

**CITY OF EVART
REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING
December 6, 2021@ 8:00PM
Community Room at the Depot, 200 S. Main Street**

Mayor Chris Emerick led the assembly in the pledge of allegiance.

Mayor Emerick called the meeting to order at 8:01pm.

Present (via roll call): Sean Duffy, Dan Elliott, Chris Emerick, Matt Hildebrand, Sandra Szeliga

Present (staff): City Manager Pepper Lockhart, Chief of Police John Beam Jr., City Clerk Kathy Fiebig

Guests: Jason O'Dell, Jim Schwab, Roger Elkins

Citizens' Comments:

Roger Elkins remarked that the refinished floor at the west end of the Depot looks great.

Jason O'Dell has been reflecting on the Oxford school shootings and believes that it's time to approach kid's issues in a different manner. It's time to look for the root of the problems and address issues at home in an effort to forestall problems at school. He is looking forward to the Community Resource Officer and is happy to hear that the position will not be restricted to the school system but will address the entire community. There was already a need for mental health services in Evart and COVID has increased that need. He reminded council that last year the Planning Commission was tasked with looking at zoning in the industrial park in order to possibly change the focus of the park in order to make it easier to sell the lots. He hopes the city won't sell these lots piece meal until the Commission has had time to discuss the issue.

Approval of Agenda

Motion by Mayor Emerick to approve the agenda as presented. Support by Mr. Hildebrand.
Motion passed with all in favor.

Approval of Consent Agenda

A. Regular Council Minutes – November 18, 2021

B. Vendor's List \$61,110.72

C. Budget Amendments

Motion by Mr. Hildebrand to approve the consent agenda as presented. Support by Mr. Elliott.
Motion passed with all in favor.

Unfinished Business

D. Agreement to Sale – Lots 2 & 3 at the Evart Air Industrial Park - *tabled*

New Business

E. Request for Sewer Credit for 703 N. Pine Street

Ms. Lockhart advised council that a hose had been left running outside this residence and that it has been confirmed that none of the water entered the sewer system. Motion by Mr. Hildebrand to approve a sewer credit of \$734.87. Support by Mayor Emerick. Motion passed with all in favor.

F. Resolution 2021-22 Approving the Employment Agreement of the City Manager

Motion by Mr. Hildebrand to approve Resolution 2021-22 approving the employment agreement for Pepper Lockhart as city manager. Support by Mr. Elliott. Motion passed with all in favor.

G. Chief of Police Contract Amendment/Renewal

Ms. Lockhart reminded council that all Evert police officers received a raise recently, and that Chief Beam was not included in that process. Research has shown that his salary is low compared to others in the area. Mr. Hildebrand questioned the dates of the proposed contract as the final year (2027) only covers January through March. Chief said he hopes to retire then. Council requested that the contract be amended to show a full year in the final year of the contract since Chief can resign at any point with 30 days' notice. Motion by Mr. Duffy to approve Chief Beam's contract amending it to reflect the entire year of 2027 as suggested. Support by Ms. Szeliga. Motion passed with all in favor.

Motion by Mayor Emerick to approve Resolution 2021-24 approving Chief Beam's amended contract extension. Support by Mr. Elliott. Motion passed with a roll call vote; all were in favor.

H. Community Resource Officer

Ms. Lockhart and Chief Beam told council that although this position started out as a school liaison officer, after discussion with school administration and other stakeholders it was decided to expand the job description into a community resource officer. While the officer will work within the schools, he will also work throughout the city, focusing on mental health intervention. Chief stressed that this job description is a living document and that the duties will flex depending upon community needs. He considers applicant Paul Cushman to be highly qualified for the position and due to his law enforcement experience, believes Mr. Cushman's field training can be streamlined. Motion by Mr. Duffy to approve the job description for the Community Resource Officer and to authorize Chief Beam to offer the position to Mr. Cushman. Support by Mr. Hildebrand. Motion passed with all in favor.

I. Sale/Lease of Lot 2 and the McClellan Building

Ms. Fiebig has received calls asking about the possibility of leasing the McClellan Building, as the real estate posting states the property is "for sale or lease." The current tenant, although on a month-to-month lease now, has been in the building for many years and supports Ventra. She asked council to remove the "for lease" option from the listing, modifying it to "for sale, with a 90 day notice required for the current tenant." Motion by Mr. Hildebrand to modify the listing as suggested. Support by Mayor Emerick. Motion passed with all in favor.

J. Approval to move forward with OHM for engineering costs for River St. and High St.

Ms. Lockhart and Mr. Elliott attended a meeting of the Rural Task Force to discuss possible improvements to High Street/River Street, the only street within the city limits that qualifies as a rural transportation road. This has been on the Task Force's list for several years and the Task Force is now considering releasing funding for resurfacing (three-four inch chip and grind). The Osceola County Road Commission is willing to contribute \$219,000 for the project. The city must provide a preliminary estimate of the cost, as when the street was first considered it was only for chip and seal. Council authorized Ms. Lockhart to proceed with obtaining a cost estimate from OHM. No further action taken.

K. Renewal of Health Insurance

Ms. Lockhart has three quotes in hand for health insurance but the city is locked into Blue Cross Blue Shield until the end of the fiscal year. She will continue to seek alternate plans in hopes of reducing the cost for both the city and all city employees. The options are limited now due to the structure of the contract with Blue Cross Blue Shield, but she believes that in the future, the city will be able to offer employees choices in coverage.

Department/Informational Reports (No Action Needed)

L. Accounts Payable Report (11/19/2021 – 12/6/2021)

M. Payroll Reports (11/19/2021 – 12/6/2021)

N. Revenue and Expense Report – November 2021

City Attorney Report/Comment – no report**City Clerk Report/Comment**

Ms. Fiebig told council that Dick Witbeck and the Witbeck Family Reunion have donated a new Riverside West sign for the intersection of South Main and 9th Street. The new sign will replace the sign they had previously donated. It has deteriorated and is in poor condition.

City Manager Report/Comment

Ms. Lockhart confirmed that there is funding available for the grant match for the proposed new police vehicle. Plans are well underway for Miracle on Main Street.

Finance Director Report/Comment – no report**Department of Public Works Report/Comment** – no report**Police Department Report/Comment**

Chief Beam told council that the Shop with a Hero event went well. Twenty first responders purchased Christmas gifts for twenty-nine kids and their families. The action plan for Miracle on Main Street is being reviewed and modified as needed. He's hired an electrician to replace the exterior lighting at the police station, and the electrician will also check the Christmas lighting that is out of order. The camera grant has been submitted and will be reviewed in January. Trail cams have been installed to protect the bridge lighting and are working well. Mr. Duffy has received several emails commenting on increasing crime and the lack of visibility of officers on the street. He noted that the police report shows our part time officer exceeding full time officers in calls. He hopes all officers are out on patrol rather than staying in the office.

Downtown Development Authority Report/Comment – no report**Evart Area Fire Department** – no report**Evart Housing Commission** – no report

Mr. Duffy requested that the City Attorney submit a written report of activity similar to those submitted by the Police Department and DPW. Ms. Lockhart will pass that request on to Mr. White.

Citizens' Comments: none

Motion by Mayor Emerick to adjourn. Support by Mr. Elliott. Motion passed with all in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 8:48pm.


Kathy Fiebig

City Clerk