

**City of Olivet
Regular Session Minutes
November 09, 2020 – 7:00 p.m.**

This meeting was held virtually due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Council Call to Order

Present: Mayor Laura Barlund-Maas, Joe Hoffdahl, Steve Penny, Don Walker, Pam Steward-Bess, Gary Peterson, James Frohm.

Visitor Section

Mayor Laura Barlund-Maas asked if there were any visitors who would like to address the council. None came forward.

Approval of Agenda

MOTION by Pam Steward-Bess, supported by Joe Hoffdahl, to approve the agenda.
Motion carried 7-0. ***

Approval of Previous Minutes

MOTION by Don Walker, supported by Steve Penny, to approve the previous minutes as presented.
Motion carried 7-0. ***

Mayor Laura Barlund-Maas stated that the rest of the votes would be by roll call.

OLD BUSINESS: Bridge/Park Update

Update on walking bridge- Commissioner Steve Penny informed the Council that the bridge between the park and the ball field is done and had passed inspection with Eaton County. Penny, who led a committee regarding the bridge project, suggested a photo and article at the bridge site with those who were involved in its completion. Commissioner Walker suggested contacting the Charlotte Shopping Guide or County Journal to see if they would like to write an article about it. Commissioner Joe Hoffdahl suggested doing the same for the new handicap swing set at the park. Public Works Director Jerry Staggs noted that the bridge is open to foot traffic right now, but could be blocked off if necessary. Penny suggested leaving the bridge open for the community to use and enjoy.

Update on Installation of Handicap Accessible Swing at the Shrontz Memorial Park-

Clerk/Treasurer Amy Huepenbecker asked about signage for the swing, like "For Handicapped Use Only." She also noted there had been discussion about a sign for the bridge about climbing. Staggs confirmed a sign for no climbing or jumping could be helpful. Park Commissioner Steward-Bess agreed. Discussion took place, and Staggs agreed to order signage.

Council agreed to plan a very small event to celebrate both the park and bridge projects, with Penny organizing the details. He said he will work with Staggs on timing and give the Council and others involved a week's notice.

Mayor Barlund-Maas thanked everyone involved for their work on these park projects. The bridge committee included Penny, Steward-Bess, Commissioner James Frohm, Huepenbecker, and Staggs, as well as others who contributed. The community appreciates their efforts.

Mayor Barlund-Maas asked Staggs to explain to the Council the additional work that had happened at the park as a result of the swing project. Staggs stated that with the approval of Steward-Bess and Barlund-Maas, additional concrete work was done to make the walkway from the parking area lead all the way to the pavilion. Staggs stated that this had been planned for the future but adding this on top of the already-

approved work saved the City some money in the long run. They widened the walkway, and now the pavilion is also accessible for the handicapped and easier to navigate for families with strollers as well. Danny LaPoint of D&J Excavating hired Rob Beers to do the concrete work, and Staggs thinks it looks very nice. To be handicap accessible, porous pave was used in the area of the swings themselves, which has a bouncy quality, so it will keep the people safer if they happen to fall.

NEW BUSINESS:

A. Michigan Township Participating Plan Risk Reduction Grant Resolution – Action Item

Mayor Barlund-Maas stated this resolution says that the City is applying for a Risk Reduction Grant through the Michigan Township Participating Plan to purchase a standby generator to be installed at the DPW.

MOTION by Steward-Bess, supported by Hoffdahl, to approve the resolution for the Michigan Township Participating Plan Risk Reduction Grant. Motion carried 7-0. ***

B. Park Donation Brick/Picket Purchase – Discussion Item

Mayor Barlund-Maas stated that the Council may want to do some fundraising at the park again by “selling” bricks to people with their names on them, like the bricks that are already on the path to the Shrontz Playground. Chail Gentile, of the DPW, has had some experience with brickwork, so he actually removed and reconstructed the walkway that is there when we recently moved the concrete walkway. Gentile could then lay in bricks purchased through this fundraising program, perhaps in the spring. Deputy Clerk/Treasurer Sandra Cain has begun looking at costs for the bricks and printing. Discussion took place. This will be brought back to Council in the spring.

C. Election Grant– Action Item

Clerk/Treasurer Huepenbecker announced that the City had received a \$5,000 grant from the Center of Technology and Civil Life to be used toward election security or safety. A drop box has been placed outside between the entrances to City Hall and the Police Department. We are looking at setting up lighting and video surveillance on the box. DPW Director Staggs has gotten quotes for one camera view on the parking lot and two cameras pointing toward the drop box for just a little over \$3,000.00. The rest of the grant money would fund addition Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) and possibly having a company come in to disinfect the voting area after the election.

