

City of Palouse

COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, August 22, 2023

Note to persons reviewing this document: This is not a verbatim transcript. While an attempt has been made to document pertinent points, these minutes contain only a summary of the discussion and voting.

CALL TO ORDER: Mayor Sievers called the meeting to order at 7:00 P.M., Councilmembers* present at the meeting were Sarah Bofenkamp, Bill Slinkard, Sam Brink, Travis Deerkop, Robert Brooks, and Ann Barrington. Also in attendance were Hans Pidino, Lesa Neumann, Jim Morrison, Dana Anderson, Cheryl Sanders, Angie Griner, Mary Estes, Kelsey Blair, and Doug Cuellar.

*In the following paragraphs, Councilmember(s) will be abbreviated as: "C."

I. ROLL CALL: Acting DC Gaber took attendance; C. Leslie Jo Sena was absent.

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

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

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

C. Deerkop introduced a **MOTION** to approve the minutes from the regular council meeting on July 25, 2023, the **MOTION** was seconded by C. Brink. All council members approved, and the **MOTION** passed.

III. PUBLIC WORKS REPORT: Supt Mike Wolf submitted a written report for the Council.

IV. POLICE REPORT: Officer Anderson presented his report to the Council.

A. 49 traffic stops resulting in two infraction citations.

B. 45 calls for service since last council.

1. 15 of those calls related to city ordinance violations.

C. Officer Anderson then went through a diagram he had posted on the wall. He explained that U turns downtown can only occur in an official intersection. He demonstrated on the diagram the dangers of making a U turn at J St. and Main, in which visibility is easily blocked by large vehicles. Additionally, it is illegal to cross a double yellow to re-enter west bound traffic. He stated that PMCs (Palouse Municipal Code) override RCWs, as each city has the right to make more specific and/or restrictive code than the state requires. He noted that ordinances are not paused while under review.

V. CITY ADMINISTRATOR / DEPUTY CLERK REPORT: CA La Follett reported:

- 2.
3. **A. GYM:** Owners of the Gym would like to landscape city property next to the old medical clinic in exchange for 50% off future water bills. Mayor Sievers said that is not an option the city is willing to consider. C. Barrington and C. Slinkard both agreed all water bills should remain separate. C. Brink said council is open to other collaboration suggestions with the owners. C. Bofenkamp said she is interested in pursuing the wayfinding sign that had been brought up previously for that location.
- B. MAIN ST. STRIPING:** WSDOT does not recognize the alley between Baggot Motors/Chappell Automotive and the Palouse Brewery as a continuation of J St., therefore they do not support the removal of the double yellow lines on Main St.
- C. WAR MEMORIAL:** Sparrow Glass in Colfax is willing to fix the laminate covering on the War Memorial in Hayton-Green Park. It will be covered by the Parks Budget. All C. members agreed.
- D. VERIZON:** Discussion occurred regarding the proposed rate to be paid by Verizon to have a tower on city property. All agreed to continue to negotiate for a higher rate. Multiple citizens asked that Verizon not have exclusive rights to tower use, leaving the ability to have multiple-use options open for the tower.
- E. TREE REMOVAL ON SHADY LANE:** Avista is willing to move trees off Shady Lane and cut into smaller rounds for ease of movement by city staff.
- F. ST. ELMO'S DONATIONS:** Confirmed with MRSC's auditor office that donations from the public are acceptable to offset planning grant's fund matching requirements. Donations have been received and are currently being accepted at City Hall.
- G. IPG GRANT:** C. Barrington worked with CA La Follett to submit a \$200,000 planning grant in early August. Quick turnaround, should know if we receive grant in October.

VI. OLD BUSINESS: None

VII. NEW BUSINESS: SHADY LANE

- 4.
5. **A. Avista** marked trees for cutting in December 2022 because the trees were dead. Cut trees down in July, now will cut into rounds and haul offsite.
6. **B. Western Pine Beetle Infestation:** currently advised by Kayla Johnston, College of Natural Resources, University of Idaho, and Mark Swanson PhD, Forestry Ecology and Management, School of the Environment, WSU.
Recommendations:
7. **1.** The largest trees should be conserved thru targeted thinning, ideally in October thru April.
8. **2.** Following thinning, small branch wood and crowns should be promptly removed to eliminate the possibility of attracting pine graver beetles (that attack and kill standing trees). Small wood can be disposed of by chipping, mastication, or pile burning.
9. **3.** Snags should be conserved to provide habitat structure for cavity nesting wildlife such as woodpeckers, flickers, western bluebirds, and nuthatches (including red-breasted, white-breasted, and pygmy nuthatches). Snags chosen should not cause any safety issues.
10. **4.** Consider the use of prescribed fire under safe weather conditions (such as a light snow) as it will provide a flush of nutrients which will enhance the vigor of the ponderosa pines, (of all ages), eliminate small branch wood, and control competition for moisture.
11. **Next Steps:** Contact Forester(s) to mark trees, local possibilities identified. Thin trees in winter months. Follow up with other options to further protect the largest trees.

