

Osakis City Council – Regular Meeting
Ed Pollard Community Center – 20 Nokomis Street West
December 10, 2024
7:00 PM

Present: Dan Wessel, Laura Backes, Tim Thornbloom, Alan Larson, Stephanie Finnegan
Others Present: Angela Jacobson, Ila Anderson, Kirsten Wessel, Moli Swenstad, Lynnette Swenstad, Shannon Graff, Travis Middendorf, Randy Anderson, Joe Ecklund, Sam Converse, Chub Hensley (left before meeting started), Mike Kral, Derek Lang, Damion Majerus, Berkley Weber, Paul Hartmann, Curtis Nagel, Ryan Willet-Keppers, Tonya Danielson, Lance Spychalla, Brenda Majerus, Mike Olson, Judy Dvorsak, Brian Schablin, Brad Zimmer, Sharon Dirkes, Calvin Uhl, Farrukh Munik, Travis Redetzke, Carlene Dean (Osakis Anchor), Lisa Johnson (Echo Press), Justin Dahlheimer, Craig DropikTroy Benning, Darrin Quistorff, Eric Jacobson, Nikki Massman

Meeting was called to order by Mayor Wessel at 7:00 p.m.

Motion by Backes, seconded by Finnegan, to approve the agenda as presented, Open Floor comments will be cut off if not comments of respect and move the Mayor farewell to end. All Ayes

Motion by Finnegan, seconded by Backes, to approve the general consent items, including the November city bills in the amount of \$436,071.04, meeting minutes from November 12, 2024 and November 26, 2024. All Ayes

PROJECT #192/84/358: TRUTH IN TAXATION / BUDGET / TAX LEVY

The purpose of the hearing is to hear public comment regarding the proposed tax levy.

Motion by Larson, seconded by Thornbloom, to open the public hearing and suspend the regular meeting at 7:03 p.m. All Ayes

Clerk Jacobson went over the 2025 Budget highlights and reviewed how the levy works.

Final Budget Revenue for the General Fund is \$1,701,001 and Final Budget Expenditures for the General Fund is \$1,700,958.

The levy increase proposed is 6% which is \$49,822. General Fund levy – \$808,822. Includes the 2012 Bond in the amount of \$28,000 and Reserve Fund in the amount of \$43,359 for a total of \$880,181.

Council heard public comments. Paul Hartmann – questions on the fund balance. Jacobson explained the General Fund Balance and total city funds including Liquor Store, EDA, Water and Sewer.

Motion by Backes, seconded by Larson, to close the public hearing at 7:25 p.m. All Ayes

Resolution 2024-35 was presented by Backes, seconded by Thornbloom, to approve the final tax levy increase of 6% or \$49,822 for a total levy of \$880,181. When put to a vote, the resolution passes unanimously.

Motion by Backes, seconded by Finnegan, to approve the 2025 Budget as presented. All Ayes

PROJECT 24: LIQUOR STORE

Council received the November Liquor Store Reports:

- Off-Sale total – \$-14,801.56
- On-Sale total – \$-14,739.77
- Total Profit – \$-29,541.33

Troy Benning introduced himself as the new Liquor Store Manager. Benning has only been with the city for a few days.

Councilmember Thornbloom discussed with the council the part-time employee wages. Currently we hire at \$12.50 and if they have done well, they will get a raise to \$13.00. Thornbloom would like to see the \$13.00 increased to \$14.00.

Motion by Thornbloom, seconded by Finnegan, to approve \$13.00 per hour for new part-time Liquor Store employees and then to raise it to \$14.00 per hour by the manager. Existing part-time Liquor Store employees at \$13.00 will move to \$14.00 per hour as of November 1, 2024. All Ayes

Discussed the sewer line project. Motion by Backes, seconded by Finnegan, to approve the Mission Mechanical bid for installation of sewer lines in the amount of \$9,922.00. All Ayes

PROJECT #73: FIRST RESPONDERS

Shannon Graff discussed adding Lindsey Hann to the First Responder roster. Haan already is a trained EMT. Received resignation from Colton Thieschafer.

Graff also informed the council that the First Responder rig needs maintenance. A quote from Ultimate Auto was for \$5,600.00.

Motion by Backes, seconded by Finnegan, to approve to hire Lindsey Hann and start her pay as she is a trained EMT already. All Ayes

Motion by Backes, seconded by Finnegan, to accept the resignation for Colton Thieschafer with regret. All Ayes

PROJECT #60: ORDINANCE / ADMINISTRATIVE CITATION

Gulbranson was not present to give the council an update on the progress of the Administrative Citation Ordinance.

PROJECT #76: POLICE

Mayor Wessel spoke to the council about an October visit to the Douglas County Dispatch and saw how it works. Wessel discussed the Auto Vehicle Location (AVL) in emergency vehicles – this shows dispatch where the vehicles are. Wessel has concerns because the AVL's in the Osakis Police Department vehicles have not been hooked up for 8 years – they are disconnected.

