

COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
Tuesday October 25th, 2022, 5:30 P.M.
City Hall Council Chambers
115 N 3rd Street

The Council of the City of Oregon met Tuesday October 25th, 2022, at 5:30 P.M.

The meeting was held at the City Hall Council Chambers and on Zoom.

Present: Mayor Ken Williams
Commissioner Melanie Cozzi
Commissioner Tim Krug
Commissioner Terry Schuster
Commissioner Kurt Wilson
City Administrator Darin DeHaan
Police Chief Joe Brooks
City Attorney Paul Chadwick
City Clerk Cheryl Hilton

Also Present: Charles Armbruster, Barb Battaglini, Public Works Director Bill
Covell, Linda & Doug Engle, Judy Groharing, Johanna Hahne,
George Howe, Dan Luepkes, and Ryan Magnoni.

Present via Zoom: Corey Buck and Alexa Zoellner.

Commissioner Tim Krug started the pledge of allegiance.

Mayor Ken Williams called the meeting to order.

Mayor Ken Williams opened public comment and explained the process of public comment.

Johanna Hahne said she opposes the solar farm due to the location of the project. She believes the location would be better suited for future development.

Judy Groharing said she opposes the solar farm due to the location and the visibility of the solar farm to the neighbors.

Doug Engle said he asked when the citizens of Oregon were allowed to participate in the process of the proposed solar farm. He feels the residents were left out of the process. He stated the solar farm would be visible from his home. He feels the project could be in a better location. Mayor Ken Williams said two public hearings were held and the 1st project was not approved. Commissioner Terry Schuster asked about the ability of the residents to have some input in this process. He asked the residents if they received information from the company regarding the project and if anyone reached out to the company for more information. Doug Engle replied yes, they received information, but no one reached out to the company.

Dan Luepkes, landowner, stated he doesn't agree with everyone's concerns. He said people will always resist change that's in their backyard. He said there would be five to six months where corn plants will hide the solar farm. He said the next generation of our society really consider clean energy a benefit to a community.

Barb Battaglini said she would not object to new homes being built in the subdivision.

Judy Groharing also said she would not be opposed to new homes being built. She also asked about the clean up of the corn husks along the fencing of the solar farm.

Public Hearing closed at 5:49 PM.

Commissioner Kurt Wilson moved to approve the October 11th, 2022, minutes, Seconded by Commissioner Terry Schuster.

Roll Call: Cozzi, Krug, Schuster, Wilson, Williams. No Nays.

Commissioner Terry Schuster moved to approve payroll in the amount of \$57,776.43 and the current warrants as listed:

A C Pavement Striping Co.	\$6,456.13
Aegis Construction, Inc	\$3,925.00
Ancel Glink, P.C.	\$57.50
Autumn on Parade	\$345.00
Bev Olson	\$105.00
Bill Covell	\$40.00
Byron Bank	\$4,261.54
Byron Bank	\$1,969.95
Casper's Home Inspection LLC	\$1,450.00
Cassandra Chapman	\$600.00
CDW Government	\$3,853.16
Cheryl Hilton	\$40.00
Chris Oltmanns	\$5.00
City of Oregon	\$5,000.00
City of Oregon	\$72,400.00
Comcast	\$94.95
Comcast	\$169.95
ComEd	\$35.74
ComEd	\$46.32
Constellation NewEnergy, Inc	\$4,301.10
Devin DeHaan	\$40.00
Dustin Runyon	\$40.00
Ehmens	\$1,220.44
Engel Electric Co	\$217.50
Engel Electric Co	\$48,223.45

