

PALOUSE CITY COUNCIL
Regular Council Meeting
July 25, 2023, @ 7:00 PM
Palouse Community Center | 220 E Main St.

CALL TO ORDER:

Mayor Tim Sievers called the Meeting to order at 7:01 pm.

ROLL CALL:

Deputy Clerk Kelsey Blair took Roll Call.

Councilmembers present: Bill Slinkard, Leslie Sena, Samuel Brink, Travis Deerkop, Robert Brooks, and Ann Barrington

Councilmembers absent: Sarah Bofenkamp,

- Councilmember Barrington introduced a **MOTION** to excuse Councilmember Bofenkamp's absence from the meeting, the **MOTION** was seconded by Councilmember Brink. All council members approved, and the **MOTION** passed.

City staff present: City Administrator (CA) Misty La Follett and Deputy Clerk (DC) Kelsey Blair

City staff absent: Public Works (PW) Superintendent (Supt) Mike Wolf, Police Officer Joel Anderson

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

- Councilmember Slinkard introduced a **MOTION** to approve the minutes from the regular council meeting on July 11, 2023, the **MOTION** was seconded by Councilmember Brooks. All council members approved, and the **MOTION** passed.

PUBLIC WORKS REPORT:

Supt Mike Wolf submitted a written report for the Council.

CA LaFollett updated:

Vehicles

- The Durango is done and ready to become a public works vehicle. The Journey is ready for sale to the Fire Department

*The full Public Works report is attached to the minutes.

POLICE REPORT:

Officer Anderson submitted a written report to the Council.

*The full Police Department Report is attached to the minutes.

CITY ADMINISTRATOR / DEPUTY CLERK REPORT:

CA LaFollett reported:

Community Economic Revitalization Board (CERB) grant for the St. Elmo feasibility study

- CA LaFollett and Councilmember Barrington traveled to Olympia to present to the CERB board for the grant application. The grant was awarded. There are forms that need to be signed to move forward with the Request for Proposals (RFP). Councilmember Barrington added that we are still looking for the remainder of the matching funds. If we put out the RFP, we need to make sure we can fulfill the RFP. There is money in the budget that the city could contribute to this.

Tennis Court

- The Tennis Courts need some maintenance and it is the city's responsibility to maintain them. We will need to budget some funds to maintain them. It has been suggested to paint pickleball lines on the tennis courts so that they have a dual use.

Tree blocking stop sign and Light

- In the council's packet is a quote to cut the tree down and add concrete to match the sidewalk.

Dog Swim

- Still working on a date. Kayla Johnston addressed the council. She is creating an advertisement flyer and she is asking businesses for prizes for a raffle. She is also looking for a volunteer to photograph the event and 2-3 volunteers to help during the event with conflict mitigation/resolution between the dogs, if it arises.

Main Street Striping

- Looking into the process for removing the double yellow striping in front of the City Shops and J Street. CA LaFollett has been in contact with the WA State Dept. of Transportation (WSDOT) and they are looking into it.

OLD BUSINESS:

Resolution 2023-17: 6-year Tax Levy - Continue Existing Ambulance Service by the City of Pullman and other EMS purposes

- Mayor Sievers read the resolution aloud in full.

- Councilmember Brooks introduced a **MOTION** to adopt Resolution 2023-17: 6-year Tax Levy - Continue Existing Ambulance Service by the City of Pullman and other EMS purposes, the **MOTION** was seconded by Councilmember Sena. All council members approved, and the **MOTION** passed.

Resolution 2023-18: 1-year Tax Levy – Operation and Maintenance of the Infrastructure for the City of Palouse

- Mayor Sievers read the resolution aloud in full.
- There was discussion about this amount being the same as last year and this being the source of funding for water projects.
- Councilmember Sena introduced a **MOTION** to adopt Resolution 2023-18: 1-year Tax Levy – Operation and Maintenance of the Infrastructure for the City of Palouse, the **MOTION** was seconded by Councilmember Brink. All council members approved, and the **MOTION** passed.