Wessel stated that if something were to happen to an officer, we would not know where they are located. If that happens – family can sue the city and the county.

Calvin Uhl stated – got new computers 2 1/2 years ago. Need a contract to hook up the box and that has not been agreed upon.

PROJECT #197: WATER PLANT / WATER TOWER

Quistorff – waiting for the nodes to install on the meters.

Motion by Backes, seconded by Larson, to approve Pay Application #12 for Eagle Construction in the amount of \$99,399.16. All Ayes

PROJECT #275: PIKE STREET PROJECT / INDUSTRIAL PARK

Motion by Larson, seconded by Thornbloom, to approve the payment for WSB in the amount of \$1,017. All Ayes

PROJECT #444/60: WASTE WATER PROJECT / I & I

Council reviewed the information with Eric Meester at the special meeting on November 30, 2024. Meester mentioned to get bids on the city doing the inspection from the main to each service.

Council discussed the I & I ordinance.

Things to consider:

- Compliance by December 31, 2025 – penalty fees would be applied January 1, 2026.
- Fees – sump pump inspections (55.07)
- Fees – private sewer lateral (55.07)
- Fees – certificate of compliance (55.07 B)
- Fee – penalty for a missed inspection (55.07. 2.D)
- Violation – fixed in 30 days or 90 days if excavation is required (55.10)
- Monthly surcharge if a violation is not corrected (55.11.3.A)

Quistorff commented on the MPCA settlement – discussed at the meeting – this is one of them to put in place as part of the qualification. For the record – we did the ordinance as a step in the process.

Motion by Larson, seconded by Thornbloom, to approve the I & I Ordinance as presented. All Ayes

PROJECT #312: OSAKIS BEAUTIFICATION TEAM

Amber Kral was not in attendance. Backes informed the council and public that February 22, 2025 will be the Hootenanny fundraiser.

PROJECT #7: COMMUNITY CENTER

Council received the following information:

- Al Neumann has been working to get the backroom insulated. This project should be started on December 16th.
- Neumann was not in attendance but wanted to discuss the Community Center floor – feels like we should hire a professional to get the floors stripped and waxed.
 - Talked about Service Master doing the floors. Larson will contact Neumann to discuss.
- City sent a letter to Nutrition Center Inc. regarding the renewal of their lease agreement at the Community Center. Currently, the rate per meal is \$.55. No increases have been made since 2019.

Motion by Backes, seconded by Finnegan, to approve to renew the lease at the current rate. All Ayes

PROJECT #94: GAS BID

Sealed bids for 2025 fuel were opened:

- Northdale Oil - \$.15 off per gallon.
- Deluxe Oil – only bid for Bulk Fuel.
- Morningstar Market - \$.08 off per gallon.

Motion by Backes, seconded by Thornbloom, to approve Northdale Oil for the City of Osakis fuel at \$.15 off per gallon and Deluxe Oil for Bulk Fuel. All Ayes

PROJECT #249: PLANNING & ZONING

The Planning & Zoning Commission held discussions regarding a Cannabis Ordinance at their last meetings. A public hearing will be held on December 19th, 2025 to hear public comment on the ordinance.

Larson commented about the need to have the meeting to approve the ordinance by year end.

Jacobson discussed the need because the state will not have anything in place by January nor will Douglas County have an ordinance in place by January 1st. Jacobson asked if it was necessary to be approved by the end of the year or can it wait until the January 13th, 2025 council meeting.

The public hearing will be on December 19th, 2024 – council will receive a draft copy and then see if the council needs to meet.

Motion by Backes, seconded by Finnegan, to approve the November 21, 2024 meeting minutes. All Ayes

PROJECT #441: PARK COMMITTEE

The Park Committee is looking to reapply for the DNR Outdoor Recreation Grant. The grant is due in March of 2025. Cost to apply is \$2,429 to apply and will be covered by Sourcewell funding.

To complete the project, we will need to complete a topographic survey. The cost is \$4,100 and we can apply for Sourcewell funding.

Motion by Backes, seconded by Finnegan, to approve to get the topographic survey and apply to Sourcewell for funding and approve the November meeting minutes. All Ayes

PROJECT #102: EDA

The EDA discussed selling the 8th Avenue Park property at their last meeting. The park has a swing set and half basketball court on the property and has not been highly used. The lot is the same size as the adjacent lot and the EDA is recommending to the city council to sell the lot for \$30,000. If sold, the requirement would be to have a house on the property.

Motion by Thornbloom, seconded by Finnegan, to approve to sell the 8th Avenue West Park lot for the amount of \$30,000. All Ayes

Motion by Backes, seconded by Finnegan, to approve the November 25th, 2024 EDA meeting minutes. All Ayes

PROJECT #80: GARBAGE SERVICE

The current garbage contract is with West Central Sanitation. This is a 7-year contract from April 2018 to April 2025.

