

CALL TO ORDER: Mayor Cook called the Council Meeting to order at 7:01 PM.

ROLL CALL: Council members present: Mary Welcome; Bill Slinkard; Tim Sievers; John Snyder; Jim Fielder; Libby Akin; Katie Cooper. Staff present: City Administrator Kyle Dixon; Deputy Clerk Ann Thompson; Police Chief Jerry Neumann; Public Works Supt. Mike Wolf.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Councilmember Snyder **MOVED** to approve the minutes of the Regular Council Meeting of March 9, 2021. Councilmember Cooper seconded. Motion carried.

PUBLIC WORKS REPORT: Supt. Wolf submitted a written report. Repaired the West Church Street water line and a 6" main at the cemetery last week.

POLICE REPORT: Chief Neumann submitted the police log.

Chief Neumann has contacted numerous residences around town regarding out-of-state plates. People who reside in Washington (including renting), have 15 days upon residence to get their license transferred to Washington. These people are long past that 15 days. Chief hasn't cited anyone yet or been aggressive because the first ticket is \$500, the second ticket is \$1500 and the third ticket is a felony tax evasion. Chief is trying to encourage people to do that on their own such as the law states. Chief will next submit letters and copies of the law and give them a compliance cutoff date.

CITY ADMINISTRATOR REPORT:

The Dept of Ecology updated CA Dixon on their timeline for a response regarding a path forward for wastewater facility upgrades. An official response will be sent in the coming days for mayor and council to review and discuss at our next council meeting.

We received clarification from the Dept of Health regarding requirements for water main upgrades on Culton and Church St. Originally, our engineers TDH indicated, with concurrence from DOH, a transition to a new water system management plan was going to be required. After further discussion with additional staff at DOH, CA Dixon was informed that in lieu of this updated management plan, construction documents and a project report added to our existing water system plan will be sufficient. This clears the way for us to proceed with our proposed main upgrades. TDH Engineering will be at our next council meeting with an update. We do not need a new water system plan.

The Whitman County Humane Society is currently in the process of crafting our upcoming 3-year renewal for animal control. Among the areas of consideration is the possibility for them to allow for the intake of cats. The Policy Committee has been discussing different strategies for controlling the feral cat population in Palouse, and this may provide an avenue for addressing that. We will know more details next month. The city has budgeted for the purchase of humane feline traps this year.

CA Dixon is working with an applicant that is requesting the city vacate the northern most 250 ft' of K St. Once the application has been finalized and fees paid, CA Dixon will collect department reports and schedule a hearing via resolution. City Council will then consider the application at an upcoming council meeting and vote to approve or deny.

CA Dixon and Munir Daud and Associates are ready to proceed with the legal notice to solicit bids for the Palouse Cove Sidewalk project. We will present these bids to council for approval at the council meeting following the closing date.

Public Works Assistant Taylor Redman's last day with the city will be next Tuesday, March 30th. She has accepted another opportunity and we wish her all the best. She was a great addition to the PW team and will be missed. We are going to proceed with three employees. We feel good with where we're at and three people can handle the workload. Four people were too many for our needs. If temporary seasonal help is needed that can be tackled at the time.

Upon entering Phase 3, we will continue to monitor for transitioning back to in-person meetings.

Andres Sena update on 2021 swim team: The league coaches have begun to reengage and discuss swim league. They are wanting to have swim team this year (assuming Covid allows it). Andres is open to organizing things in non-traditional ways to abide by whatever guidelines. He offered to volunteer his time in the process.

OLD BUSINESS:

Ongoing discussion on Civil Service Commission: This came about for a couple reasons: 1) the size of our department doesn't legally require a CSC. Three FT officers is the threshold that requires a CSC. Less than three FT, the CSC becomes optional; 2) because the CSC was never enacted legally. Mayor Cook reiterated that this is not an attempt to "defund the police" or dissolve our police dept.

