

City of Olivet
Regular Council Minutes
October 14, 2025 – 7:00 p.m.

Council Call to Order

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

Absent: Mayor Laura Barlund-Maas.

Visitors' Section:

Resident Jennifer Miller voiced her concerns regarding City residents parking vehicles and travel trailers in their yards. She believes that people are living in the travel trailers and asked when the ordinances addressing these issues would be enforceable. Mayor Pro-Tem Don Walker stated that he will have Drema Emerson assess the situation when she performs her code enforcement duties. Commissioner Gary Peterson said that if people are living in the travel trailers, that would have to be addressed with the Health Department, as they require water and sewer hookups.

Approval of Agenda

MOTION by Frohm, supported by Davis, to approve the agenda with the addition of a new Item A. Appoint the Chief of Police and Police Administrative Officer, and move each agenda item down. Motion carried 6-0.

Approval of Previous Minutes

MOTION by Marsh, supported by Hoffdahl, to approve the September 8, 2025, minutes as written. Motion carried 6-0.

OLD BUSINESS: None.

NEW BUSINESS:

A. Appoint the Chief of Police and the Police Administrative Officer

Mayor Pro-Tem Walker appointed Shawn Garcia as the new Police Administrative Officer. Walker appointed Johnny Lopez as the new Chief of Police. Both Garcia and Lopez were sworn into office.

B. Insurance Renewal-Jason Orton-David Chapman Agency – Action Item

City of Olivet insurance agent Jason Orton with the David Chapman Agency presented the Council with a packet regarding the Municipal Insurance Renewal Proposal. Orton stated that there are no significant changes in the policy, except for a higher premium resulting from the purchase of the new fire truck. He gave an overview of the coverage of the policies and benefits. Orton pointed out some

changes to the policy, the first being that the Law Enforcement Liability coverage is the same at \$5 million, but is accompanied by a new statewide deductible of \$5,000.00 for all law enforcement. Another change is that older fire trucks are being replaced with a similar fire truck at a lower cost compared to a brand new truck. Orton said that the new fire truck that the City purchased has a full replacement cost. Orton stated that he did send out the City policy for bids, and none of them were competitive. He said that when he receives the new rates in December, he will again do an early market analysis to find competitive rates. He asked if there were any questions. Commissioner Joe Davis asked, given the City's size, if \$100,000.00 of Cyber Liability coverage is sufficient? Orton said that he believes the coverage is adequate for the City. Commissioner James Frohm asked if the Personal Injury Protection (PIP) under the Automobile Coverage could be unlimited. Orton stated that most municipalities are unlimited, as governmental entity insurance is very specific. He said the City does have unlimited protection, and changing it to limited saves very little.

MOTION by Hoffdahl, supported by Marsh, to approve the insurance renewal as proposed by the David Chapman Agency, at a cost not to exceed \$47,271.00. Motion carried 6-0.

C. OHM Proposal-Bridge Funding – Action Item

DPW Director Jerry Staggs reminded the Council that OHM Bridge Inspector Al Halbeisen had completed the Main Street bridge inspection over Indian Creek in June. Staggs reiterated that the deterioration of the bridge is due to stress fractures. Halbeisen offered to assist with the application for funding to rehabilitate the bridge. Staggs provided the Council with the proposal from OHM to assist the City with the preparation and submission of the funding application to the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) for the Main Street Bridge. Applications are due April 1, 2026, and selections are made in the fall. If selected, the construction is anticipated to be completed within approximately three years. Staggs stated that the fee is \$1,500.00 for OHM's professional service, and due to the timelines and schedule, the Council would have to vote to accept the proposal to ensure a timely application.

MOTION by Frohm, supported by Hoffdahl, to accept the proposal from OHM to assist with the preparation and submittal of the funding application at a cost not to exceed \$1,500.00. Motion carried 6-0.

D. Olivet “Welcome” Signs - Action Item

Staggs provided a quote for \$1,290.65 from Dornbos Sign, Inc. for the “Welcome to Olivet” signs and a new sign for the Municipal building. He stated that he had spoken with The University of Olivet and the Olivet Community Schools (OCS) regarding the signs. He said both entities would like to be recognized on the welcome signs and would contribute to the cost of the signs and to the cost of rebuilding/repairing the framework for the signs. Davis would like to see a mock-up of the sign.

MOTION by Hoffdahl, supported by Davis, to accept the proposal from Dornbos Sign, Inc. to make the signs with the updates at a cost not to exceed \$1,290.65. The cost of the Welcome signs and the repairs to the framework will be shared as follows: The University of Olivet will pay 50%, and OCS and the City will each pay 25%. The City will pay for all costs of the new Municipal building sign. Motion carried 6-0.

