

PALOUSE CITY COUNCIL AGENDA

Regular Council Meeting
August 24, 2021 @ 7:00 pm
Palouse Community Center

CALL TO ORDER: Mayor Cook was absent, and Councilmember (Mayor Pro Tem) Sievers called the Council Meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

ROLL CALL:

DeputyClerk (DC) Misty La Follett took Roll call

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

Councilmember absent: Bill Slinkard

Councilmember Cooper introduced a **MOTION** to excuse Councilmember Slinkard, **MOTION** seconded by: Councilmember Akin. Council unanimously passed the **MOTION**.

City staff present: City Administrator (CA) Coughenour, Deputy Clerk (DC) Misty La Follett, Public Works (PW) Supt. Mike Wolf, and Police Officer Joel Anderson.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Councilmember/Mayor Pro Tem Sievers asked that a redundant sentence be removed from "Old Business" to clarify the language of using Zoom meetings. Councilmember Welcome introduced a **MOTION** to approve the minutes from the regular council meeting on August 10th, 2021, with the changes requested by Councilmember/Mayor Pro Tem Sievers; **MOTION** was seconded by: Councilmember Fielder. Council unanimously passed the **MOTION**.

OPEN FORUM:

One citizen registered to address the Council:

Michael Echanove introduced a concern regarding the installation of the fiber lines by NW Fiber, LLC, by cutting trenches in the streets. First, he reminded Council that the City received approximately \$1,000,000 from the state of Washington to reconstruct Whitman St. Secondly, Mr. Echanove felt that if they did not make these repairs before winter, the rain and freezing temperatures could cause significant damage to the roads. According to Ordinance 994, passed by the City Council in 2020, the Ordinance requires NW Fiber, LLC to return the streets to their original condition. Supt. Wolf and CA Coughenour stated they would meet with NW Fiber, LLC, to discuss returning the roads to their original condition before the weather damages the streets.

PUBLIC WORKS REPORT:

Supt. Wolf presented the Council with his written report pertaining to the City's infrastructure and facilities.

Supt. Wolf was made aware of a leak in the City Hall's roof that needs to be repaired. Wolf also informed the Council of two leaks in the water main in two separate locations and a broken sprinkler valve in Main Street. PW will be repairing the culvert by the Whitman County Shop and cutting down the height of the sewer hookups at the RV park. PW was unable to paint the crosswalks due to a paint shortage due to the pandemic. Supt. Wolf has contacted the County Roads department to use the crack filling machine to make repairs within the next month.

Akin asked that the water usage report provide a five-year trend. Akin was also concerned about the significant water usage for April, Supt. Wolf informed the Council that the water meters are not read during the winter months, and the first read is in April, which spikes the amount of usage in the report.

After further discussion, the Council asked that the report be changed to only include March to October water usage for the past five years.

Councilmember/Mayor Pro Tem Sievers asked about the repairs for the road grader and Supt. Wolf stated that the grader was 47 years old and leaking hydraulic fluid. Supt Wolf has identified the problem. But, parts for the grader have been hard to find.

*PW report attached to the minutes.

POLICE REPORT:

Officer Anderson presented his report to the city council. There were 12 calls for service with zero call-outs.

Officer Anderson has completed his annual mandatory law enforcement training, and he will continue his free training.

Officer Anderson performed foot patrols and spoke with local business owners at the 2nd Saturday event. He has also continued his speed/traffic emphasis at the entrances to the City. This emphasis resulted in the arrest of one person for DWS, and the vehicle was impounded.

He also contacted two separate parties about living in the vehicles and suggested they seek the services provided in Moscow or Pullman.

Officer Anderson will be On-Call for the upcoming school board meeting if there are issues regarding the mask mandate.

Councilperson Welcome thanked Officer Anderson for reaching out and working with the community and asked how he would enforce the new mask mandate. Officer Anderson said, If there is a report for someone not wearing a mask indoors and a complaint, he would respond and educate. He would not actively be looking for residents not wears masks indoors.

*Report attached to the minutes.

CITY ADMINISTRATOR/DEPUTY CLERK REPORT:

CA Coughenour held the pre-construction meeting for the Cove Sidewalk Project, and there is a start date of October 4th, 2021. The project is scheduled for 70 days, but it should not take that long to complete.

