

City of Othello
Regular Council Meeting
September 11, 2017

CALL TO ORDER:

Mayor Shawn Logan called the meeting to order at 6:31p.m. and led a silent invocation and the Pledge of Allegiance.

Present: Mayor Shawn Logan; Councilmembers: Genna Dorow, Corey Everett, Angel Garza, Larry McCourtie, John Lallas, and Mark Snyder.

Also Present: City Administrator Wade Farris; Department Heads: Police Chief Phil Schenck, Finance Officer Spencer Williams; Building and Planning Secretary Trisha Tolley and City Attorney Jennifer Hansen.

Absent: Councilmember Eugene Bain.

Council carried a motion to excuse the absence of Councilmember Eugene Bain. M/S McCourtie/Dorow

CITIZEN INPUT

There was none.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Council carried a motion to approve the agenda. M/S Dorow/MCCourtie.

CONSENT AGENDA:

- A. Approval of City Council Minutes of August 28, 2017
- B. Approval of Special City Council Meeting of September 8, 2017
- C. Approval of Accounts Payable Checks
- D. Approval of Payroll and Related Expense
- E. Set Public Hearing on Revenue Sources for 2018 for October 2, 2017

Accounts Payable was audited and certified by the Auditing Officer, as required by RCW 42.24.080; and those expense reimbursement claims certified and as required by RCW 42.24.090, have been recorded on a listing that has been reviewed by the Council audit committee and is available to the Council.

Accounts Payable Check No. 48634 to No. 48701 in the amount of \$240,610.73.
Payroll and Related Expenses Check No. 30629 to No. 30699 in the amount of \$407,668.43.

Council carried a motion to approve the Consent Agenda, as presented. M/S Garza/Snyder.

UTILITY ORDINANCE DISCUSSION

Finance Officer Spencer Williams explained what was the best way to treat the Utility Tax fund moving into the future which is an item we've discussed before. The Utility Tax fund revenues are considered General Fund revenues for financial reporting purposes. In many Cities, these revenues are received directly into the General Fund and used as needed. When Othello implemented these Utility Taxes, the decision was made to receive them into their own fund. These are taxes on the sale of natural gas, electricity, cable, telephone, water and Sewer.

Mr. Williams stated his question to consider is the need for this fund today. Should we dissolve this fund and receive these revenues directly into the General fund, or should we keep the fund as is? This question was raised, in part, because of the constant need to change the Othello Municipal Code (OMC) through ordinance, to allow the Council to use these funds to best meet the needs of the city. Before we pass the budget each year, we must pass a resolution stating the percentage of Utility Tax dollars we will use in the General Fund. This is redundant because we've already discussed how we want to use the dollars through the budget process. A third option would be to amend the OMC to take out the restrictive language and tie the fund usage to the approved budget. This last option would: 1. leave this fund separate from the General Fund and 2.

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rid us of the need of regular amendments to the OMC. This last option may be the best of both worlds. Councilmember Lallas recommended Mr. Williams move forward with this.

TRANSPORTATION BENEFIT DISTRICT DISCUSSION

Finance Officer Spencer Williams talked about the possibility of the City assuming the Transportation Benefit District (TBD). He mentioned that we've had this discussion before and it's worth bringing up again. The TBD is a separate legal entity; and we treat it as such. It has its own: meetings, budget, insurance, financials, audit, etc. Mr. Williams explained that If we assume it into the City it will not be sucked into the General fund or into the Street fund. It will remain its own fund. Nothing will change about how the money is used. We legally can't change what this money is used for. It's a restricted pot of money. If we assume it into the city we will save time (meetings) and money (audit, insurance). A lot of cities are doing this because of the benefits.

Councilmember Garza said as long as the money is used for improvements of our streets. Councilmember Dorow wanted to make sure we educated the public on this change so that they know the money is still used for the cities street. Councilmember Lallas recommended Mr. Williams move forward on this.