E. Winter-Spring-Summer Streets Project-Trees/Sidewalk - Discussion Item

Staggs stated that a discussion took place with the engineers from Wightman & Associates regarding the following issues, which the Council would need to address before the project starts:

- ✓ Sidewalk on Summer Street – west side only.
- ✓ Complete the remainder of the sidewalk on the west side to Winter Street.
- ✓ Remove the sidewalk from Yale Street to Winter Street.
- ✓ Leave the sidewalk as is.
- ✓ Remove the trees in the right-of-way or let the residents decide.

Clerk Treasurer Amy Huepenbecker said that the engineers from Wightman & Associates recommend hosting an open house for the residents to get information on the project, ask any questions, and share their opinion regarding the trees and the sidewalks. She said Wightman & Associates has a list of trees that could replace any trees that need to be removed. Huepenbecker said that the open house is scheduled for November 10. All residents are welcome to attend, but those living on Summer, Winter, and Spring Streets or owning property and a couple of houses on Butterfield Highway with driveways on these streets will be mailed an invitation and are encouraged to attend. Peterson asked if the plans for the project would be finished in time to share at the open house. Huepenbecker said that they would be completed in time for the open house.

F. DPW Building Carpet – Action Item

Staggs asked the Council's permission to replace the old carpet in the DPW building with a glue-down commercial-grade carpet. He said the current carpet has been in the building for at least nine years and is falling apart. Staggs provided the Council with three quotes for installation and carpet. Davis asked why carpet instead of a coating over the cement floors. Staggs said that he preferred carpet. Davis asked about the upkeep of the carpet and asked if it is professionally cleaned periodically. Staggs said he vacuums weekly and rents a carpet cleaner a couple of times per year. Peterson asked why we would pay to dispose of carpet when the City has a dumpster. Staggs said the DPW would take care of the old carpet.

MOTION by Hoffdahl, supported by Marsh, to purchase carpet for the DPW building from Lowe's at a cost not to exceed \$1,766.14. Motion carried 6-0.

G. Parking Ticket Revision – Action Item

Police Administrative Officer Shawn Garcia stated that in the past, he would write a parking notice for a violation, and after ten days, if the notice was not paid or contested, he would write a citation that would go to the 56th District Court. He said the Council agreed to change that process several years ago by sending the citation to a collection agency if the offender failed to pay or contest the parking notice within 30 days. Garcia said that the City attorney's opinion is that the citation would go to the 56th District Court if the parking notice is not paid or contested within ten days. Garcia provided the Council with a sample of the original and the proposed revision of a parking notice and pointed out the differences in the samples. He asked if the Council needed to vote to revise the parking notice since the Police Department would revert to sending citations to the courts. Huepenbecker said that she and Mayor Laura Barlund-Maas discussed having The University of Olivet send a mass email out to its students advising them of the change.

MOTION by Davis, supported by Frohm, to approve the revision of the parking notice of violation and to send citations to the 56th District Court as documented in the City Ordinances. Motion carried 6-0.

H. Firefighters Association Halloween Open House /Trick or Treating Hours – Action Item

Fire Chief John Collins asked the Council's permission to allow the Firefighters Association to host its Halloween Open House during traditional trick-or-treating on Friday, October 31, from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. Huepenbecker suggested the Council permanently approve the traditional trick-or-treating hours and the Firefighters Association Halloween Open House for the evening of Halloween from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. In the event the date or time needs to be adjusted, it would have to come back to Council for approval.

MOTION by Davis, supported by Hoffdahl, to have recurring approval for the trick-or-treating hours and the Firefighters Association Halloween Open House on October 31, from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. Motion carried 6-0.

I. Firefighters Festival – Discussion Item

Fire Commissioner Walker stated that the Firefighters Association is considering disbanding. Walker said the Firefighters Festival is the only event that the City has that brings people into our town and brings the community together. He informed the Council that the Association has hosted the event for the past 29 years and is wondering about the future of the festival. He said there is a possibility that the Association would consider hosting the 30th Firefighters Festival with the assistance of the City, and then the City could take over for subsequent years. Discussion took place regarding the amount of time it takes to plan the festival, costs, fundraising, lack of donations, and City involvement. It was suggested to get more information at the next Firefighters Association meeting and bring it back to the next Council meeting for discussion. Davis stated that he has spoken with some firefighters, and there have been good ideas for the festival. Davis said he is all for helping the Association get through the 30th Firefighters Festival and finding a way to continue the festival. Collins said the Association has thought about the possibility of doing a golf outing to raise funds.

PROJECT UPDATES:

1. Ordinance Book Amendments

Huepenbecker stated that she sent the City Attorney the Fowl Ordinance. The attorney has reviewed the document and has sent it back to the City with revisions. Peterson and Marsh were given copies. The Ordinance Committee would meet in the future to discuss the proposed changes. Davis said that he had reviewed it and there are some clerical errors to be changed in the Fowl ordinance, but not many decision-related items to change.

