additional late bills. Motion carried 7-0.

Department Head Reports

Police Chief Shawn Garcia – Garcia was absent.

DPW Director Jerry Staggs – Staggs stated that the DPW has been busy keeping up with the plowing and salting. He said the sanitary survey of the lagoons for the wastewater would be completed and the final report would be sent tomorrow. He informed the Council that he had contacted American Hydrology regarding groundwater monitoring. They will try to obtain any Olivet permits that are on file with The Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes and Energy (EGLE) using the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). These permits will be helpful with the required wastewater department groundwater monitoring.

Fire Chief John Collins – Collins stated that the Fire Department had responded to the accident on Friday evening involving the semi hanging over the bridge on I-69 and Stine.

Clerk/Treasurer Amy Huepenbecker – Huepenbecker informed the Council that budget meetings will take place next week with City Accountant Hanna. She said she would email Hanna regarding the pumper truck and police position. Huepenbecker stated the office is busy with water and tax payments.

Commissioner Comments

Joe Hoffdahl – Hoffdahl thanked the DPW for keeping our roads cleared and salted.

Joseph Davis – Davis stated that he had nothing to add.

Don Walker – Walker stated he had nothing to add.

Larry Marsh – Marsh stated he had nothing to add.

Gary Peterson – Peterson stated he had nothing to add.

James Frohm – Frohm stated he had nothing to add.

Laura Barlund-Maas – Barlund-Maas thanked everyone for all the information this month.

MOTION by Davis, supported by Hoffdahl, to go into Executive Session to approve the executive session minutes from November 11, 2024. Motion carried 7-0. The Council entered executive session at 8:46 p.m.

Council meeting resumed and adjourned at 9:02 p.m.

Laura Barlund-Maas, Mayor

Amy Huepenbecker, Clerk/Treasurer