Councilmember Snyder - When talking employment law, once you engage in a certain level of due process rights it becomes extremely difficult to back out of those due process rights and I don't know if its appropriate. We still have a process even if it wasn't properly enacted; it's still there. If we dispose of it, we could be making a small problem bigger than it needs to be.

Councilmember Sievers: I reviewed the history of this. Only very few references to the CSC creation in the minutes and no enacting legislation from council as the resolution addresses. The city operates through our city code and sets up a manner of how we do business. We have commissions which are outlined in our city code and that does not exist for this commission. Having a commission out there with some authority they've created themselves and hasn't been approved by any council since, muddies the waters of who does what and who has what responsibility. Essentially, we've operated in an unlawful manner for 14 years. We did not establish this in our city code. We give authority but have no accountability or structure. Councilmember Sievers is uncomfortable operating under the current situation. It's not good to go forward without an enacting legislation and with members whose terms expired long ago.

Councilmember Welcome's concerns are similar to Councilmember Sievers'. My red flags are around compliance. Our CSC isn't in compliance with these rules (term limits, procedures, minutes). Would like to discuss where we can go forward from this.

Councilmember Cooper: Has concerns about transparency and openness of the meetings. If we have a city-based commission then there should be some kind of public notice of when the meetings are and where, similar to Planning Commission meetings. That doesn't seem to be the case with the CSC.

Councilmember Fielder: when on the Planning Commission, we dug through the rules and we worked hard to be in compliance and to fix anything that wasn't. We have something well-intended but not built properly.

Chief Neumann echoed maybe it is broken but he would like to move forward and do what we need to do to become compliant. The CSC provides a service to the PD.

Mayor Cook: Palouse already has code in place to address fairness. We have a personnel committee to have checks and balances. If the chief or an officer has a grievance, they take it to the Personnel Committee.

Much discussion ensued. Council is very appreciative of the time and energy put in by the volunteer CSC members. Council will continue deliberation on this and will make a determination on how to proceed at a subsequent council meeting.

NEW BUSINESS:

Amended Solicitor's Permit policy: The new policy now requires solicitors to 1) pay a \$15 application fee per person (not per company); and 2) upon clearance by the PD, each solicitor pays a \$25 daily fee to solicit. We are hoping this new policy will discourage any unscrupulous solicitors. Other entities have taken these exact measures. Councilmember Welcome **MOVED** to amend our solicitor's policy by adding these fees as written. Councilmember Fielder seconded. Motion carried.

Resolution No. 2021-03 – amended fee schedule: This adds the two solicitor permit fees and the contractor rate at the RV Park as voted on at last council meeting. Councilmember Sievers **MOVED** to adopt Reso. No 2021-03. Councilmember Cooper seconded. Motion carried.

COMMITTEE REPORTS/REQUESTS:

Streets, Properties, & Facilities, Chair Sievers- Have a meeting coming up with WSDOT to discuss the railroad crossing on W Main, the retaining wall near the RV Park and also the Bridge St bridge.

Joint Fire Board, Chair Fielder-

Councilwoman Akin is filling the vacancy on the JFB. The JFB consists of the Palouse FD, three council representatives and three rural commissioners.

FD is looking at purchasing a used fire truck for the fleet. They're putting together a list of necessary requirements.

MAYOR'S REPORT:

Creation of Youth Advisory Council: Mayor Cook continues to work on the creation of this. Councilmember Akin offered to assist. This will be open to any teenager who resides in the Palouse School District.

Pullman Regional Hospital taxing district update: The PRH Board of Commissioners is going to reconsider their position on redistricting. It's a positive sign. They are going to advance the conversation at their May meeting.

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

The following checks are approved for payment:

Claims Paid 3/23/2021	Ck# 11509-11524 & EFT	\$12,469.96
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ADJOURN: Councilmember Akin **MOVED** to adjourn. Councilmember Slinkard seconded. The motion carried. The council meeting adjourned at 8:29 PM.

APPROVED: _____ ATTEST: _____