Envision Healthcare, Inc	\$254.00
Euclid Managers	\$1,408.68
Ferguson Waterworks #2516	\$1,740.75
Ferguson Waterworks #3325	\$225.66
Frontier	\$58.26
Graf Tree Care	\$5,048.00
Gregory Spencer	\$40.00
Hagemann Horticulture LLC	\$1,150.00
Hawkins, Inc	\$1,375.50
Helm Civil	\$139,114.14
I Fiber	\$180.00
Illinois AWPCO	\$40.00
Illinois EPA	\$58,374.60
Illinois Municipal League Risk Mtg	\$88,142.22
James Evans	\$6,000.00
Jayce Gusloff	\$40.00
Jeff Pennington	\$40.00
Joseph Brooks	\$24.00
Joseph Brooks	\$70.00
Josh Lee	\$40.00
Josiah Flanagan	\$40.00
Ken Williams	\$184.03
Kurt Wilson	\$65.00
Layne	\$62,514.30
Leslie Penoyer	\$10.00
Lindsay Wicker	\$27.00
Luke Ellis	\$40.00
Lynn Kaufman	\$35.00
M & M Equipment Auto Sales, Inc	\$23,510.00
Maison Crawford	\$40.00
Manheim Solutions, Inc	\$2,592.00
Mary Elliott	\$40.00
Matt Kalnins	\$40.00
MCS Advertising	\$75.00
Melanie Cozzi	\$65.00
Mobile Electronics	\$202.50
Moring Disposal	\$68.00
NAPA	\$179.99
Northern Illinois University	\$11,500.00
Ogle County Clerk & Recorder	\$60.00
Oregon Snyder	\$474.83
Pace Analytical Services	\$111.86

Polo Cooperative Association	\$4,857.71
Postmaster	\$733.92
Rush Power System	\$1,361.94
Sauk Valley Media	\$301.75
Scott Wallace	\$40.00
Secretary of State	\$163.00
Share Corp	\$479.77
Stillman BancCorp	\$2,863.65
Sue Cozzi	\$15.00
Sun Life Financial	\$382.58
Tad Dominski	\$12.65
Tad Dominski	\$40.00
Terry Schuster	\$65.00
Tim Brechon	\$40.00
Tim Krug	\$40.00
Traffic Control & Protection Inc	\$1,746.60
Verizon	\$535.71
Village of Progress	\$934.60
William Thomas	\$10.00
Zach McKean	\$40.00
	\$574,801.93

Seconded by Commissioner Melanie Cozzi.

Roll Call: Cozzi, Krug, Schuster, Wilson, Williams. No Nays.

Commissioner Tim Krug moved to table the Job Description for Superintendent of Streets, Seconded by Commissioner Kurt Wilson.

Discussion: Commissioner Tim Krug said the job description is still being worked on and is not finalized.

Roll Call: Cozzi, Krug, Schuster, Wilson, Williams. No Nays.

Commissioner Terry Schuster moved to approve ComEd Audit Agreement \$5,000.00, Seconded by Commissioner Kurt Wilson.

Discussion: Commissioner Terry Schuster said about five years ago, the city entered into an agreement with a company called Azavar. Azavar performed an audit of all the utilities in the city. The purpose of the audit was to make sure the taxes collected were going to the right taxing body. Over the course of the years, they have found utility bills that were going to the county instead of the city and have been fixing them. About a year ago ComEd pushed back because Azavar has been doing this across northern Illinois. There was a final settlement that says the municipality will receive five thousand dollars from ComEd.

Roll Call: Cozzi, Krug, Schuster, Wilson, Williams. No Nays.

Commissioner Tim Krug moved to Engineer's Pay Estimate for Martin & Company for the 2022 Street Reconstruction Project on Jefferson & Madison Street, Seconded by Commissioner Kurt Wilson.

Discussion: Commissioner Tim Krug said the project cost an additional eight thousand dollars but was still under the engineer's estimate. Public Works Director Bill Covell said there was unsuitable material that needed to be removed and replaced. A manhole was also replaced during this project.

Roll Call: Cozzi, Krug, Schuster, Wilson, Williams. No Nays.

Commissioner Tim Krug moved to approve Engineer's Pay Estimate #7 to O'Brien Civil Works for 3rd Street Reconstruction, Seconded by Commissioner Melanie Cozzi.

Discussion: Commissioner Tim Krug stated this project also cost an additional eight thousand dollars. Public Works Director Bill Covell said there was an increase in the cost of the asphalt surface material. He also stated concrete diamonds were installed around all manholes. The addition of the concrete diamonds will be part of the estimate for any street project going forward. Mayor Ken Williams said the total cost of the project was nine hundred and seventy-eight thousand dollars.

Roll Call: Cozzi, Krug, Schuster, Wilson, Williams. No Nays.

Mayor Ken Williams moved to approve the Annexation Agreement for USS Ducks Solar, Seconded by Commissioner Kurt Wilson.