TIB has been in contact with CA Coughenour regarding the Cove Sidewalk extension. TIB liked the project, and CA hopes the City will receive the grant money to complete the project by next fall. This grant will include the funds for lighted pedestrian signage that was removed from the Cove Sidewalk project.

CA Coughenour has completed online budget training. Recipients have picked up all the American Recovery Plan Act (ARPA) grant money. The Department of Commerce is behind on grant and loan funding, but the City should receive the funding paperwork for the water main project soon.

CA Coughenour conducted a meeting with the lifeguards to go over operations. They provided a list of safety, repairs, and operational changes they felt were necessary for the next season.

Councilmember Akin asked if White Diamond Concrete felt they would have any issues finishing the sidewalk project due to weather. CA Coughenour stated that it was a simple project and there should be no issues.

CA Coughenour felt that the only issue was getting the placement of the mailboxes approved by the Postmaster. All the resident that would be affected by the mailbox move has been contacted.

CA Coughenour further stated that Public Works would be tracking the amount of gravel and water used by the contractor for accountability.

Councilmember Cooper asked who would be contacting NW Fiber, LLC regarding the trenches in the road. CA Coughenour stated that it was his understating that PW would fill the trenches, and the City would bill NW Fiber, LLC for the material and labor. This will be completed in conjunction with the annual street crack repair.

Council emphasized that the streets needed to be restored to their original condition before the weather changes, and they need to be held to the franchise agreement.

Supt. Wolf said that he would meet with CA Coughenour and NW Fiber, LLC, to discuss the requirements needed to restore the road to its original condition.

Councilmember Cooper stated that since PW was inundated with work, NW Fiber, LLC, needed to be held to the franchise agreement and coordinate the repairs.

Councilmember Fielder asked for the results of the footbridge inspection. CA Coughenour said he had not yet received the report. Supt. Wolf was with the engineers during the inspection, and he stated that PW marked the boards that the engineers pointed out that needed to be replaced. The report may point out other issues with the bridge that may need to be addressed.

Councilmember Cooper asked about the \$45.79 issue on the check register from the last meeting. CA Coughenour found that it was caused by using the same BARS code to pay the building inspector, who is now considered a city employee, that was previously used to pay the previous contractor Dan Gladwill. The issue has been resolved, and the \$45.79 is in the correct fund. Councilmember Cooper wanted to make sure that this was corrected as she has been through an audit, and things like this can cause an issue with the auditors and cost the City more money.

OLD BUSINESS:

No new business

NEW BUSINESS:

Council meeting location: Councilmember/Mayor Pro Tem Sievers stated that the meeting would continue to be held at the Palouse Community Center, indoors, moving forward.

DC La Follett stated that she received an email from the Community Center, and they have made their facility available to the City for the Council meetings until the end of the year.

Mask Mandate: The mask mandate is the law moving forward. Council did receive an email from a citizen asking how the City would be enforcing the mask mandate. Councilmember/Mayor Pro Tem Sievers felt that Officer Anderson had already addressed this issue.

Councilmember Cooper stated that the website reporting business not following the mask mandate was available again if anyone wanted that information.

Officer Anderson used the Palouse Caboose as an example of the mask mandate being difficult to enforce while people are dining.

Councilmember/Mayor Pro Tem Sievers would encourage everyone to honor the law and respect one another. Officers Anderson's approach to educate and inform is the correct approach.

Councilmember Welcome followed up with CA Coughenour regarding the Chamber's purchase of COVID PPE with the former City Administrator Dixon and sent that list to CA Coughenour. DC La Follett stated that the supplies had been ordered from Palouse Foods, following the order from last year. Councilmember Welcome noted that we had an account with Project N95 as the funds were coming from the federal government. Project N95 was the supplier for municipalities. DC La Follett asked if she would cancel that order, Councilmember Welcome said not to. In the future, we would prefer to order from Project N95.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Budget, Finance, & Major Acquisitions, Chair Welcome: Councilmember Welcome spoke with Marv Pillers, and the radios have been ordered, acquired, programmed, and distributed. The AED has also been ordered. Councilmember Welcome had previously emailed City Staff regarding funding and acquisition of the loan for the new fire truck, and she was waiting for CA Coughenour's response. Councilmember Welcome will be meeting with Annie Pillers next week to make sure that all the EMS funds end up in the correct account.