Resolution 2023-19: 1-year Tax Levy – Operation and Maintenance of the Swimming Pool

- Mayor Sievers read the resolution aloud in full.
- There was discussion about the amount going up from last year and that this enables the city to keep the pool open.
- Councilmember Brooks introduced a **MOTION** to adopt Resolution 2023-19: 1-year Tax Levy – Operation and Maintenance of the Swimming Pool, and the **MOTION** was seconded by Councilmember Slinkard. All council members approved, and the **MOTION** passed

Resolution 2023-20: 1-year Tax Levy – Street Improvements and Street Oiling

- Mayor Sievers read the resolution aloud in full.
- Council asked how much did the city spend on road oiling this year, and CA LaFollett answered \$22,480. There was a discussion about the amount of the Levy being \$50,000. CA LaFollett explained that back-blading and other improvements use the rest of the money.
- Councilmember Barrington introduced a **MOTION** to adopt Resolution 2023-20: 1-year Tax Levy – Street Improvements and Street Oiling, the **MOTION** was seconded by Councilmember Sena. All council members approved, and the **MOTION** passed

Verizon

- CA LaFollett provided a Verizon cell tower update in the council's packet. CA LaFollett explained that Verizon will submit an official project proposal after the amount of the lease can be agreed on. There was a discussion about the amount that other landowners have been paid and about the types of towers. CA LaFollett asked the council if she should counter Verizon's offer, there were no objections from the council.

St. Elmo's Request for Proposal (RFP)

- The council was provided with the RFP for review, at the last council meeting. There was a discussion about who owns the St. Elmo building property and who will own it once the feasibility study is done. Justin and Lindsay Brown currently own the property and will continue to own the property until they decide to sell it.
- Councilmember Slinkard introduced a **MOTION** to adopt the Request for Proposal for the CERB grant St. Elmo feasibility study, the **MOTION** was seconded by Councilmember Barrington. All council members approved, and the **MOTION** passed.

NEW BUSINESS:

No New Business

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Policy & Administration - Chair Barrington:

- The committee has reviewed examples of Public Nuisance / Noise disturbance ordinances. A good example that they like listed the types of noise disturbances, and the hours it would apply to. There was discussion about the noise from bars downtown and the exemptions that would apply to businesses and agriculture. There was a discussion about whether a business would need an application or a variance for events and if there would be a fee for the application or variance. It was mentioned that the state noise level is 55 decibels and the city would need a way to measure it. The committee hopes to get a draft noise ordinance sent to the City Attorney soon.
- A draft ordinance separating the consequences for the “potentially dangerous dogs” and “dangerous dogs” is being reviewed by the city attorney.
- The committee is still working on the sidewalk seating policy.

Budget, Finance, & Major Acquisitions - Chair Bofenkamp:

- No Report

Streets, Properties, & Facilities - Chair Deerkop:

- No Report

Personnel - Chair Brink:

- No Report

Water and Sewer - Chair Slinkard:

- Met with the Department of Ecology (DOE) to discuss solutions to the Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) issues. The DOE is willing to come once a month to meet and help come up with potential solutions. Set to apply for an extension for the 2024 deadline. Implementing a full solution will take care of the thermal problem.

Joint Fire Board - Chair Sena:

- No Report

OPEN FORUM:

- Dennis Kittleson – addressed the council to say that we are lucky to have Officer Anderson. Mr. Kittleson is a 21-year resident and has seen a variety of officers and Officer Anderson is one of the best. The Sheriff's office is fine but they are stressed and it could take them a long time to respond.
- Jessica Twigg-Harris – Thanked CA LaFollett and Councilmember Barrington for work done on the St. Elmo Feasibility Study Grant. It is exciting to have the study done and have answers. Mrs. Twigg-Harris thanked the Browns for being open to exploring options. The building may come down, but at least we will understand.
- Michael Echanove – Thanked CA LaFollett and Councilmember Barrington and the whole council for the work done on the St. Elmo Feasibility Study Grant. Mr. Echanove said it is a great road to go down to get answers. He informed the council that he is in support of the current officer. He stated that when it comes to taking down the tree on the corner blocking the stop sign, it may be more complicated. The trees were planted in barrels and they have drip water lines and electricity. Mr. Echanove suggested consulting with an arborist for a solution.
- Edie Riddle – asked if there is a Police Task Force report yet. Councilmember Brink answered that they are still working on it.
- Brenda Fire Hawk – She has researched rural policing and rural policing is like Cheers, where everyone knows your name. An outside source will not know us or the situation. She asked if an outside source will police the schools.
- Angie Griner – Asked if the task force, if in the research, are they looking closely at code enforcement. She thinks that we should have a small-town police officer, but overtime should not be used by a police officer for code enforcement if a code enforcement person would be cheaper. Taking that off the current officer's plate could reduce the amount paid in overtime. Mrs. Griner stated that we should be careful when creating a noise ordinance so that it does not affect the livelihood of the bars and restaurants. She asked them to consider making the hours later, on Friday and Saturday nights. Mrs. Griner researched U-turns on state highways and stated that it is allowed with 500+ft of visibility. Mrs. Griner thanked CA LaFollett for the work done with the WSDOT. Mrs. Griner stated that she would love to see the St. Elmo be saved, but she asked the council if the city should be using taxpayer money to pay a city employee for hours worked on a project that is owned by a private citizen and is not city property. Mrs. Griner asked if city funds should be spent on the matching fund's requirement because once we use the grant money, the city is on the hook for the remaining matching funds. Mrs. Griner asked if the city would help other private business owners with their iconic buildings.
- Dana Anderson – Stated he has experience with negotiating a Verizon tower and is glad that the city did not accept the low offer of \$700 per month. Mr. Anderson suggested that the Verizon tower money could help cover the cost of the pool and/or other things like the tennis courts. If we do get \$2000 per month that is \$24,000 per year that could be put towards the pool and/or tennis courts etc. Mr. Anderson appreciates that a potential noise ordinance will consider weekends, he would also like to see clauses in the ordinance for special holidays such as the Fourth of July. Mr. Anderson addressed the Police Task Force on the topic of a code enforcement officer and the fact that they are not a cop and cannot enforce legal issues. Mr. Anderson states that Pullman can support a code enforcement officer because they have a larger population, but does not think Palouse could afford a code enforcement officer. Mr. Anderson stated that Officer Anderson does an outstanding job, and he asked the council who we have on backup when Officer Anderson is on vacation or after he has finished his 40-hour work week. Council did not answer.
- Steve McGehee – Being a former council member for 10 years, he has documents that he wanted to give back to the current council members, a 1992 WWTP Manual, and an Annexation Policy. Mr. McGehee told a story about an application for a subdivision, back in the 1990s, that wanted to annex a 200-unit residential development and that is how the Annexation Policy became to be. It was created to protect the water and sewer infrastructure and the people who live here now.
- Al Pancoast – Asked about the oiling of the gravel roads and wonders if there is something better than oiling that the \$20,000 could be spent on other than keeping dust down, like sidewalks. Also, Mr. Pancoast stated how valuable Officer Anderson is.
- Kayla Johnston – Stated she is a Forestry Professional and there is a patch of dead trees on Shady Lane, that is due to a Mt. Pine Beetle infestation. As a professional Mrs. Johnston recommends removing the stressed and dead wood in winter and hanging pheromone packets to deter the Mt. Pine Beetles. Mrs. Johnston stated that if left untreated Mt. Pine Beetles could destroy all the trees on Shady Lane within 5 years. There was a discussion about the trees being on private property and a discussion about spraying. Mrs. Johnston recommended consulting with a forest management company.

- Mayor Seivers read a letter in full from Jim Fielder.
- Councilmember Slinkard handout out information packets at the request of Mr. Gearhart.
- Tia Elgar – Expressed her support for Officer Anderson and told a story of how Officer Anderson assisted her with a domestic violence situation.

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

No Executive Session

MAYOR'S REPORT:

- Mayor Sievers reported that he had a pre-meeting with Varela Engineering prior to the meeting with the DOE.
- Regarding the meeting with the DOE, it seems there was forward progress.

ALLOW PAYMENT OF BILLS:

Councilmember Slinkard introduced a **MOTION** to allow the payment of bills; the **MOTION** was seconded by Councilmember Sena. All council members approved, and the **MOTION** passed.

The following checks are approved for payment:

Claims paid Ck#13271-13296 & EFT \$58,418.50

ADJOURN:

Councilmember Sena **MOVED** to adjourn; Councilmember Barrington seconded the **MOTION**: All council members approved, and the **MOTION** passed.

The council meeting Adjourned at 8:21 pm

APPROVED: _____

ATTEST: _____

DATE: _____

