

**City of Olivet**  
**Public Hearing & Regular Council Minutes**  
**March 10, 2025 – 6:45 p.m.**

**Council Call to Order**

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

Absent: None.

**Public Hearing – Ordinance Amendments**

Mayor Laura Barlund-Maas announced that the first fifteen minutes of the meeting are designated for a Public Hearing regarding three different ordinances. She stated that the first ordinance to be discussed would be the Lien Assessment of Delinquent Water Rates and Charges on the Tax Roll, followed by Temporary Signs on City Property, and the last ordinance would be the Fowl Ordinance. Mayor Barlund-Maas asked if there was any public comment regarding the ordinance amendments.

Commissioner Don Walker asked about the wording of “sufficient time” used in the lien assessment ordinance. Mayor Barlund-Maas stated that water bills are quarterly and tax bills are twice yearly, so “sufficient time” was used. Clerk/Treasurer Amy Huepenbecker stated that this ordinance would only affect vacant property, as active residents who have a delinquent utility bill would have their water shut off, and payment in full would have to be made to restore service. No further comments were made regarding the lien assessment of delinquent water rates and charges.

Commissioner James Frohm asked if signs should have a contact phone number that City Hall could call when signs need to be removed. Mayor Barlund-Maas stated that the phone number is unnecessary as the ordinance states that temporary signs may not be placed on City property, including the Right-of-Way. City employees may remove any temporary sign on City property without notification. Harton Farms owner Jeremy Harton asked about placing their seasonal signs on the telephone poles. Mayor Barlund-Maas stated that the ordinance states that temporary signs are not permitted on telephone poles. No further discussion regarding signs took place.

Mayor Barlund-Maas stated that the Council was provided two different versions of the Fowl Ordinance amendment. She explained that example #1 has a total number of 24 fowl allowed, and example #2 has a total number of fowl allowed based on the size of the property with 18 fowl maximum. Commissioner Joe Davis reiterated that examples #1 and #2 are identical throughout each document, excluding the section on the total number of fowl allowed. Discussion took place regarding allowing a flat number of fowl per property or allowing the number of fowl to be based on the size of the property, the required distance of the fowl enclosure from the residential structure and property lines, the spacing needed per number of fowl requested, and permitting of fowl.

Commissioner Gary Peterson asked if the City is taking complaints regarding fowl (chickens). Huepenbecker stated that residents are calling to ask if they can have fowl (chickens) in the City limits. Peterson asked if the keeping of fowl was based on the zoning district or a single-family residence. Huepenbecker said it is proposed to limit fowl to single-family residences, no matter the zoning district. Walker stated that his property has two lots; one lot is residential, and the other lot is agricultural, and he asked how that would work. Davis said that the document states “an occupied single-family dwelling only” and would exclude having fowl (chickens) on the agricultural piece of property. Discussion took place regarding what is allowed for an agricultural-zoned property.

Police Chief Shawn Garcia stated that a good start has been made in these documents, but the ordinance committee should review them, and an attorney should be involved to clarify any issues before moving forward.

At 7:25, Mayor Barlund-Maas asked if the Council wanted to end the discussion at this time and go into the regular meeting. The Council agreed, and Davis stated he would like new ideas and input from the Council when it is revisited.

### **Visitors' Section:**

Residents John and Amanda Kozar asked the Council's permission to have a live band behind their home located at 124 S. Main Street for their son's graduation open house on June 6, 2025, from 6:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. Mayor Barlund-Maas said she appreciated the Kozars asking, and they do not need the City's permission as long as the noise ordinance is not violated.

Olivet Jr. Eagles representative Nick Vasilion informed the Council that they have reserved the ball field for May and June. Vasilion asked the Council's permission to hang banners on the fence acknowledging the sponsors this season. Vasilion asked if the Jr. Eagles would need to ask the Council's permission each year regarding hanging banners on the fence or if the Council would allow them to place the banners automatically when they reserve the ballfield for the season. Mayor Barlund-Maas stated that the Council would allow them to place the banners when reserving the ballfield as long as there are no issues and the arrangement is respected. Vasilion stated that the infield has water issues, and he asked the Council's permission to allow the Jr. Eagles to purchase diamond dust to help with the water. DPW Director Jerry Staggs asked Vasilion about the restroom key and asked that if there were any issues with the restrooms, Vasilion would notify the DPW. Staggs reminded Vasilion to make sure the restrooms are locked after use to avoid vandalism.