CA Coughenour stated that the only two options for funding are a low-cost loan or taking money out of the City's investment account. Councilmember Welcome said that she needed the additional information that she asked for before she could proceed.

Councilmember Cooper responded to the email sent by CA Coughenour asked about the procedures for starting the budget process. She stated that he could meet with the budget committee, but the CA and the Mayor drove the process.

CA Coughenour said he, through the Mayor, would get budget letters out to department heads as soon as possible to get their proposals completed and returned. He would also be preparing the ordinances for the budget year. He has also been in contact with the Whitman County Auditors and Assessor's Office, and we are on track and not missing anything that would affect tax revenues.

Councilmember Cooper had questions regarding the Treasurer's Report and the ending balances in the negative for the Cemetery and Water Reserves. CA Coughenour was unsure how the Cemetery was funded and was researching the funding source. CA Coughenour stated that he would evaluate and adjust the balances as necessary for the Water Reserve fund.

CA Coughenour said that in October, the City would need to do a budget amendment. Councilmember Cooper again expressed her concerns about budget balances and the auditors.

CA Coughenour explained the asterisk on the Treasurer's Report. The asterisk is caused by adjusting a fund or adjustment in any prior month. Once adjustments are made, the software requires you to rerun the Treasurer's Report for that month and any subsequent months.

Councilmember Akin asked why the phone bill for the pool was \$646. DC La Follett explained that when the phone line was installed, Zply quoted the line at \$68 per month, but the bill was for \$108 with taxes and fees. The Zply bill was clarified, and the entire bill is for all the City's phone lines, not just the pool.

Streets, Properties, & Facilities, Chair Sievers: Chair Sievers said at the committee meeting, they discussed the ongoing concerns from the community member regarding the continuing industrial traffic in town, speed limits, enforcement of traffic safety laws, noise, weight limits, and brake noise. The committee will be further researching solutions to satisfy as many residents as possible.

Councilmember Sievers stated the Councilmember Welcome reminded the committee that there was some funding in the budget for a nuisance cleanup that has not been used. The committee was hoping to find a way to use these funds this fall.

CA Coughenour had contacted Whitman Co., and they have a reduced fee for cities for spring and fall cleanup. He suggested possibly using the funds for large dumpsters to support the cleanup dates so all residents could remove items from their property. CA Coughenour recommended using these cleanup dates to educate those residents who do not comply with the City Code and provide the residents with a way to remove unwanted items.

Pool issues were also discussed at the committee meeting, and this fall and winter, they will be able to fix some things, so we are prepared for next summer.

Councilmember Cooper would like to make sure that the pool repairs and included in the budget recommendation.

Personnel, Chair Snyder: Chair Snyder commented that questions had been raised on the process of recognizing Officer Anderson while he has been the acting Police Chief. The committee will get together to address this at a later date.

Water and Sewer, Chair Slinkard: No Report.

Policy & Administration, Chair Cooper: Chair Cooper would like to know the status of the feral sterile program with the Whitman Co Humane Society. DC La Follet asked Officer Anderson, who is responsible for transporting dogs to the Whitman Co Humane Society, and it was determined that the PD would transport any dogs. DC will follow up with Whitman Co Humane Society regarding the feral sterile program.

Joint Fire Board, Chair Fielder: Chair Fielder stated at the last JFB meeting they approved the 2022 budget and submitted it to CA Coughenour. Chair Fielder reported the Fire District had three fire calls in June, and one call was for mutual aid, and the JFB met three times. There were ten fire calls in July, five were for mutual aid, and the JFB met three times. EMS had 14 calls in June and one special training event. Chair Fielder did not have the EMS call numbers for July and would provide those at the next meeting.

MAYOR'S REPORT:

Mayor Cook asked councilmember/Mayor Pro Tem Sievers to read a note from Cindy Alred.

Councilmember Akin added that the Youth Advisory Board would be coming back soon.

ALLOW PAYMENT OF BILLS:

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

Councilmember Cooper asked since the meeting was now in person, they should be able to sign things in a more timely manner. DC La Follett stated she would make sure that everything is available for signatures moving forward.

ADJOURN: Councilmember Cooper **MOVED** to adjourn; Councilmember Snyder seconded the **MOTION**. The **MOTION** was passed. The council meeting adjourned at 8:11 PM.

APPROVED: _____ ATTEST: _____