2. City Policies (Handbook) – Lexipol

Huepenbecker stated that there were no changes to report.

3. Police Department Policies – Lexipol

Administrative Officer Garcia stated that there were no changes to report.

4. Compensation Committee

Huepenbecker stated that she believed that Mayor Barlund-Maas had found the fifth person needed for the committee.

5. Fire Station Committee

Fire Chief Collins said that Senator Sarah Anthony supports the needs defined by the Olivet Fire Department for a new fire station, which include the acquisition of property. Unfortunately, the Fire Department received a letter from the State that the City's request for funding for the new fire station was unsuccessful. Collins said he continues to look for available grants and other funding sources. Collins said that he has toured the new Marshall Township fire station and feels it would be a good fit to build for Olivet. He invited the Council to attend the Marshall Township fire station open house on November 8 at noon to see what a compliant station looks like. Collins said that he received input from Wightman & Associates regarding their thoughts on a new fire station.

6. Event Form

Davis stated that there have been no changes since the last meeting, but he has acquired feedback from recent events that will help shape certain aspects of the event form.

Approval of the Bills

MOTION by Peterson, supported by Marsh, to pay the bills. Motion carried 6-0.

Department Head Reports

DPW Director Jerry Staggs – Staggs stated that the DPW will be replacing a fire hydrant on the corner of Spruce Street and Butterfield Highway. He said that the DPW is trying to get things repaired or replaced before the Spring, Summer, and Winter Street project starts. Staggs reminded the Council that leaf pick-up starts the week of the 20th.

Fire Chief John Collins – Collins discussed the breakdown of the monthly fire report. He said the department has been doing public education at Fern Persons Elementary School and Wee Ones Preschool. Collins said that the department will be conducting training with Marshall Township, Marengo Township, and Bellevue departments that comply with Insurance Services Office (ISO) standards. Collins also wanted to note the fire hazard associated with lithium batteries. He suggested that when purchasing lithium batteries and products that have lithium batteries to purchase good Underwriters Laboratories (UL) items to avoid fire-related incidents.

Police Administrative Officer Shawn Garcia – Garcia stated that last month, he was patrolling more often due to complaints in the area of Summer and Winter Streets. He said he asked an Athletic Director of The University of Olivet to remind students of the four-way stop at the intersection of Summer and Winter Streets. Garcia said The University of Olivet homecoming went well. He thanked the Bellevue Police Department and Michigan State Police (MSP), who sent troopers to be present with him at the concert held at the Cutler Student Center during homecoming. Garcia said that the new mutual aid agreement and resolution were to be on the agenda tonight for the new Chief of Police to sign, but were put on hold as some Police chiefs in the area feel that more discussion is needed. Garcia stated that Animal Control no longer exists for smaller agencies; however, Ingham County donated a catch pole, cage, and chip reader to the smaller agencies. Garcia said he is unsure at this time how to care for these animals.

Clerk/Treasurer Amy Huepenbecker – Huepenbecker said she has been busy working on grants. She gave an update on the Eaton County Parks grant. She said the office has been busy accepting water payments, and the election for the school millage is on November 4.

Commissioner Comments

Joe Hoffdahl – Hoffdahl said that leaf pick-up begins next week, and the DPW is preparing equipment for winter. Hoffdahl congratulated new Olivet Chief of Police Johnny Lopez. Hoffdahl thanked the employees for their hard work.

Joseph Davis – Davis said that Adna Technologies has started the onboarding process. He will convene with Adna Technologies and City staff to see if the onboarding with Adna is complete, or if another month with VC3 would be needed. Davis said that he has been involved with the Charlotte Community Library to assist with the hiring of the new Director. He said there is a great candidate for the position. The library is interested in furthering a partnership with Olivet. Davis expressed his appreciation for the new attorneys and for the new addition of Police Chief Lopez. He said there may be further changes in the Police Department, and he will discuss them in more detail at the meeting next month.

Don Walker – Walker welcomed Chief Lopez and stated he looks forward to having Lopez aboard.

Larry Marsh – Marsh welcomed Chief Lopez. Marsh recently attended an impressive drone light show instead of fireworks. He suggested the possibility of a light show at the Firefighters Festival. Walker stated that the Firefighters Association has discussed a light show instead of fireworks, but thought the community might not be receptive to the change. Chief Collins said that there is very little difference in the cost of a light show versus fireworks.

Gary Peterson – Peterson welcomed Chief Lopez. He stated that he should have an update on the Eaton Area Transportation Authority (EATRAN) at the November meeting.

James Frohm – Frohm said that he had nothing to add.

Laura Barlund-Maas – Barlund-Maas was absent.

Council meeting adjourned at 8:26 p.m.

Don Walker, Mayor Pro-Tem

Amy Huepenbecker, Clerk/Treasurer