**City of Palouse**

**City Council Minutes**

**February 25, 2025**

**Palouse City Hall**

**120 E. Main St.**

**Palouse, WA 99161**

**CALL TO ORDER & ROLL CALL**

Mayor Tim Sievers called the meeting to order at 7 PM.

Councilmembers present: John Snyder, Angie Griner, Leslie Sena, Molly Quigley, Robert Brooks and Ann Barrington.

City Staff present: City Administrator (CA) Misty LaFollett

Councilmember Sena introduced a motion to excuse Councilmember Anderson from the meeting; the motion was seconded by Councilmember Barrington and unanimously approved.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Regular Council Meeting – Feb. 11, 2025.

Councilmember Griner motioned to postpone the approval of the minutes until the March 11 council meeting so that a correction can be made to her report; the motion was seconded by Councilmember Quigley and unanimously approved.

**OPEN FORUM**

No residents signed up to speak during open forum.

**PRESENTATION**

Kara Riebold, executive director for the Port of Whitman County, shared the Port’s 2024 Strategic Plan Report Card, and shared about past progress and plans for the future.

**PUBLIC WORKS REPORT**

No report submitted.

**POLICE REPORT**

Officer Anderson submitted his report. There were 19 calls for service, six were ordinance related, and two callouts.

**CITY ADMINISTRATOR REPORT**

City Administrator LaFollett walked the council through the Cemetery Fund – 103.

The Annual Report preparations are underway and a rough draft should be completed by the end of March. The Annual Report will help inform the audit later in the year.

Council was reminded to complete the Doodle Poll regarding a potential date for city council training.

Varela Engineering & Management’s summary report of the Sewer project that was presented to the Technical Assistance Team at the Infrastructure Assistance Coordinating Council (IACC) conference in October 2024 was included in the packet for councilmembers to review.

City Administrator LaFollett noted that the bills include a $25,000 invoice and check for C&M Logging, Inc. that completed the forestry operations on Shady Lane last fall. The reimbursement from the State Department of Natural Resources grant has been delayed and a partial payment was requested so that C&M Logging can avoid layoffs for their crew.

**OLD BUSINESS**

Horizon/Verizon Tower – Mayor Sievers updated the council on progress regarding the potential siting of the cell tower on city-owned land. Horizon/Verizon is preparing photo simulations for the council and community to review and will present the renderings along with other information about the project in their March 11 presentation to the council.

St. Elmo Project Update – Councilmember Barrington shared that the Washington State Department of Commerce’s Community Economic Revitalization Board (CERB) grant is complete and the Washington Department of Ecology’s Integrated Planning Grant (IPG) is now underway. The Phase 2 Environmental Assessment and Hazardous Materials Survey are next. In July, we will build on the work we’ve completed so far by engaging in a U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Vision to Action Technical Assistance workshop to help the community envision a renewed St. Elmo and what it could bring to our community. We also are working on a Thriving Communities Grant through Philanthropy Northwest, to secure funds for site acquisition and demolition.

Salary Schedule Updates – A revised salary schedule including updates at the request of the Joint Fire Board, and to the mayor’s salary was submitted for consideration:

JFB Proposal

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Position** | **2025 Approved Annual Compensation** | **Proposed Increase (2.34%)** | **New Annual Compensation** |
|  |  |  |  |
| Fire Chief | $1,500 | $35.10 | $1,535.10 |
| Assistant Fire Chief | $750 |  | $750 |
| EMS Chief | $1,500 | $35.10 | $1,535.10 |
| EMS Training Officer | $750 |  | $750 |
| JFB Administrative Secretary | $750 |  | $750 |

The Mayor submitted a recommendation to increase the salary for the position as part of the 2025 budget proposal. Council tabled the recommendation for discussion at a later date, and requested to discuss it again.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Position** | **2025 Approved Annual Compensation** | **Proposed Increase** | **New Annual Compensation** |
|  |  |  |  |
| Mayor | $3,000 | $3,000 | $6,000 |

Councilmember Sena introduced a motion to adopt the proposed increases retroactive to the beginning of the year; the motion was seconded by Councilmember Barrington. There were four votes in the affirmative, zero votes in the negative, and Councilmember Griner and Councilmember Quigley abstained for a conflict of interest, the motion passed.

**NEW BUSINESS**

Community member Sean McCartney brought a proposal to revitalize the basketball courts at Hayton Greene Park and would like the City to apply for a grant from the AgWest Farm Credit Local Advisory Committee Guided Stewardship program. The project would include: resurfacing the courts, painting lines, replacing the hoops, shade tents, benches, solar lighting, and a drinking fountain.

Councilmember Barrington introduced a motion to approve the project and for the City to submit the application; the motion was seconded by Councilmember Griner and unanimously approved.

**Committee Reports**

**Budget, Finance, Major Acquisitions** – No report.

**Streets, Property & Facilities** – Chair Brooks had no report.

**Personnel** – Chair Sena reported that interviews are underway for the Wastewater Treatment Plant Operator and Public Works Assistant for Parks and Cemetery.

**Water & Sewer** – Chair Griner reported that the Department of Ecology is satisfied with progress and wants to move to quarterly meetings.

**Policy & Administration** – Chair Barrington reported that the committee is continuing work on financial policies, the Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) policy, and a review of the council rules of procedure. The committee also will discuss policy options regarding the recording of meetings.

**Joint Fire Board** – No report.

**COUNCILMEMBER COMMENTS**

Councilmember Brooks thanked the volunteers who helped move the barricades from the Flat House to around the St. Elmo Hotel:

Clifford Jones

Willy Woltering

Marv Pillers

Monte Nearing

Ed Griner (truck & trailer)

Angie Griner

Mike Wolf

Molly Quigley

**MAYOR’S REPORT**

Olympia Update – Mayor Sievers reported that he was able to attend the Association of Washington Cities’ City Action Days at the Capitol and met with Representative Mary Dye, Representative Joe Schmick, and Senator Mark Schoesler.

Tennis Court Update – The terms of the agreement with the Sate of Washington Recreation and Conservation Office don’t allow us to divest of a grant-funded project without replacing it with another public recreation facility. It can’t be a rehabilitation of an existing site – it must be new. The mayor will continue pursuing options and discussions with the Palouse School District.

Hiring Update – The Personnel Committee is meeting to conduct interviews, and the Deputy Clerk position is newly vacant. The position was posted and interviews will take place as soon as possible.

**PAYMENT OF THE BILLS**

Councilmember Sena introduced a motion to allow the payment of the bills; the motion was seconded by Councilmember Brooks and unanimously approved.

The following checks were approved for payment:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Payroll Paid | EFTs | $ 290.16 |
| Claims Paid | Checks 14399 – 14409 | $48,151.76 |
|  |  |  |
| Total |  | $48,441.92 |

**ADJOURNMENT**

Councilmember Griner introduced a motion to adjourn; the motion was seconded by Councilmember Sena and unanimously approved.

The meeting adjourned at 9:02 PM.

APPROVED: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

ATTEST: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_