

Palouse City Council
Regular Council Meeting held at Palouse Community Center due to COVID restrictions
July 14, 2020

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; John Snyder; Jim Fielder; Steve Alred; Katie Cooper. Staff present: Police Chief Jerry Neumann; Police Officer Joel Anderson; City Attorney Eric Hanson; City Administrator Kyle Dixon; & Deputy Clerk Ann Thompson.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Councilmember Sievers **MOVED** to approve the minutes of the Regular Council Meeting of June 23, 2020. Councilmember Alred seconded. Motion carried.

OLD BUSINESS:

Ordinance No. 993 – adoption of rules & regulations for the display of flags, banners, and signs on city light poles: Mayor Cook read aloud the ordinance in its entirety. In summary, the ordinance states the following banners and flags may be flown on street lamp posts within the city or the flag standards affixed to them and no others:

- the national flag of the USA;
- the WA State flag;
- the POW-MIA flag;
- the Palouse city flag;
- and any other flag or banner which the City Council may choose, via resolution, to be flown from time-to-time.

The above-mentioned flags may be flown, by the city, on the dates adopted by City Council from time-to time. Currently, the holidays designated for flying them are as follows:

- March 30 (Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day);
- April 9 (Former Prisoner of War Day);
- 3rd Saturday in May (Armed Forces Day);
- Last Monday in May (Memorial Day);
- June 14 (Flag Day);
- July 4 (Independence Day);
- July 27 (Korean War Veterans Armistice Day);
- 2nd Saturday after Labor Day (Palouse Days);
- 3rd Friday in September (POW/MIA Recognition Day);
- November 11 (Veterans' Day);
- December 7 (Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day).

The ordinance is not intended to prohibit or curtail individuals from carrying flags or banners in public and/or displaying them on private property. No person or entity shall paint, mark or write on, or post or otherwise affix, any hand-bill or sign to or upon any public crosswalk, curb, curbstone, street lamp post, hydrant, tree, shrub, tree stake, or guard, electric light or power or telephone pole, or wire appurtenance thereof or upon any lighting system, public building, drinking fountain, street sign, or traffic sign. The penalty for violation of this ordinance includes removal by either the Palouse PD or Palouse Public Works. The person(s) responsible for any such illegal posting shall be liable for the cost incurred in the removal thereof.

Councilmember Alred **MOVED** to adopt Ordinance No. 993. Councilmember Slinkard seconded. Motion carried.

OPEN FORUM:

Jessie Twigg Harris. Thanked council and mayor for all their work on the flag policy. Urged council to develop an anti-racism statement and to publish it on the chamber's website.

Dominick Mylett. Read aloud his letter to council asking for the pool to be reopened.

Diane Mylett. Advocating for the pool being reopened. Suggested a pass system for residents, thereby restricting pool usage so only city residents have access. Thinks there may be some kind of compromise. She offered some ideas.

John Sykes. 1) Wants pool to reopen with more restrictions, no swim lessons, etc. 2)Wants better development of basketball courts at the park, perhaps something similar to what Farmington just put in.

Becky Manning. Thanked council for coming up with a flag policy. Agrees with issuing an official response to racism. Her daughters were both pool managers and knows it's a lot of responsibility during the best of times to keep standard protocols in place at the pool; don't rely on young lifeguards to try and enforce Covid restrictions. She's sad to hear it closed but has confidence and trust that city leaders are leading us through this with a purpose. There's such division on the COVID subject, maybe community members could be part of the discussion so they had more of a voice.

Andres Sena. Swim team coach. Would like pool to reopen. He thinks there are safe ways to do it. Must be mindful and respectful of each other through this process. Thinks RV Park should be closed for safety. Black Lives Matter. Thinks we all need to be accepting of each other.

Nancy Whitesell. Feels like people are creating a racism issue in town that doesn't exist. Palouse isn't about racism or hate and it never has been. Things need to take a step back and remember who we are. We live in a small community because we don't have to deal with big city issues. Why bring it here when it's not the face of our community?

Mike Burkhart. This community has never been white supremacist or racist. The Lions Club has never ever put that forth on their agenda. Our goal is to serve our community. Yes, we (Lions Club) flew the Blue Lives Matter flag. We've flown it for six years. Why is it an issue now?

