

City of Olivet
Regular Council Minutes
January 12, 2026 – 7:00 p.m.

Council Call to Order

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

Absent: Larry Marsh.

Visitors' Section:

Resident Cara Ortiz asked if the cameras are working at Memorial Park. She stated that she has seen children at the park misusing the equipment. Commissioner Joe Davis stated that there are cameras at the park that are recording, and she is welcome to stop in the Police Department to discuss any issues.

Approval of Agenda

MOTION by Davis, supported by Walker, to approve the agenda with two additions. Firefighters Festival Update under Old Business and Police Department Desktop Computer Purchase under New Business Item E. Motion carried 6-0.

Approval of Previous Minutes

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

OLD BUSINESS:

A. Firefighters Association – Firefighters Festival Update

Firefighters Association President Scott Piepkow and Vice President John Shakeshaft requested assistance from the City regarding the Firefighters Festival. Piepkow said it would be helpful if the Council could approve annual recurring items related to the festival, such as road closures and parking lot use. He asked for financial assistance from the City to offset the rising costs of fireworks and requested help to coordinate applicants for the parade. He said the Association is always looking for volunteers and ideas to enhance the festival. Mayor Laura Barlund-Maas offered to meet to discuss possible modifications to the festival and said she could help with publicity at The University of Olivet to encourage more people to participate. Clerk/Treasurer Amy Huepenbecker asked about the cost of fireworks. Piepkow said last year fireworks were \$7,500.00, this year they are \$8,600.00, and subsequent years will be over \$10,000.00.

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.

B. 2026 Property Tax Poverty Exemption – Resolution 26-01 – Action Item

Mayor Barlund-Maas stated that the poverty guidelines and asset levels for the 2026 Property Tax Poverty Exemption Resolution are included in the packet. Huepenbecker said the adoption of the poverty exemption has to be done every year for the assessor. She 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 2026.

MOTION by Walker, supported by Davis, to adopt the 2026 Property Tax Poverty Exemption Resolution 26-01 using the 2026 asset level as presented. Motion carried 6-0.

C. Fire Department Medical Class Continuing Education – Action Item

Fire Commissioner Don Walker stated that last month, the Fire Department came to the Council to request funds for continuing medical education, only to find out there was a grant and funds were not needed. He said, unfortunately, the grant is no longer available, and funds are needed to pay for the medical class that starts today. Walker stated that the cost of the class is \$3,500.00. He said the Association is willing to pay \$2,000.00 towards the class and asked if the City could pay \$1,500.00 to offset the cost of the class. Piepkow said Amy Maas would be taking the class. Mayor Barlund-Maas said that she had thought from the conversation last month that Assistant Fire Chief Bill Maas and firefighter Mike Flood, who are employed by the ambulance service, would be taking the class. Piepkow stated that Maas and Flood are no longer taking the class now that the grant is no longer available to the ambulance service. Commissioner Davis asked if Amy Maas missed some of the training with the class starting today. Piepkow said Maas did not miss any training. Maas paid out-of-pocket for the class herself, and the Association reimbursed her \$2,000.00.

MOTION by Walker, supported by Hoffdahl, to approve the reimbursement of \$1,500.00 to Amy Maas for the continuing education medical class. Motion carried 6-0.

D. AED for City Hall – Informational Item

Huepenbecker stated that she would like the City to consider purchasing an Automatic External Defibrillator (AED) to have available at City Hall. She also informed the Council that none of the City buildings have AEDs. She said Cintas maintains a first aid kit for the DPW, and they also sell AEDs. She said Cintas is more expensive, because you are also paying for their service. Cintas would be responsible for installation, monthly charging checks, software updates, and any recalls. Huepenbecker said that the City could purchase a more cost-effective AED, but would be responsible for the upkeep. She stated that a Cintas representative told her that if an AED is not properly maintained and does not work, the City could be held liable. She asked the members of the Fire Department who were present if this was true. Piepkow said the liability falls off for the "Good

Samaritan Law,” which he explained. Fire Chief John Collins said that the monthly checks on the AED could be performed by the DPW staff or the Fire Department staff. Piepkow said an AED is easy to maintain. He advised the Council to purchase the same AED that is used by the Fire Department and Ambulances. He will look at it and let her know. Mayor Barlund-Maas suggested coordinating with the Fire Department and revisiting this next month. Discussion took place regarding reaching out to Assistant Fire Chief Maas for the brand of AED to purchase, AED training, and who would train staff on the use of the AED.

E. Police Department Purchase – Desktop Computer – Action Item

Police Commissioner Davis asked the Council’s permission to purchase a new desktop computer and an uninterruptible power supply (UPS). He said that Police Administrative Officer Shawn Garcia’s computer is six and a half years old and is failing. Davis explained that funds are available in capital outlay. He stated that he received a quote today for a new desktop computer and UPS from Adna Technologies for \$1,118.54. Davis stated that the products are in stock and could be installed this week.

MOTION by Davis, supported by Hoffdahl, to approve the purchase of a new desktop computer and UPS from Adna Technologies at a cost not to exceed \$1,118.54. Motion carried 6-0.

PROJECT UPDATES:

1. Ordinance Book Amendments

Mayor Barlund-Maas stated that she and Huepenbecker have discussed a plan for the ordinance amendments.

2. City Policies (Handbook) – Lexipol

Huepenbecker stated that she has had a problem logging into the Lexipol system.

3. Police Department Policies – Lexipol

Police Commissioner Davis stated that there were no changes to report.