Walker asked if this program is a matching grant. It is not; the grant does not require the City to put in any money at all. Further discussion took place.

MOTION by Steward-Bess, supported by Hoffdahl, to move forward with the purchase of the safety and security items listed up to limit of the \$5,000.00 grant. Motion carried 7-0. **

D. COVID-19 Expenditures - CARES Grant – Informational Item

Clerk/Treasurer Huepenbecker stated that this grant of just over \$12,000 is another we did not have to apply for. The State recognized that communities received less income from revenue sharing since the onset of COVID-19, so this grant was developed for all municipalities to receive. We have to spend the money on COVID-related expenses that are not already in our budget. Huepenbecker explained that she and other department heads had been brainstorming with the mayor regarding ideas for these funds, i.e.; laptops and PPE. This is not a matching grant, so it will cost the City nothing. Whatever we do not spend of the grant funds must be returned. Discussion took place.

MOTION by Penny, supported by Hoffdahl, to approve the receipt of the COVID-19 CARES grant for \$12,000.00 for the laptops and PPE. Motion carried 7-0. ***

E. Municipal Employee's Retirement System (MERS) Addendum - Action Item

Clerk/Treasurer Huepenbecker explained an addendum to the Municipal Employee's Retirement System (MERS), the employee's retirement plan.

With this plan, the City currently pays in a 3% match to the employees on all reportable income. In our payroll system, all regular, sick, vacation, and miscellaneous are all grouped together. MERS now wants some income, like mileage, to be reclassified as non-reportable income. The only payroll item that gets included in the reportable income right now is a payment we give to employees who opt out of health insurance. In that case, the employee receives two payments per month that equals 25% of the total what the monthly cost to the City would be if that employee were on a single plan. For example, if your policy was \$400.00 per month you would get 25% of that which would be \$100.00. That would be split over two (2) pay periods. That would be \$50.00 per pay period. Right now, that is included as miscellaneous income and qualifies to get the 3% MERS payment on it, 3% from the City and 3% from the employee. The Council needs to decide if this health insurance opt-out payment should be included in the MERS equation or should be left out. Currently, one employee opts out of the health insurance.

Penny said that if this is the only item, it did not seem that this would make a large difference in the City's expenses. Steward-Bess agreed.

MOTION by Penny, support by Steward-Bess, to approve the Addendum to MERS to include the health insurance opt-out payments as reportable income. Motion carried 7-0. ***

F. Tree Removal/Trimming – Action Item

DPW Director Staggs said a list of trees to be trimmed or removed had been included in the Council packets. The budget for trees is about \$9,000. We are looking to spend between \$5000 and \$6000 this fall, and we will do more tree work in the spring. We've worked with Ayles Tree Service several times, so he had asked them to provide a quote.

Commissioner Gary Peterson stated that he was surprised at the quote because it appeared much higher than he had expected. Staggs indicated that Ayles has trimmed up limbs, etc, for the City at no cost, and he has let us use his crane at no cost when the DPW was working at the wells. Staggs also pointed out that Jack has been very good to the city and these are some really big trees.

Mayor Barlund-Maas asked Staggs when he last time got bids for tree removal. Staggs said he thought this was our third year. Walker pointed out that the City's common practice is to get bids at least every three years, which Barlund-Maas confirmed. Discussion took place. Barlund-Maas noted that this project did not have to be done immediately. Staggs agreed to get more bids to bring back to the Council.

G. Fire Department Purchase E-mail – IT Right – Action Item

Fire Department Chief John Collins informed the Council that Tom Owen communicated with Clerk/Treasurer Huepenbecker regarding the department using IT Right, the company used by other departments in the City. The onetime set-up fee would be \$1,800.00, with an annual fee of \$480.00 for ten (10) e-mail accounts for the Fire Department. There is some money in the budget under Radio Repair and Maintenance.

MOTION by Walker, supported by Steward-Bess, to hire IT Right to set up and maintain the Fire Department e-mail accounts at a cost of \$1,920.00 and the annual fee of \$480.00. Motion carried 7-0. ***

H. Fire Department Purchase – 5" Fire Hose – Emergency Vehicle Services (EVS) – Action Item

OFD Chief Collins said the department needs to replace 700' of 5" hose for one truck. This would replace some twenty-year-old hose, so it is a long-term purchase. The cost is \$6000.00 from Emergency Vehicle Services (EVS). Discussion took place.

MOTION by Walker, supported by Steward-Bess, for the Fire Department to purchase 700 feet of 5" hose at a cost of \$6,000.00 for one truck from EVS. The expense will come out of a line item to be determined later. Motion carried, 7-0. ***

I. Fire Department Purchase – Service on Amkus Tools (2 sets) – Action Item

Fire Chief Collins presented this other annual purchase item. Amkus tools are used for extrication from automobiles. We have two (2) sets of Amkus tools. We take this cost from the equipment account. We try to service the tools every two (2) years, but it has now been three (3) years, so this needs to be done. There is \$7800.00 in the Equipment Repairs account.

