

Palouse City Council
Regular Council Meeting
July 28, 2020
Via Zoom Videoconferencing

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; City Administrator Kyle Dixon; & Deputy Clerk Ann Thompson.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Councilmember Sievers **MOVED** to approve the minutes of the Regular Council Meeting of July 14, 2020. Councilmember Slinkard seconded. Motion carried.

PUBLIC WORKS REPORT: Supt. Griffin submitted a written report.
Repaired and replaced pump at sewer plant

POLICE REPORT: Chief Neumann submitted the police log.
PD is still having an ongoing issue with a habitually loose dog who acts aggressively in the neighborhood. PD will hold the owner accountable through the legal system.

Mayor Cook reminds residents public not to tamper with people's private property; leave yard signs alone even if you disagree with the message. Chief stated that video evidence is wonderful and admissible.

Council inquired about people not following the mask mandate and wanted to know how this could be better enforced. Chief indicated that the responsibility falls on the County Health Department to hold people accountable, stating that he isn't going to be the mask police but will try and encourage people to wear them.

CITY ADMINISTRATOR REPORT:

Effective July 20th, the state implemented additional limitations to slow the spread of COVID-19. The number of individuals allowed in social gatherings during Phase 3 has been reduced from 50 to 10. As such, city council meetings will be held via Zoom until this order has been lifted and in-person meetings have been deemed safe to resume.

This is Supt. Griffin's final week with the city after 14 years of service. He has been integral to the operation and appearance of the City of Palouse and we are sad to see him go. Mike Wolf was offered and has accepted the PW Supt. position on a one-year interim basis. He has been training with Supt. Griffin. The city is now advertising for Mike's replacement, which is a Public Works Assistant in charge of the cemetery and parks. We hope to have this role filled by mid-August. Garfield has assured us that they will assist us indefinitely if needed for emergency infrastructure repairs with the understanding that we will do the same if called upon.

Mary Estes expressed need for some plant work at Heritage Park that is outside the Rose Ladies' capabilities. CA Dixon will hand over to PW to address and if they are unable, they will hand it over to an outside party.

We continue to receive complaints about the Native Plant Park, a volunteer nature park. Resident Jamie Gaber (along with Palouse Conservation District and volunteers) is supposed to be working there on July 30. One of their goals is to clean up and identify the various plant species.

OLD BUSINESS:

Palouse Cove Sidewalk Bids:

Bids closed July 16th. We only got two bids, but one bid was in the ballpark. Looks like we will have an extra \$30k over what we had originally planned. Cost of construction materials increased significantly. We were still confident that we could see bids in our price range but it didn't happen. TIB (Transportation Improvement Board) normally would cover these overages, but the majority of their funding has been cut for this year. CA Dixon needs direction from council on how to proceed. This project was originally supposed to be funded by 100% grant, but now it's upwards of \$30k needed from city to proceed. We have until March of 2022 to expend grant funds. Easy solution is to reject all bids and regroup while CA Dixon seeks additional funding. CA Dixon will also continue outreach to property owner adjacent from proposed sidewalk to assist the city in cutting a major cost of the project. Councilmember Sievers **MOVED** to reject all bids. Councilmember Alred seconded. Motion carried.

COMMITTEE REPORTS/REQUESTS:

Budget, Finance, Major Acquisitions – Chair Welcome: Had a great meeting last week with CA Dixon. Sidewalk project would take unexpected chunk out of Arterial Streets fund if we proceed. Garfield police contract line item will show major shortfall, but city is saving money from the elimination in March of the 3rd police officer position.

Streets, Properties, & Facilities - Chair Sievers: Committee revisited the pool closure issue. Took into consideration the governor's July 16 order decreasing public gatherings from 50 to 10, the increase in county COVID cases, and other pools around the state choosing to remain closed. We looked at online scheduling to use the pool and other options but none of them were feasible. It is the committee's recommendation that the pool remain closed.

Received a request from Paula Echanove to rename H Street in honor of Sgt Jacob Demand, a Palouse native who was killed in Iraq in 2004. They chose H Street because it doesn't change anyone's address. Committee likes the proposal but isn't ready to take action yet. The intent is a great thing however there is potential for unintended consequences. There are a host of deserving people in our community and does this create a scenario where the city sees an increase in these requests. Does this set a precedent? The city might need to set up procedures and criteria for these kinds of requests going forward. Streets Committee and Policy Committee will meet to discuss.

