

PALOUSE CITY COUNCIL AGENDA

Regular Council Meeting
October 12, 2021 @ 7:00 pm
Palouse Community Center

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

ROLL CALL:

Deputy Clerk Misty La Follett took Roll Call.

Councilmembers present Mary Welcome, Bill Slinkard, John Snyder, Jim Fielder, Libby Akin, Tim Sievers, and Kaite Cooper.

City staff present: Deputy Clerk (DC) Misty La Follett and Public Works (PW) Supt. Mike Wolf.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Councilmember Akin a **MOTION** to approve the minutes from the regular council meeting on September 28, 2021; **MOTION** was seconded by: Councilmember Fielder. Councilmember Cooper asked for a change after the **MOTION** to approve the Minutes was introduced. There being a motion and a second, the vote was taken and the **MOTION** failed.

Councilmember Cooper requested to replace "No citizens attended" with "No citizens addressed the council." Councilmember Cooper introduced a **MOTION** to approve the minutes from the regular council meeting on September 28, 2021, with the proposed change; **MOTION** was seconded by: Councilmember Akin. Council unanimously passed the **MOTION**.

OPEN FORUM:

Bradley Pearce addressed the Council with his concerns regarding transparency within the City government.

PUBLIC WORKS REPORT:

Supt. Wolf provided Council with his written report.

Supt. Wolf briefed Council on the significant leak that happened on Main Street. A failure at a joint caused this leak because two different types of metals were used. Supt. Wolf warned that there could be more leaks on Main Street if these materials were used at other junctions. Legacy Paving will be repairing the street shortly.

Supt. Wolf has been overseeing the Cove Sidewalk project, and White Diamond Concrete is on track to start paving on October 25, 2021.

Supt. Wolf has been helping Inland Fiber Networks with the crack sealing to repair the trenching caused by the installation of the fiber lines.

*PW report attached to the minutes.

POLICE REPORT:

Officer Anderson was not present.

*Report attached to the minutes.

CITY ADMINISTRATOR/DEPUTY CLERK REPORT:

No Report.

OLD BUSINESS:

No old business.

NEW BUSINESS:

Mayor Pro Tempore Sievers addressed the appointment process and how to proceed after the resignation of Mayor Cook.

As Mayor Pro Tempore, he cannot appoint anyone to a position, and that includes hiring the City Administrator.

There are two options; the Council can appoint a new mayor from the Council, or the Council can open up an application process for the community. Citizens could apply, and the Council would hold interviews in an open Council meeting. The Council would then discuss the candidates in an executive session, and after this session, they would vote on the appointment.

Mayor Pro Tempore Sievers contacted Whitman County Elections, and the person appointed to the position of Mayor would complete the term of Mayor Cook.

The process for appointing a new Mayor was open for Council discussion, and discussion ensued.

Councilmember Welcome expressed the importance of getting a new City Administrator as quickly as possible appointed to ensure that all statutory deadlines are met for the approval of the 2022 Budget. The City needs to appoint a Mayor as soon as possible to keep the budget process moving forward.

Councilmember Slinkard stated that time is of the essence, and the City needs a Mayor before a City Administrator can be hired. Councilmember Slinkard believes that the members of the Council are the most knowledgeable, which makes them the most desirable candidates for the position of Mayor. Of the City Council members, he recommends that Mayor Pro Tempore Sievers be installed as Mayor tonight.

Councilmember Cooper asked Mayor Pro Tempore Sievers if he had contacted Eric Hanson, the City's Attorney, and the City's insurance company. Mayor Pro Tempore Sievers stated that he was playing phone tag with the insurance company and that Eric Hanson did state that the City could do whatever it wanted to do regarding this matter. Councilmember Cooper was concerned about not being transparent if the Council did appoint a new Mayor without allowing residents to apply for the open position.

There was an extensive discussion amongst the Council regarding the need for transparency in a new mayor's appointment and balancing this with the urgent need to hire a City Administrator. Included in this discussion was the need to regain stability within the Palouse City Government and at City Hall.

Councilmember Fielder stated that the Council has been transparent regarding the location of the City Council Meeting. Council Meetings were moved to the Community Center starting in July, and a change of location was published on the email listserve and posted on the City Hall front door.