PROPOSED 4-WAY STOPS AT ASH ST AND 10TH AVE

Police Chief Phil Schenck commented that the City has a traffic safety and congestion issue at Ash and 10th. This issue is caused by morning and afternoon parents dropping and picking up their students at McFarland Middle School. We believe a 4-way stop at this intersection will assist traffic from 10th moving onto or through Ash. Additionally, this will make it safer for students to cross Ash on their way to and from school.

Brooke French Principle at McFarland Middle School explained the concerns they have with the situation at McFarland with the drop off, picking up and traffic congestion they have. They have tried to create more parking but it's not enough.

A discussion was held between Council, Mayor Shawn Logan and City staff. The consensus was to put flashing stop lights at 10th and Ash Street.

WATER METER READING SOFTWARE

Finance Officer Spencer Williams explained the City will need to update our meter reading software, because our current software (Connect) is no longer supported. The replacement software is called 'Beacon'. The City currently uses Connect software as an interface between the customer waters meters and our financial billing system. The Public Works Department collects these reading every month and turns this information in to our Utility Biller. The billings are then created. Connect was discontinued in late 2015 and we've been limping this system along for two years. Due to more frequent computer issues, it's time to update our system to the new software. This would have an initial cost of \$10,700 and then annual fees of about \$2,729.68.

Council carried a motion to upgrade the city's water meter reading software. M/S Dorow/Lallas

RESOLUTION TO SURPLUS PUBLIC WORKS ITEMS

Public Works Director Terry Clements mentioned that on October 11th, the City of Othello will be holding a silent auction at City Hall for surplus items. Public works has some items that are no longer needed for our department and we would like to add the following items to the auction. We are asking council to allow for these items to be surplused:

- Pool Table – originally from the Fire Department. Asking for a minimum bid of \$200.
- 1990 Reel Mower – Toro has given it a trade-in value of \$1500. It has been replaced by the new 2017 Toro Mower – Asking for a minimum bid of \$2,000.
- Cash Registers X 2 – Originally purchased for the pool. These registers no longer meet the state auditors cash receipt detail requirements. They have been replaced with an auditor approved cash registers

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Council carried a motion to APPROVE THE RESOLUTION SURPLUSING THE ITEMS FOR THE SILENT AUCTION. M/S. Dorow/Lallas This shall be known as Resolution No. 2017-23

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Councilmember McCourtie asked about the IT position and progress on 1st Ave. City Administrator Wade Farris stated that the city had decided to go out for proposals from IT companies to remotely monitor our systems. City Engineer Kurt Holland addressed the 1st Ave issue and had a rough guess of the end of October for completion.

NEW BUSINESS

Councilmember Garza asked about the apartments on 940 E Main St. Police Chief Phil Schenck indicated that they are working with the landlord. At this time they are considered condemned.

Councilmember McCourtie indicated that the debris in front of 1010 E Main needs to be taken care of. Police Chief Phil Schenck said he would have Heather look into it.

Police Chief Phil Schenck wanted to let the council know about the block parties that will be taking place next the Thursday after the fair. He will get them a list so they know where they are and would be making it a competition to see which council members can visit every one of them.

Mayor Shawn Logan reminded council about the strategic planning. A form was sent out by our Grant Writer and Moderator to be completed by council by the 22nd or 23rd of September.

Police Chief Phil Schenck notified the council that the VFW and the Explorers will be raising the POW flag at 8am on Friday September 15, 2017 at our flag pole.

Councilmember Lallas indicated that a committee of himself and Eugene Bain have been going over the rates for increases for solid waste. They looked into finding an area down off of Hwy 24 for setting up a recycling area to help our citizens that want to recycle.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further items to discuss, Mayor Logan adjourned the Council meeting at 7:28 p.m.

By: _____
SHAWN LOGAN, Mayor

ATTEST:

By: _____
TRISHA TOLLEY, Building/Planning Secretary