

Palouse City Council
Regular Council Meeting held at Hayton Greene Park due to COVID-19 restrictions
June 23, 2020

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

ROLL CALL: Council members present: Mary Welcome; Tim Sievers; John Snyder; Jim Fielder; Steve Alred; Katie Cooper. Staff present: Police Chief Jerry Neumann; Police Officer Terry Snead; City Administrator Kyle Dixon; & Deputy Clerk Ann Thompson. Councilmember Cooper **MOVED** to excuse Councilmember Slinkard's absence. Councilmember Sievers seconded. Motion carried.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Councilmember Alred **MOVED** to approve the minutes of the Regular Council Meeting of June 9, 2020. Councilmember Fielder seconded. Motion carried. Councilmember Snyder **MOVED** to approve the minutes of the Special Council Meeting of June 18, 2020. Councilmember Alred seconded. Motion carried.

OPEN FORUM ON FLAG POLICY:

The Lions Club have hung flags on Main Street for years and it's a great benefit to the city and very much appreciated. However, in recent weeks the city has received numerous letters raising concern over the Thin Blue Line flag being allowed to hang. Palouse doesn't have a clear policy over displaying flags so light poles may be construed as a public forum. Policy & Administration Committee is researching best practices to move this matter forward. Mayor Cook issued an order to Chief Neumann to cease & desist from removing anything from light poles until we have a policy in place. We are here to solicit public comment regarding a flag policy. The goal is to take this feedback into consideration while a formal policy is crafted.

The following people spoke aloud during the open forum, in no particular order: Libby Akin, Emily Akin, Jessie Twigg-Harris, Sarah Bofenkamp, Kurt Brantner, Damon Estes, Carly Schoepflin, Michael Echanove, Jens Hegg, Ann Barrington, Brad Pearce, Ken Alsterlund, Dave Caudle, Leslie Sena, Lynn Gearhart, Caleb San Miguel, Darrel Goertzen, Sinclair Watkins, Jerry Hibbard, Adam Cochran. Additionally, CA Dixon read aloud letters from Katryna Newman, Claire Echanove, Shandra Bohn, and Ron & Lana Redman, which were submitted for the forum.

Upon completion of the open forum at 8:11 pm, Councilmember Alred **MOVED** to take a 10-minute recess. Councilmember Snyder seconded. Motion carried. Meeting readjourned at 8:23 pm

PUBLIC WORKS REPORT: Supt. Griffin submitted a written report.

POLICE REPORT: Chief Neumann submitted the police call log.

CITY ADMINISTRATOR REPORT:

The city has been looking into alternatives to address the condition of the Native Plant Park in a timelier fashion. We continue to receive complaints on a regular basis. CA Dixon invited resident Jamie Gaber and Palouse Conservation District representative Garrett LaCivita to discuss how we can team up to expedite improvements. Jamie explained about some of the plantings and progress thus far. Had a good survival rate from last year's plantings. Currently have people working on signage to continue educational efforts with species identification, etc. They're also hoping to wire cage all the plantings and complete the path. Once that's done, mowing can be done around the wire cages and signs. Mowing native grasses will be better if done after July 1 which eliminates risk to nesting songbirds and damage to grasses. The public would like to see functional pathways, river access, weeds cut down, and manicured to some degree. Jamie could use more volunteer help.

The city received two bids for our annual road oiling: BST Surfacing \$10,564.40, & Mort's Dust & Erosion Control \$17,248.00. BST has bid the lowest cost for the past several years and they do good work. Supt. Griffin recommends council accept their bid. Councilmember Sievers **MOVED** to accept the low bid from BST Surfacing. Councilmember Cooper seconded. Motion carried.

RV Park reservations have increased significantly since Phase 3 approval.

Palouse Chamber has ordered a first round of masks/PPE from the state appropriation from COVID-19 related expenses. CA Dixon will also be reaching out to other entities (i.e. local food bank, FIRE/EMS) to determine needs and eligibility for these funds.

OLD BUSINESS:

Wastewater Operator Contract with Garfield: Palouse doesn't have a Level II certified operator in Palouse. Garfield has one. This agreement allows us to trade with Garfield eight hours of our public works services for eight hours of their Level II certified operator services. Language is also in the contract which allows for us to call on Garfield in the event of sewer facility emergencies. Traded hours are 1:1 with no exchange of funds. This will satisfy ECY's requirements. Councilmember Alred **MOVED** to adopt the contract. Councilmember Fielder seconded. Motion carried.

Palouse Cove Sidewalk Bid Documents:

Engineer Munir Daud has continued to price alternatives to remain within budget for our project. His recommendation is to proceed with bids without the block wall and the pedestrian lights (which would be added later). We are still in discussions with property owner in Harvest Loop development to better utilize the terrain to avoid the block wall. We can also give contractors three months to finish the project, to better work with competing schedules, which should also result in a lower bid. If the bids still come in too high, we reserve the right to reject all bids. CA Dixon is still working on additional funding opportunities. The original grant of \$200,000 received for this project does not need to be spent until March of 2022. Even then, in light of current events, an extension of this deadline would likely be approved. It is the engineer's and CA Dixon's recommendation to put a call for bids for this project ASAP. A determination to proceed to construction can be made after a review of submittals. Councilmember Sievers **MOVED** to approve the call for bids. Councilmember Welcome seconded. Motion carried.

COMMITTEE REPORTS/REQUESTS:

Personnel, Chair Snyder- has some action items forthcoming.

Policy & Administration, Chair Cooper-

Flag Policy Discussion: Committee has met twice with attorney. They have done a lot of research on this issue. There are three options: 1) The city could take no action, effectively 'opening' the street lights as public forums without regulation, whereby anything could be posted or hung at any time by anyone. 2) Adopt a policy that applies time, place and manner restrictions. This would create a permitting process that would require pre-approval to hang flags/banners at predetermined places and times. The city would not be allowed to regulate content. 3) Adopt a policy that 'closes' the public forum. Only city owned flags and banners would be allowed on city owned property to be hung only by authorized city personnel. They will have another committee meeting this week to consider all the input heard today and will present their recommendation to council at the next regularly scheduled council meeting. There are no other special meetings scheduled at this time.

Joint Fire Board, Chair Fielder-

There were four fire calls and two trainings in May. There were five EMS calls in May: 3 city, 2 non-residents. Also had two EMS trainings in May.

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

The following checks are approved for payment:

Claims Paid	6/23/2020	Ck. #10917-10931 & EFT	\$33,251.80
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ADJOURN: Councilmember Welcome **MOVED** to adjourn. Councilmember Alred seconded the motion and the motion carried. The council meeting adjourned at 9:00 PM.

APPROVED: _____ ATTEST: _____