4. Compensation Committee

Mayor Barlund-Maas said that the compensation committee is now fully staffed. She said she expects to have the start-up meeting within a month.

5. Fire Station Committee

Fire Chief Collins said that he asked Fire Station Committee Chairman Mike Judd to attend the meeting for an update. Huepenbecker stated that Judd had told her he had spoken to Kyle O’Brien regarding the purchase of O’Brien’s vacant property. Huepenbecker said at some point, property will have to be purchased to move forward on a fire station, and this property is available.

6. Event Form

Davis stated that he had a meeting with Administrative Officer Garcia regarding the new event form. He said revisions are complete, and he will be meeting with department heads to get their opinion of the form.

Approval of the Bills

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

Department Head Reports

Police Chief Johnny Lopez – Lopez stated that the department had 53 calls, which included numerous traffic stops around school areas. He said that he is busy finalizing the information to submit for a \$10,000.00 grant offered through the 100 Club of Greater Lansing. The grant will be used to install AEDs in the patrol cars and security cameras in and around the City Hall building. He said he is also looking into other grants to upgrade the cameras city-wide, including the park and the walking trail.

Lopez stated that he talked to Davis regarding the possibility of increasing the current \$15.00 fines for 2:00 am to 6:00 am parking tickets. He said that he took the opportunity to research other municipalities to see what they were charging for parking fines. He said Charlotte is charging \$50.00, Bellevue is charging between \$30.00 and \$35.00, and Grand Ledge and Eaton Rapids are charging \$25.00. Lopez suggested increasing the fine to \$25.00, which would double to \$50.00 if not paid within ten days. He said the \$15.00 does not cover the cost of personnel time to write tickets and citations or the cost of the ticket books themselves. He hopes that the increased fine will send a signal out that parking on the streets from 2:00 am to 6:00 am needs to stop. Commissioner Gary Peterson asked if the Police Department issues tickets in the City parking lots. Lopez said tickets are issued in City parking lots for overnight parking. Lopez said he is having some trouble with ordinance wording, and some ordinances need to be amended.

DPW Director Jerry Staggs – Staggs stated that the DPW has been busy with plowing snow, water main breaks, and filling potholes. He said that he has been conducting interviews for the DPW Assistant, and there are two good candidates. Commissioner Walker asked if the candidates have a water license. Staggs said one candidate has a water license and a Commercial Drivers License (CDL), and the other candidate has some of the water licenses. Staggs asked for confirmation regarding the Running Night event at The University of Olivet on Friday, January 16, and said he will provide the barricades for the event.

Fire Chief John Collins – Collins discussed the breakdown of the monthly fire report and stated it was a busy month with 33 calls. He said that he attended a safety meeting at The University of Olivet regarding the alarms going off due to equipment failure. He said he has also had safety meetings with the Olivet Community Schools, with follow-up meetings scheduled. Collins stated that the new pumper truck has a recall that will be addressed on Thursday, and truck #817 had repairs made. Lieutenant Tom Parker is scheduling service for the other trucks. Collins said training sessions are coming up, and the department will be attending the Eaton County All -Terrain Vehicle (ATV) / Utility Terrain Vehicle (UTV) training class. He said the department will again, for the fourth year, attend the cold-water rescue training with Bellevue, Marshall City, and Marshall Township.

Clerk/Treasurer Amy Huepenbecker – Huepenbecker stated the office is busy accepting utility bill payments that are due next Tuesday and tax payments. She said there is currently a lull in the grants, but they will be ramping up in February, putting bids out for the Category B Roads and the Spring, Summer, Winter Street project. Huepenbecker stated she is busy working on budgets and will be meeting with City Accountant Kelly Hanna on Friday. She reminded the Commissioners to get with their department heads and schedule a meeting with Hanna.

Commissioner Comments

Joe Hoffdahl – Hoffdahl thanked the employees for their hard work.

Joseph Davis – Davis had concerns regarding the plowing of sidewalks with the new machine. He stated that the sidewalks seem to have more ice, and it's harder to remove that ice after using the new machine to plow the sidewalks. Davis is asking the Council to consider this, examine their sidewalks, and share any thoughts at the next council meeting for discussion. Commissioner Peterson did not agree with the increase in ice. DPW Director Jerry Staggs said that weather patterns and the type of snowfall, whether wet or dry, have a significant impact on the condition of the sidewalks. Staggs said the DPW must decide if they should remove the ice or snow that could potentially create more of a hazard.

Davis stated that the Olivet Community Schools are still looking for a School Resource Officer (SRO), so if anyone knows of someone who may be interested, please have them contact the Police Department. He stated that he is working on ordinance suggestions and the wireless “bridge” between City Hall and the Fire Department. Davis appreciates and thanks the hard-working firefighters who not only respond daily to calls but had to respond to a call on Christmas morning.

Don Walker – Walker stated he appreciates the Fire Department and the Firefighters Association for all they do for the community.

Gary Peterson – Peterson stated that today is the first day of the Capital Area Transportation Authority (CATA) cutbacks, eliminating CATA route 3 and eliminating the Eaton County Transportation Authority (EATRAN) connector routes to Grand Ledge and Charlotte. He will have more information next month.

James Frohm – Frohm thanked the Fire Department.

Larry Marsh – Marsh was absent.

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

Council meeting adjourned at 8:05 p.m.

Laura Barlund-Maas, Mayor

Amy Huepenbecker, Clerk/Treasurer