The city received another letter from the Bofenkamps regarding noise and speeding issues going by their house on the highway. The city is awaiting WSDOT approval to install the recently purchased flashing speed sign. Councilmember Sievers wants to continue to seek out grants to purchase more of the flashing speed signs for all entrances to town. Chief will look into cost of repairing the radar trailer.

Councilmember Sievers would like to see the city take on the responsibility for care of the volunteer-run Native Plant Walk because it's not working with volunteers. Public Works is already stretched thin. It is going to require additional funding for staffing if Public Works is forced to take on the upkeep of another park. Mayor Cook thinks perhaps a blended model with volunteers and some level of city involvement is a possibility.

Had a citizen complaint about the upkeep at the cemetery: gravestone that had been moved off its base and weeds around the gravestones. It is not what we've come to expect from our cemetery. Committee would like to see this rectified moving forward. If Public Works can't give it the attention needed, we will need to address it from outside hire.

Councilmember Sievers spoke with CA Dixon about the Palouse Arms building. We will reach out to state fire marshall again to discuss a meeting to note safety issues and notify owner.

Water & Sewer – Chair Slinkard.

Chair Slinkard provided some background on facility planning timeline. Went to Spokane and met with ECY regarding our Facility Plan earlier this year. During that discussion it seemed that two things are set in stone: timeframe to address effluent temperature TMDL by summer of 2024 and elimination of river discharge during low river flow periods by 2030. Alternatives to address temperature TMDL were industrial chillers or effluent blending with aquifer water. Both options are very wasteful and temporary. Water/Sewer Committee believes at this point the most appropriate course of action is to try to fast track installation of lagoons (eliminating river discharge during low flow periods) because that will be required eventually. There is funding available through ECY and USDA Rural Development and CA Dixon has met with state legislatures for the past 3 years in the hope to get additional funding in the state budget as well. We need to move fast because the first benchmark is 2024. John Patrouch from Varela was present via zoom. If we miss deadlines, we open ourselves up to litigation from 3rd parties. Lagoon alternative was first proposed three years ago and ECY rejected it. And now three years later, investigation of several other alternatives and associated costs, we are back to the same alternative. CA Dixon would like to see ECY take some ownership over this because they are culpable for the time and funding issues before us. With current available funding for upgrades we would have to charge between \$80-\$120 for sewer alone for each residential unit which has the potential to be devastating to our community. Varela will be replying to comments issued by ECY on our facility plan with an emphasis on lagoon construction by 2024. City will be very aggressive in our pursuit of any additional funding possibilities. Meeting with ECY will be scheduled for sometime this fall to further discuss our direction.

Policy & Administration – Chair Cooper: Appealed to fellow councilmembers to respond to emails.

Joint Fire Board – Chair Fielder:

- On the financial side, JFB is over-budget due to COVID expenditures but is being reimbursed from CARES Act.
- There were two fire calls in June. One station night.
- There were 11 EMS calls in June (7 city, 1 rural, 3 non-residents). 60 EMS calls total through June. Had two EMS hands-on training nights. The ambulance contract with Pullman is up for renewal.
- There will be an increase to budget next year due to official DOT truck inspections. Because we haven't been doing the inspections the initial cost is \$10,000 (\$5k from city, \$5k from rural). But after initial large expense, ongoing costs would only be about \$300 per truck and not necessarily annually. CA Dixon said this won't be a budget problem.

MAYOR'S REPORT: Covered in other areas of meeting

ALLOW PAYMENT OF BILLS: Councilmember Snyder **MOVED** that the bills against the city be allowed. Councilmember Slinkard seconded. Motion carried.

The following checks are approved for payment:

Claims Paid 7/28/2020 Ck. #11006-11017 & EFT \$6,992.42

ADJOURN: Councilmember Fielder **MOVED** to adjourn. Councilmember Welcome seconded the motion and the motion carried. The council meeting adjourned at 8:32 PM.

APPROVED: _____ ATTEST: _____