It is time to negotiate the contract or go out for Requests for Proposals from all garbage companies.

Council will discuss in January.

PROJECT #382: UNION CONTRACT

MAPE and AFSCME unions have negotiated their contracts.

Finnegan stated – we discussed holding off until the new year to approve.

Wessel and Backes stated they both have not heard that – we want them done by the end of the year.

Backes said they deserve every bit for what they deal with.

Finnegan said no employee leaving because of pay or benefits – its because of co-workers and gossip.

Quistorff stood up and stated – the union has a Tentative Agreement – the council should vote on it. If the council had concerns, it should be discussed before now.

Motion by Backes, seconded by Thornbloom, to approve the MAPE and AFSCME contracts as presented with changes for 2025-2026. Ayes: Thornbloom, Backes, Wessel Against: Finnegan, Larson

Backes stated that she is canceling the LELS negotiations tomorrow and Backes removed herself from the Negotiation Committee.

PROJECT #414: SURPLUS SALE

The public auction on Bid2Buy was done on December 8th. Items sold will be picked up tomorrow.

PROJECT #3: ELECTED OFFICIALS TRAINING

Council members are required to attend the League of MN Cities training. Council members are to let city hall know if they will be attending and to get signed up.

PROJECT #22: CLERKS

Jacobson requested the office staff to attend training for understanding AI. This can help gather information, make forms, letters, agreements and etc. Training is January 28th, 2025 from 8:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. Registration is \$85 per person.

Finnegan – don't see why it could not be closed for the morning.

Motion by Finnegan, seconded by Thornbloom, to approve city hall staff to attend AI training on January 28th, 2025 from 8:30 to 12:00 p.m. in Fergus Falls and to close city hall for the training. All Ayes

PROJECT #507: PRESS RELEASE

Larson asked if the council gave permission to put out the press release.

Council was asked about it and they said they wanted to.

Larson stated – clerk has asked for votes before. Was a vote made? Larson stated he did not get to review.

No – it was not needed. Jacobson stated that no one asked to review the press release.

Mayor Wessel – Al, you were not at the meeting and we are moving on.

PROJECT #196: FEE SCHEDULE

Council reviewed the 2025 Fee Schedule and water/sewer rates for 2025.

Motion by Finnegan, seconded by Thornbloom, to approve the water/sewer rates for 2025 and the 2025 Fee Schedule. All Ayes

PROJECT #89: ATTORNEY

Motion by Backes, seconded by Thornbloom, to approve for the Police Department to continue to use Megan Burkhammer and for civil and labor law use Flaherty and Hood Law firm. All Ayes

PROJECT #505: LAVENS LAKEVIEW DR

Mayor Wessel stepped away from discussion. Backes as acting mayor informed the council that Paul Sandy (WSB) is working and the feasibility and will present it when complete.

OPEN FLOOR

Tonya Danielson – the vacuum cleaner for the Community Center needs to be replaced. Tables are starting to look bad – stained because they are not cleaned. Chairs are also ripping. Need to take better care of the building.

Darrin Quistorff – thanked Mayor Wessel and Councilmember Larson for their service to the community.

Sharon Dirkes (604 8th Ave W) – commented that she thought we needed the 8th Avenue Park.

We have a housing need – costs are high to update the park. Properties around have playscapes and we have other properties that make better parks and there are other ones to go to.

Paul Hartmann commented on the police department – have had an opportunity for 27 to 28 years to remove the police department and contract it out to the county.

Have a friend that makes \$80,000 a year – how do we get people to work for the city if we don't pay \$80,000.

Hartmann also commented that the city should not be running a Liquor Store – government should not run a business. Hartmann feels it should be leased out to a private party to make money.

Ryan Willet-Keppers – we have a small police department and doesn't trust the county. The county gets there to late – suspect gets away with the crime before anyone is there. Need officers in town.

Paul Hartmann commented that he had a burglary and all was handled by the county. Local cop showed up when it was done.

Mayor Wessel asked Curtis Nagel if he was recording. Mayor Wessel stated he did not say disband the police – he asked the council what to do with the ongoing problems.

Comment made that the minutes are available one month after the meeting – and the video for the public to watch is right away.

PROJECT #492: MAYORS FARWELL

Mayor Wessel stated that this last year has been lots of lies, miss information and slander that has happened. Wessel has had his name and picture on signs that are disrespectful.

Wessel thanked all of the people that supported him and for those that did not support him, he stated he will pray for you.

Farwell, as this is my last meeting.

Motion by Thornbloom, seconded by Finnegan, to adjourn the meeting at 9:08 p.m. All Ayes

Mayor – Daniel J. Wessel

City Clerk/Treasurer – Angela A. Jacobson