Councilmember Slinkard introduced a **MOTION** to appoint Mayor Pro Tempore Sievers as Mayor of Palouse; **MOTION** was seconded by: Councilmember Akin. Mayor Pro Tempore Sievers asked if there was any further discussion, and Councilmember Cooper again asked for confirmation that the City's attorney approved this process for an appointment. Mayor Pro Tempore Sievers stated he would apply for the position of Mayor if the Council wished to proceed with that option. The **MOTION** passed with five yay votes (Councilmembers Akin, Welcome, Fielder, Snyder, and Slinkard), one nay vote (Councilmember Cooper), and one abstention (Councilmember Sievers).

After this appointment, there was a discussion regarding the procedure to swear Tim Sievers in as Mayor. Council decided to recess to allow the Council time to determine the process to swear in the new Mayor.

Councilmember Akin introduced a **MOTION** to take a ten-minute recess; **MOTION** was seconded by: Councilmember Fielder. Council unanimously passed the **MOTION**.

The meeting recessed at 7:40 PM and resumed at 7:53 PM.

Deputy Clerk La Follett administered the oath of office to Tim Sievers, swearing him in as the Mayor of the City of Palouse.

Councilmember Slinkard started the discussion amongst Council on the procedure to fill the vacancy on Council created by Councilmember Sievers appointment to the position of Mayor. After much debate, the decision was made to wait until after the November election as Councilmember Sievers's term expires in December 2021.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Budget, Finance, & Major Acquisitions, Chair Welcome: Chair Welcome and Policy and Administration Chair Cooper have been working in the Budget process and will give their notes to the Mayor. The preliminary Budget Hearing will be held on November 9, 2021, for the public to attend. Chair Welcome stressed the importance that all Councilmembers attend the upcoming meetings to ensure that the 2022 budget is approved.

Streets, Properties, & Facilities, Chair Sievers: No report.

Personnel, Chair Snyder: There are two very qualified applicants for the City Administrator position. He would like to get the interview panel in place to begin the interview process as soon as possible. Councilmember Slinkard asked Chair Snyder if the interview panel should include a person not on Council to participate in this process to help facilitate transparency.

Water and Sewer, Chair Slinkard: No Report.

Policy & Administration, Chair Cooper: Chair Cooper again expressed the importance of all Councilmembers attending the upcoming meetings. The budget meeting cannot be a special meeting; these meetings need to be a part of the regular City Council meetings.

Joint Fire Board, Chair Fielder: Chair Fielder reported for August that there were three Fire meetings, five outcalls, 2 of which were local calls. The fire department did a long call at the Moscow Mountain fire.

There were twelve EMS calls, ten of which were for the City. Pullman responded to seven of those calls and transported the patients. Three calls were for lift assists.

Councilmember Cooper asked Personnel Chair Snyder for a timeline to hire a City Administrator. There was a discussion amongst the Council regarding the process for this hire.

EXECUTIVE SESSION: No executive session.

MAYOR'S REPORT:

Mayor Sievers thanked Deputy Clerk La Follett for the assistance the past couple of weeks. Mayor Sievers has been meeting with City Staff and our project partners. He also has had lots of contact from constituents via

email and phone calls. He appreciates this contact and thanked everyone who attended the City Council meeting. Mayor Sievers would like to affirm that the City Council does have the City's best interest at heart. Despite any disagreements, everyone in Palouse would like to move Palouse forward in a positive direction.

He thanked everyone for their service over the problematic past couple of weeks. Mayor Sievers stressed the importance of coming together despite our differences and to build off of them, and use them to our advantage.

Councilmember Akin asked if a Mayor Pro Tempore needed to be appointed, and Councilmember Cooper stated that it could wait until the next City Council Meeting.

ALLOW PAYMENT OF BILLS:

Councilmember Welcome asked about the payroll hours charged to the swimming pool. Deputy Clerk La Follett explained that this was from the former CA and would be corrected in the next payroll cycle.

Councilmember Snyder introduced a **MOTION** to allow the payment of bills. Councilmember Welcome seconded the **MOTION**; **MOTION** unanimously passed.

ADJOURN: Councilmember Fielder MOVED to adjourn; Councilmember Cooper seconded the **MOTION**. The **MOTION** passed. The council meeting adjourned at 8:16 PM.

APPROVED: _____ ATTEST: _____