Jim Morrison. Thanked council for adopting flag policy. Asked if flags would be hung on just the one specific date or if the flags would be hung for a few days before and/or after each holiday. Councilmember Cooper responded that the new policy doesn't preclude only hanging flags on the specific date so yes, they can be hung on surrounding days (i.e. weekend surrounding the holiday).

Connie Newman. 1)Agreed the Lions aren't racist or a white supremacist organization and she didn't hear that sentiment from other people but can appreciate that the Lions felt that way. Palouse is special; we're watched by other communities because we're thriving. She feels this has been an important dialogue in Palouse and the conversation is important. She detailed how this topic has caused deep dialogue with all three of her children and initiated understanding and healing. We're all on the same page. 2) She's sad that the pool closed but discussed her time as a lifeguard and pool manager and conveyed that we can't expect lifeguards to be responsible for social distancing and masks etc. on the deck. She would volunteer though to help it reopen.

MAYOR'S REPORT:

Mayor Cook outlined his reasons for closing the pool on July 6. Based on COVID safety and the welfare of our community; National and regional COVID trends; How quickly COVID flares, etc. all gave Mayor Cook concern. Staff have a specific job to ensure safety of people in the pool; asking staff to ensure COVID safety compliance is problematic. At end of the day, kids are going to be kids. They don't social distance. They play. He still thinks keeping the pool closed is the right and prudent thing to do. The state is talking about tightening things up if things don't get better. There are basically three options: 1) keep closed; 2) open as normal; 3) a hybrid solution. Councilmember Sievers stressed that council's interest is the safety of the community; there was no bad intent in closing the pool. Councilmembers Sievers, Alred, Slinkard, & Cooper all think the city should err on the side of caution. Public safety is a very serious issue for all ages. Facilities committee will research the issue and report back at next meeting. There are unintended consequences of asking people not to come to our pool.

Public Works Supt. Update: The city only received five applicants for outgoing Supt. Griffin's position. None of the applicants had Supt. Griffin's levels of comprehension or skill set. We have had ongoing conversations with Garfield to assist should problems arise. We are currently working to train up our existing staff. We lose Supt. Griffin on August 1 and will have challenges ahead with his departure.

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

POLICE REPORT: Chief Neumann submitted the police log. Chief Neumann reminds people when doing sidewalk art, only use chalk, not permanent paint. It's a criminal act.

CITY ADMINISTRATOR REPORT:

The city is accepting bids for the Palouse Cove Sidewalk project until this Thursday, July 16th at 2PM. Our engineer has fielded questions from interested contractors, so we are hopeful that competition is going to drive bids lower. As you may recall, inflated costs have our engineer worried that the bids will come in over our budget which has the potential to suspend construction until next year. CA Dixon is currently working to acquire additional funds with the goal to see the full project scope, including a pedestrian bridge across the river to the city park, completed next year. We will have an update regarding final bid amounts for council consideration at our next meeting.

CA Dixon and Finance Chair Welcome will have an update on first half of 2020 financials at our next meeting. RV revenue is expected to take another major hit with fan participation becoming less and less likely for WSU athletics this fall. The city has seen reduced revenue in other areas as well but overall is getting through these difficult times okay.

Spoke with ECY regarding the status of our Wastewater Facility Plan that was submitted to them back in March. They will have comments to us and our engineers prior to our next council meeting.

If pool remains closed for the rest of the year, we have a mechanism to account for unspent pool levy dollars for next year's levy.

COMMITTEE REPORTS/REQUESTS:

Budget, Finance, & Major Acquisitions, Chair Welcome- meeting and will bring report to next council

Streets, Properties, & Facilities, Chair Sievers- will meet to discuss pool

Personnel, Chair Snyder- Hoping to bring human resources packet to next meeting.

Water & Sewer, Chair Slinkard-

Policy & Administration, Chair Cooper-

Joint Fire Board, Chair Fielder-

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

The following checks are approved for payment:

Payroll Paid	6/30/2020	Ck. #10932-10958 & EFT	\$51,616.53
Claims Paid	7/10/2020	Ck. #10959-11005 & EFT	\$42,713.95

ADJOURN: Councilmember Fielder **MOVED** to adjourn. Councilmember Welcome seconded the motion and the motion carried. The council meeting adjourned at 8:10 PM.

APPROVED: _____ ATTEST: _____