COMMITTEES:

Policy and Administration - Chair Barrington:

A draft Ordinance separating the consequences for the "potentially dangerous dogs" and "dangerous dogs" is being reviewed by the city attorney.

Budget, Finance, & Major Acquisitions - Chair Bofenkamp:

No Report

Streets, Properties, & Facilities - Chair Deerkop:

Tree in front of Stop sign on Main St. to be trimmed to increase visibility of the flashing signal

Personnel - Chair Brink:

Considering resumes for Deputy Clerk position

Water and Sewer - Chair Slinkard:

Ecology extended deadline for temperature reduction

Joint Fire Board - Chair Sena:

C. Bofenkamp asked if the Fire Board had considered a notification system that could be implemented in the event of a wildfire or other large-scale emergency to notify residents.

VIII. OPEN FORUM: C. Slinkard asked to have the floor. He noted citizens' responsibility to both the city and other citizens. These duties can be carried out by being respectful of each other, and responsible, by following the rules of city council. Each person has three minutes to talk and the mayor has both the right and responsibility to enforce this.

Hans Pidino: Supports local policing. Also, suggested placing signs in town identifying local laws, such as the U turn policy.

12. **Lesa Neumann:** Stated the whole community is important and rules are important to follow. Asked that Senate Bill 5051 regarding excessive force by police officers be reviewed. Wanted to follow up on status of dangerous dog ordinance.

Jim Morrison:

Supports both Joel Anderson and local policing. Would like all residents to be respected equally regardless of how long they have resided in town.

13. **Dana Anderson:** Currently teaching a young driver the rules; WA. State driving handbook clearly states a double yellow line can not be crossed. Would like other drivers to follow rules, to set a good example. If not, they should be cited and let the courts decide. Also, would like to see a conclusion to the Police Task Force.

Cheryl Sanders: Asked what instigated forming the Police Task Force. Also, questioned what still needs to be addressed? Offered to help with food at Midnight Swim next year.

Angie Griner: Running in November for council position. Supports multiple steps for city employees to improve before any punitive measures taken. RCW 4661 states, if safe, can cross double yellow. Supports signage on acceptable U turns downtown. Would like to see more specifics stated on agenda for new business in council meetings.

Mary Estes: Asked why there are no citizens on the Police Task Force. Appreciates the Police Department enforcing city codes. Supports signage, good solution to U turn questions downtown.

Kelsy Blair: U turn happens in alley; code says can cross double yellow if coming out of an alley. Would like more topics listed on agenda for public to see beforehand. If tree by Stop sign/signal gets cut down, could replant, and grow a replacement.

14. **Doug Cuellar:** Supports both Joel Anderson and local policing. Thinks laws are important to follow and hopes all will lead by example, especially for the benefit of new drivers.

IX. MAYORS REPORT: ICMA CONFERENCE: attended in Detroit. Selected by the EPA to receive "Small Site, Big Impact" Award for the restoration of our Brownfield site downtown. An Ecology representative expressed interest in Palouse, noting a key bipartisan law has made more money available for similar projects. An article was written about Palouse in the ICMA (International City/County Management Association) magazine and distributed to more than 3,000 people. Travel expenses were offset by a generous donation by Avista.

15. **B. BENNETT LUMBER:** wants to reactivate Railroad tracks through town. The train would travel from Idaho to Palouse to Spokane. They will present to the city soon. They have an easement through town and expect 7-10 cars to come through town once weekly. They will do safety education. C. Bofenkamp noted we are responsible for safety signage. C. Barrington asked for sign changes to be announced on the listserv.

16. **C. PALOUSE BASIN AQUIFER:** Looking for Palouse to be represented on new committee. C. Bofenkamp has contact information.

X. COUNCIL MEMBER DISCUSSION: C. Brooks addressed the city council regarding the cancellation of the last city council meeting. He objected to the action, thinking violation of our code had occurred. Discussion amongst the councilmembers ensued. C. Brink concluded the discussion by recommending we check with the city lawyer then revisit the topic.

XI. ALLOW PAYMENT OF BILLS: C. Slinkard asked why we were re-issuing firefighters checks. CA La Follett answered the firefighters had not cashed the original checks for an extended period. C. Barrington introduced a **MOTION** to allow the payment of bills; the **MOTION** was seconded by C. Brooks. All council members approved, and the **MOTION** was passed.

The following checks were approved for payment:

Claims paid	Ck# 13297, #13322-13365	\$33,762.82
Payroll paid	Ck# 13298-13321	\$65,685.46

XII. ADJOURN: C. Brink introduced a **MOTION** to adjourn; the **MOTION** was seconded by C. Deerkop. All council members approved, and the **MOTION** was passed.

The council meeting Adjourned at 8:44 pm

APPROVED: _____

ATTEST: _____

DATE: _____