Resident Jennifer Miller addressed the Council asking for an update regarding the Zoning Ordinances. She stated that there are multiple vehicles parked on the property located on the corner of Church and Green Streets. She said it appears the vehicles are being rehabilitated. Miller asked the Council when the zoning ordinances would be enforceable. Mayor Barlund-Maas stated that Deputy Clerk Drema Emerson drives around the City weekly in the spring through the fall season, but because some zoning is being updated, there is a limit to what Emerson can address. Miller also asked for an update regarding the proposed fire station. Mayor Barlund-Maas said that the fire station was paused due to property availability as well as having to purchase a new truck. She stated that she needed one more person for the fire station committee. She has been looking into other income sources and moving forward with another grant request. Mayor Barlund-Maas acknowledged that the city did not have the opportunity to weigh in on the previous grant request and assured Miller that the City did not lose money because of that.

Olivet representative to the Charlotte Community Library Board Sarah Thomson said the Charlotte Community Library is hosting strategic planning sessions for the public on Friday, March 21 at 1:00 p.m. and Wednesday, March 26 at 6:00 p.m. She said that anyone who wants to attend should RSVP by Monday, March 17, by sending an email to [ReynoldsK@CharlotteLibrary.org](mailto:ReynoldsK@CharlotteLibrary.org). Davis stated that he would attend one of the sessions.

Mayor Barlund-Maas called on Eaton County Commissioner Jim Mott to provide an update on Eaton County happenings. Mott stated that, effective Monday, March 17, Eaton County administrative offices will be open to the public from 8:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. and 1:00 p.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Thursday, and will be closed to the public every Friday. He stated that employees would still be working on Fridays to catch up and alleviate any stress because of being short-staffed.

Peterson asked Mott if a solar project was trying to come into Roxanne Township. Mott said he had not heard that. Peterson said that the solar company had called him as a property owner and said they were putting in solar and transmission lines. Mott said the State has taken over the solar.

Mott reminded the Council that there is a Parks Grant available and asked if the City will apply. Huepenbecker said the city is hoping to apply on a smaller scale this time due to budget constraints.

Mott disclosed that Eaton County will no longer be able to provide Zoning services as they have in the past due to a lack of funds and staff. He said there was a Board of Commissioners meeting last week regarding the Zoning/Planning. He stated the townships and villages were willing to pay to continue Zoning services with Eaton County, and the County would have to develop a dedicated Zoning department and hire another person to handle the extra workload involved. Mott offered the City of Olivet the opportunity with the new model to buy into the program, and Eaton County would be responsible for Zoning. Mott stated that it would be detrimental to Eaton County if an agreement were not reached with the municipalities. Mayor Barlund-Maas asked if each township would be paying the same cost for the service. Mott said the committee has decided to explore this option, and the cost has not yet been determined.

### **Approval of Agenda**

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

### **Approval of Previous Minutes**

**MOTION** by Walker, supported by Hoffdahl, to approve the February 10, 2025, minutes as written. Motion carried 7-0.

### **OLD BUSINESS:**

#### **A. Project Update**

##### **1. Ordinance Book Amendments**

Mayor Barlund-Maas stated that the council had already been talking about ordinance amendments this evening, and she asked if anyone had further questions regarding the ordinances.

##### **2. City Policies (Handbook) – Lexipol**

Clerk/Treasurer Huepenbecker stated that there were no changes to report as she has been working on the Fowl (chicken) Ordinance.

##### **3. Police Department Policies – Lexipol**

Chief Garcia stated that there were no changes to report.

##### **4. Parks Master Plan**

Commissioner Davis stated that the next Parks Board Meeting is on April 1, 2025, where the Board will discuss the Master Plan. His goal is to present the Parks Master Plan to the Council at the April 12 City Council meeting.