Discussion: Ryan Magnoni presented the proposed changes to the solar project. The largest change was to the location of the project, which is farther west. The seventy acres of property will need to be annexed into the city. He said they have worked with an engineer for the placement of the project. The plan for the landscape screening has not yet been created by a landscape architect. If specific trees and shrubs are requested to be used for the project, they will be presented with the building permits and approved by the city. The access to the solar farm was also changed to the far west of the project at an existing farm access. The project will support about eleven hundred and twenty-five homes, about seventy percent of the homes in Oregon. He said this is not a permanent structure and the land will be brought back to suitable farmland. He also said a maintenance company will service the solar project about five to six times per year to provide required maintenance. He said he hopes the City Council can see all the advantages of the project. He also stated approval tonight does not give them the ability to build anything, it is only for the land use.

Mayor Ken Williams stated the board members could ask the petitioner any questions they had and then the Council would have discussion after that. He also said a yes vote for annexation allows the solar company to build the solar farm with state approval. It is

not a two-step process. They will not need to come back to City Council for approval to build the solar farm.

Commissioner Terry Schuster said the petitioner stated the energy supplied could support seventy percent of the homes in Oregon. His understanding was the energy would go back into the grid and could not be used specifically for the City of Oregon. Ryan Magnoni said because this is not connecting into transmission but is connecting into the distribution grid. The power can only go into what is in the distribution grid. Mayor Ken Williams said there are five distribution grids in the city. The power could not cross Rt 64 because that is a different line that comes into the city. Commissioner Terry Schuster also said in twenty years the project would be decommissioned and returned to farmable land. However, this is a lifetime for many people, and many would not see this.

Commissioner Tim Krug was under the assumption that the new location was out of sight for the residents. Ryan Magnoni stated about ninety percent is out of view. There is a valley where some homes will be able to see it. The screening will help to hide the solar farm.

Commissioner Melanie Cozzi asked how much energy would be collected on overcast days. Ryan Magnoni said once the temperature gets above seventy-five degrees you start to lose energy. Colder temperatures allow for more energy generation. These solar panels collect energy from the top side as well as the bottom side, during the winter months more energy is collected due to the reflection of the snow on the ground. Commissioner Melanie Cozzi asked what types of plants would be used on the solar farm and if they would be approved by the City Council. Ryan Magnoni stated the trees and shrubs around the solar farm would be prepared by landscape engineers and would have to be approved by City Council. Commissioner Kurt Wilson stated the Tree Board could be asked to review the plans.

Commissioner Tim Krug stated he is for the solar farm and green energy. He said Dogwood trees do lose their leaves and could an evergreen tree be used. Ryan Magnoni said the trees are typically a mix of trees but would still need to be approved by the city. He also said if the city wants a line of evergreen trees only that is what they would provide. Commissioner Tim Krug said he thought the proposed property would be completely out of view of the residents and he would not like to see this from his home.

Mayor Ken Williams said the annexation shall be completed by no later than November of 2023. He asked Ryan Magnoni if there is an issue with the date. Ryan Magnoni said he has had conversations with the landowner and with City Administrator Darin DeHaan. He believes they will have approval by then, the issue is with having the materials to build. They would begin construction next year after the landowner has removed his crops for the year. Mayor Ken Williams said he is only concerned with the timeline regarding the annexation. City Attorney Paul Chadwick stated the annexation date will be included in the agreement. Mayor Ken Williams said this agreement does not mean construction has to be completed by November 1st, only that if the City Council votes yes tonight then they have twelve months to annex, or the project drops off the books. He

also asked what the odds are for this project qualifying for the state program. Ryan Magnoni stated he believes the odds are above fifty percent.

Commissioner Melanie Cozzi asked if the twenty-year cycle begins when a permit is approved or when the project is constructed. She also asked about construction time. Ryan Magnoni said the twenty-year lifespan begins when the solar farm is operational. He said there is about a month and a half of construction and a month of testing with ComEd.