MOTION by Walker, supported by Penny, to service the Amkus tools for a cost of \$1,600.00 to be taken out of equipment repairs. Motion carried 7-0. ***

Approval of the Bills

Mayor Laura Barlund-Maas indicated that since the Council was unable to meet in October, she and Clerk/Treasurer Amy Huepenbecker reviewed the bills together. They found no concerns, so they paid the October bills, which would need to be approved formally at this time. She noted that if she and/or Huepenbecker had had concerns or questions, they would have contacted the appropriate commissioner.

MOTION by Steward-Bess, supported by Frohm, to approve the October paid bills, and also pay the November bills as presented. Motion carried 7-0. ***

Department Reports

Olivet Fire Department – Chief John Collins said the department has gotten a little busier on the fire side, with some bigger calls to a cornfield fire, a combine, and to a lawnmower fire. Medical calls are still busy with COVID. Due to COVID-19 quarantines, personnel has been limited, but the department is doing okay.

City Hall – Clerk/Treasurer Amy Huepenbecker expressed her happiness that the election was over. She thanked Jennifer Miller for all of her years of assistance as Election Chair. The election went well and was busy all day. We had 58% of registered voters turn out, which is good. In addition, she has been working on several grants: for elections, CARES Act, the police vehicle, and the DPW generator. She will begin preparation for the Winter Property taxes next week, so these will be mailed at the end of the month. We will also begin working on the 2021-22 budget soon.

Olivet Police Department – Chief Shawn Garcia said that there was not much more to add to the report already submitted. He asked Council for direction regarding the sale of the Crown Victoria. Discussion took place. Garcia agreed to do prepare an advertisement for the car, stating that we would take sealed bids.

DPW Director Jerry Staggs – Director Jerry Staggs indicated that his department has been busy. He thanked everyone for their work on park, the swing, and the sidewalk, as well as the bricks. He informed Council that staff member Ron Smith had won the appointment to Calhoun County Water Resource Commissioner and will be leaving the department in January 2021. Staggs will be looking for a replacement. LaPoint is doing a fantastic job on the fall leaf pick-up this year. Chail Gentile would be taking another water test on the November 10.

Commissioner Comments

Pam Steward-Bess – Steward-Bess stated that everyone was doing a great job. She is glad that the new Deputy Clerk Treasurer Sandra Cain is working out.

Don Walker – Walker stated that he also thinks that leaf pick-up is going well, calling it a commendable effort.

Joe Hoffdahl – Joe Hoffdahl thanked the employees for the work on the bridge project.

Steve Penny – Penny stated that Halloween had gone really well. Both Chief Garcia and Officer Bailey were on patrol that evening and did not have any incidents to reports.

Gary Peterson – Peterson had nothing to add.

James Frohm – Frohm had nothing to add.

Laura Barlund-Maas – Barlund-Maas informed the Council that Olivet College President Steven Corey had approached her about the public access cable channel that municipalities are entitled to through WOW. The college would like to manage the channel through the Media Production and Communication Department. She reported that she told the college the City would want it arranged that we would have some amount of control over the content and delivery in case the college should unexpectedly have content the City would think inappropriate. As a public access channel, it would broadcast events like college, high school, and middle school sports and other programming happening in town. The college would not be making actual television shows for some time because that would increase their expenses. Documents will still have to be written up, so this will come back to us as it progresses. If anyone has questions or concerns, please bring them to Barlund-Maas.

Commissioner Peterson asked if we have the authority to give our station to the college. His understanding of the agreement with WOW was that if WOW did business in Olivet, WOW would give the City of Olivet a free cable access channel. Barlund-Maas indicated that the head of the college's ITS department had been in contact with WOW prior to this discussion with her. Documents will need to be drawn up to specify the agreement and would need to be reviewed by the City's attorney. Depending on how this process moves forward, Barlund-Maas said she may ask someone else on the council to continue discussions with the college.

Second, Barlund-Maas noted that cases of COVID-19 are rising at alarming rates every day. The U.S. has increased by one million cases in ten days, the shortest time frame we have experienced so far. She has been in conversation with Huepenbecker regarding when to close City Hall again and they will be bringing Steward-Bess into that discussion as well. She also stated that we would continue meeting on Zoom for the time being.

Meeting Adjourned at 8:18 p.m.

Laura Barlund-Maas, Mayor

Amy Huepenbecker, Clerk/Treasurer

*** Roll call vote was taken.