**5. Fire Station Committee**

Mayor Barlund-Maas reiterated that she is looking for one more representative for the committee, as progress was paused due to property availability and the purchase of a new fire truck. Fire Chief John Collins said he wants to continue to move forward as there are representatives from both townships and the City.

**6. Compensation Committee**

Mayor Barlund-Maas stated that she has an idea for the last representative needed for this committee, and she will reach out to her. Huepenbecker asked that when this committee meets, she would like them to discuss the Board of Review and Election worker's pay.

**7. Emergency Plan – City**

Huepenbecker stated that she reviewed the basic template that she has from Grand Ledge. She said that she would email Ella Gardner at the County to discuss the County Emergency Plan. Peterson stated that he thought the Cutler Event Center was the go-to area in case of a tornado. Mayor Barlund-Maas stated that each building on campus has its tornado protocol.

**8. Event Form**

Commissioner Davis stated that there has been no change to report. Frohm asked if the no-throwing of candy during the parades could be addressed. Mayor Barlund-Maas stated that the parade forms would address this issue as we advance. Chief Garcia stated that enforcement is the hard part, as there need to be procedures in place to be enforceable.

**9. New Attorney**

Mayor Barlund-Maas informed the Council that she and Huepenbecker have been working on the second draft of the Request for Proposal (RFP), which will be sent to prospective attorneys once it is completed this week. Huepenbecker stated that it was not determined at last month's meeting who should receive the RFPs. Davis asked if there would be a cost to send the RFPs to the ten recommended attorneys. Huepenbecker stated there would not be a cost as she would send them via email. It was determined that Huepenbecker should send the RFPs to all ten attorneys on the list and one to Knaggs & Brake.

**10. Welcome to Olivet Signs – The University of Olivet**

Huepenbecker stated that Vice President and Chief of Staff at The University of Olivet Ryan Shockey responded to her email regarding the "Welcome" signs that were approved in July of 2024. She said that Shockey stated that there is a new Facility Director, Chad Green, whom Shockey will contact regarding the signs. Huepenbecker said it would be nice to get this project done this spring. Staggs stated that he will get a current quote for the signs from Dornbos Sign, and he and Huepenbecker will work with Green to complete this project if Green agrees.

**11. Traffic Study – Engineering Firm**

Mayor Barlund-Maas stated that the traffic study is on hold until Spring. Peterson stated that we need to know the correct distance from an intersection to a parking space. Davis said they have addressed the distances that need to be followed regarding corners, hydrants, and crosswalks. He said phase two would be to apply the distance rules to the City as a whole. Phase three would be to contact the engineering firm to discuss a traffic study/calming throughout the City.

**12. Removal of Parking Spaces**

Mayor Barlund-Maas stated that the removal of parking spaces is on hold until Spring. Staggs suggested having the "No Parking" and the "Police Parking and Campus Safety

Parking “signs made so they are ready to install in the section in front of the Cutler Student Center. Mayor Barlund-Maas said that the cost of the signs would need to be brought to the Council. Staggs said he would get the updated quote.

## **NEW BUSINESS:**

### **A. Ordinance Amendments Adoption – Action Item**

Mayor Barlund-Maas reiterated that the Council decided during the Public Hearing to put off the Fowl (chicken) Ordinance at this time, but we do have the Lien Assessment of Delinquent Water Rates and Charges on the Tax Roll and the Temporary Signs on City Property Ordinance amendment adoption.

**MOTION** by Walker, supported by Marsh, to approve the amendment for both the Lien Assessment of Delinquent Water Rates and Charges on the Tax Roll Ordinance and the Temporary Signs on City Property Ordinance. Motion carried 7-0.

Mayor Barlund-Maas stated that she is on the Ordinance Committee along with Davis and Marsh, and after the meeting, they will set a date and time to move forward on the Fowl (chicken) Ordinance.

