

CALL TO ORDER: Mayor Cook called the Council Meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

ROLL CALL: Council members present: Mary Welcome; Bill Slinkard; Tim Sievers; Jim Fielder; Katie Cooper. Staff present: Police Chief Jerry Neumann; Public Works Supt. Mike Wolf; City Administrator Kyle Dixon; & Deputy Clerk Ann Thompson. Councilmember Sievers **MOVED** to excuse Councilmember Snyder's absence. Councilmember Cooper seconded. Motion carried.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Councilmember Slinkard **MOVED** to approve the minutes of the Regular Council Meeting of December 8, 2020. Councilmember Fielder seconded. Motion carried.

PUBLIC WORKS REPORT: Supt. Wolf submitted a written report. Water reservoir overflowed on Sunday as a result of telemetry failing. And Friday, a lift station pump and the clarifier at the sewer plant had an issue due to run-off. Problems are solved but Supt. Wolf is getting quotes for equipment that can alert the crew in real time via their cell phones when the city infrastructure alarms are activated.

POLICE REPORT: Chief Neumann submitted the police log.

-Chief Neumann is monitoring the river flow for potential flooding.

-Getting some preliminary numbers for the replacement of the 2007 Durango patrol car. Looking at a 2017 or newer, under 40,000 miles. Price range is in the \$25,000-\$28,000 range, plus \$2,000-\$3,000 in equipment.

CITY ADMINISTRATOR REPORT:

We anticipate ECY releasing the results of their latest round of funding sometime this week or next. Assuming our application is approved, we will begin the process of designing wastewater facility upgrades while also continuing to investigate all possible alternatives that will reduce the final cost of the project.

Effective this month, base rates for sewer utilities have increased bringing the total water & sewer bill from \$73.06 to \$77.18 for a standard single-family residence. These increases will be used for the sewer operating fund and the sewer facility reserve fund in preparation of impending facility improvements and increasing operation & maintenance costs.

NW Fiber LLC, out of Colfax, has started trenching and installing underground fiber internet infrastructure in town. Beginning at the city hall building, their plan is to work north up Beach St. and expand east/west through side streets and alleys, where appropriate. No timeline for fiber internet access in homes has been given at this time. Zply Fiber is also in the final planning stages before they begin installation of their own fiber infrastructure in town.

The red 1995 Ford pickup is long past its useful life and has been sitting by the Public Works shop for the last month. CA Dixon and PW Supt Wolf would encourage City Council to declare it surplus so we can attempt to sell it via sealed bid with a minimum of bid of \$500.00. Councilmember Welcome **MOVED** to surplus the 1995 Ford pickup. Councilmember Slinkard seconded. Motion carried.

CA Dixon is working with one landowner off Palouse Cove Rd on a minor subdivision, and another on North K St on a proposed street vacation. When the minor subdivision is ready to proceed, it will be heard and voted on by the Planning Commission. Petitions for street vacations are heard and voted on by City Council.

CA Dixon will process 2020 year-end tax paperwork and have W2's to city employees on or before next Friday, January 22nd.

NEW BUSINESS:

Resolution No. 2021-01: fee schedule – As discussed in 2020, fee increases effective Jan. 1, 2021, are for cemetery plot \$500, burial cost \$750, water connection fee \$1,825, and sewer connection fee \$1,825.

Councilmember Cooper **MOVED** to adopt Resolution No. 2021-01. Councilmember Sievers seconded. Motion carried.

Resolution No. 2021-02: salary schedule – Only change was to reflect minimum wage increase from \$13.50 to \$13.69 for extra labor. Councilmember Sievers **MOVED** to adopt Resolution No. 2021-02. Councilmember Fielder seconded. Motion carried.

COMMITTEE REPORTS/REQUESTS:

Joint Fire Board, Chair Fielder-

In November there were five fire department calls and 11 EMS calls.
16 Fire/EMS members have received both rounds of their Covid vaccinations.

MAYOR'S REPORT:

It came as a surprise to Mayor and Council last week to learn that Pullman Regional Hospital (PRH) is looking to expand their taxing district to include Palouse, which may increase taxes in Palouse substantially via subsequent levies. Pullman citizens voted down the PRH tax levy bonds in 2019 and are seeking a larger tax base (Albion all the way to Palouse, including county), to help carry their tax burden. On January 5th and 6th Mayor Cook communicated with PRH CEO Scott Adams to better understand the process, mindset, and ultimately get some questions answered as well as express our concerns. That very day (1/6/21) the PRH board was already voting on continuing down this path. Mayor Cook expressed that Palouse hasn't had a voice despite what was perceived to be a transparent relationship. There are a number of issues with this, including the fact that Palouse's population also uses Gritman, Whitman, & Lewiston hospitals. Palouse has some major infrastructure issues coming and our own street and pool levies are vital for ongoing O&M costs; if PRH goes through with this, it may force Palouse residents to choose between city levies and the hospital levy. We need to make sure PRH is aware of Palouse's stance on this and Palouse voters need to be made aware of this. PRH needs to know this is not good for Palouse and PRH needs to hear our position prior to them moving forward. Councilmember Sievers **MOVED** to send a formal letter from Palouse City Council to PRH CEO Adams and the PRH Board of Commissioners, outlining our concerns as well as requesting they open the public comment period early to give Palouse an opportunity to voice our concerns on the matter. Councilmember Cooper seconded. Motion carried.

The city will be accepting letters of interest for vacant council seat #6 until 5PM on Tuesday, February 23rd. This is a council appointed position to serve until December 31st, 2021 and eligible for reelection on the November ballot.

ALLOW PAYMENT OF BILLS: Councilmember Slinkard **MOVED** that the bills against the city be allowed. Councilmember Welcome seconded. The motion carried.

The following checks are approved for payment:

Claims Paid	12/23/2020	Ck. #11339-11354 & EFT	\$29,201.09
Payroll Paid	12/31/2020	Ck. #11355-11374 & EFT	\$48,686.81
Claims Paid	12/31/2020	Ck. #11375-11388 & EFT	\$ 6,661.12
Claims Paid	01/12/2021	Ck. #11389-11397	\$ 9,252.76

ADJOURN: Councilmember Fielder **MOVED** to adjourn. Councilmember Slinkard seconded the motion and the motion carried. The council meeting adjourned at 7:49 PM.

APPROVED: _____ ATTEST: _____