### **B. Fire Truck #813 Disposal – Action Item**

Chief Collins thanked the Council for the new fire truck #814. He also thanked Captain Tom Parker for the time Parker has put into exploring ways to dispose of truck #813 for the best price for the City. Collins stated that Parker had received two scrap price quotes, and when Parker met with the higher bidder Joe Thomas of Grand Ledge, Thomas increased his quote to offer the City \$11,000 and Thomas will pay for the cost to move the truck as well. Collins added that before removal, the department will finish removing all the equipment from #813 that can be reused. Collins also stated that the \$11,000 could be put toward the cost of the new truck.

**MOTION** by Walker, supported by Marsh, to sell fire truck #813 to business owner Joe Thomas for \$11,000.00 with the understanding that Thomas will pay to have the truck moved. Motion carried 7-0.

### **Approval of the Bills**

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

### **Department Head Reports**

**Police Chief Shawn Garcia** – Garcia stated that he had some unexpected time off for the past couple of weeks. Since his return, he has been working on administrative items and plans to get back in full swing next week. He said the hiring process for the Chief position is moving forward. Garcia thanked Mayor Barlund-Maas for interviewing a candidate for the position. He asked to meet with Mayor Barlund-Maas after the meeting to discuss the interview.

**DPW Director Jerry Staggs** – Staggs stated that the DPW is gearing up for all the spring projects, which consist of changing the downtown banners, filling potholes, and making repairs to fix problems with the pump at the lift station on Washington Street. Walker asked about the status of the chip seal project on Main Street and if someone had contacted the State regarding reimbursement for the damage to our roads during construction. Huepenbecker stated that she would again reach out to the State. Staggs stated that he will again apply for the Category B Road Grant to help resurface Spruce

and Yale Streets and to chip seal Main Street. Staggs informed the Council that he had discussed with City Accountant Kelly Hanna using \$85,000.00 to \$90,000.00 in their budget to chip seal Main Street without the State's help. He said he would need to rent equipment from the County to help apply Durapatch to the road before the chip seal to fill in any holes or cracks, which would add five years to the roads.

**Fire Chief John Collins** – Collins stated that the Fire Department had 15 calls for the month. He said the Fire Department received an application that looked promising. The department will be working with Bellevue, Marshall City, and Marshall Township on auto extrication training. Collins stated that next month is the Fire Department Instructors Conference (FDIC), and five people will be attending. He informed the Council that the new truck is being put together at Spartan, and he receives weekly photo updates. Collins presented Fire Commissioner Walker with a Fire Commissioner badge.

**Clerk/Treasurer Amy Huepenbecker** – Huepenbecker informed the Council that tax season is over and the final payment to the County will go out this week. She said her plan for the coming week is to work on the emergency plan. Huepenbecker asked Chief Garcia if he would work with her for fifteen minutes or so a day to work on City policies as she feels Garcia has a better legal grasp of things. Garcia said that he would be glad to offer his input, but his time would be limited as he is working to get the Chief position filled.

### **Commissioner Comments**

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

**Joseph Davis** – Davis stated that he appreciates the City staff; they are great to work with. He said that at the Parks meeting next month, they will be discussing the walkway by the park, grant ideas, and the Parks Master Plan.

**Don Walker** – Walker stated that he agrees with Davis that the Council and City employees are great to work with. He thanked the Fire Association, stating that they are a good group of people and that he is proud to be part of the Fire Department.

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

**Gary Peterson** – Peterson stated that Eaton County Transportation Authority (EATRAN) will go before the Delta Township Board to ask if they would put a millage on their tax bills to help support EATRAN. He will give an update at the next meeting.

**James Frohm** – Frohm stated he had nothing to add.

**Laura Barlund-Maas** – Barlund-Maas stated that she went to The University of Olivet Board of Trustees meeting last week. She said she took the opportunity to talk to them about the Olivet Fire Department regarding the fire truck and the fire station. The University asked how many Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs) the Olivet Fire Department has. Barlund-Maas stated that there is one advanced EMT, four basic EMTs, and ten Medical First Responders, which is a worthy thing to note.

Council meeting adjourned at 8:54 p.m.

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Laura Barlund-Maas, Mayor

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Amy Huepenbecker, Clerk/Treasurer