Commissioner Terry Schuster stated he voted no for the first project because of the visibility and impact to the residents and closing off the area for future development. The first project was further to the south and the construction road was along the west side of the subdivision. That project was voted down. He said when project two was brought up he believed it would be a great solution because it would be set back and not visible. He said the western row of home in the subdivision look down into the valley. There will be homes that will have a view of the valley. He was invited to a homeowner's property to see for himself. He said the visibility issue from the first solar project proposal has not been resolved and there is still an impact on the homeowners except now there are ten homes impacted instead of four or five homes at the south end. He is also concerned with resale value. There will be eight months before the corn is high enough to hide the solar farm. He really wanted this project to work.

Mayor Ken Williams asked what the landscape screening would look like. Ryan Magnoni said they want to be good neighbors. The city can decide the specific tree and size on the building permit. Commissioner Tim Krug asked about the size of the trees. Ryan Magnoni said six-foot trees are transplanted, larger trees tend to die off. He also said the landowner would have to agree to the proposed landscape screening. Commissioner Terry Schuster said a barrier along the back lot line could hide the solar farm from view for the homeowners. Commissioner Tim Krug said a row of evergreens could be planted along the back lot line; he would not mind seeing a row of trees. Dan Luepkes said he would not have a problem with the planting of trees along the lot line. He will lose a little farmland and so will the homeowners, but he is ok with the row of trees. Mayor Ken Williams said the row of trees would need to be along the thirteen homes affected. Commissioner Terry Schuster stated each homeowner would need to decide if they would want a row of trees along their lot line. Commissioner Melanie Cozzi asked if the trees would be too acidic for Dan Luepkes to farm. He said he would lose a little productivity in that area, but he is willing to do this to further the project. City Attorney Paul Chadwick said the current agreement has a reference for development standards which would include the height of the panels and any fences. He asked if this material was provided. Ryan Magnoni said it is included in the packet presented to the Planning Commission.

Commissioner Terry Schuster moved to amend the motion to Approve Annexation Agreement for USS Ducks Solar pending approval of a natural evergreen screening not less than six foot in height, located along the west lot line of the subdivision and the

adjoining farmland at the developers cost to install but subject to approval of the homeowners, Seconded by Commissioner Melanie Cozzi.

Roll Call: Cozzi, Krug, Schuster, Wilson, Williams. No Nays.

Mayor Ken Williams moved to approve the Annexation Agreement for USS Ducks Solar as amended, Seconded by Commissioner Kurt Wilson.

Roll Call: Cozzi, Yea. Krug, Yea. Schuster, Nay. Wilson, Yea. Williams, Yea.

Commissioner Terry Schuster moved to approve City Council salary recommendation for next term based on cost-of-living increases, Seconded by Commissioner Kurt Wilson.

Discussion: Mayor Ken Williams read the ordinance regarding the increase in City Council salary. He said the Council is required to review this ordinance for the incoming City Council. Commissioner Terry Schuster addressed the impact on the budget. The current budget for commissioner salaries is twenty-two thousand seven hundred dollars. It would increase to twenty-four thousand dollars which is an increase of about one hundred and sixty-three dollars per month. Mayor Ken Williams said the increase is for all commissioners, divided five ways.

Roll Call: Cozzi, Krug, Schuster, Wilson, Williams. No Nays.

City Administrator Darin DeHaan stated he has been working with Morton Arboretum to finalize the tree ordinance. The creation of the ordinance is a requirement of the grant the city received. He also stated the ordinance was created to have strong protection of the trees located on public property. The ordinance contains built in protections for the trees such as fencing around trees when work is being done, cash bonds in case there is damage to a tree, and consequences if the trees are damaged. A suggested fine schedule is also in the ordinance. Commissioner Melanie Cozzi asked if this ordinance will protect trees in developed areas. City Administrator Darin DeHaan stated his next step is to create a forest management plan. If a development comes in, they will need approval from the City Council and the Tree Board. The next step will be to create the process for developers to gain approval. Mayor Ken Williams asked the City Council to review the ordinance and it will be voted on at the next meeting.

Public Works Director Bill Covell said they picked up the new chipper. They are looking forward to putting it to use and saving the city some money.

Commissioner Kurt Wilson said has spoken with Randy Cropp, Code Enforcement Officer, about a few things and he is looking forward to great things happening with the position.

Commissioner Terry Schuster said he is really enjoying working with members of the City Council. He said nothing is taken for granted. Everyone was asking questions, fully

engaged, and participating in the conversation tonight. He said it really stands out among other municipal governments. He is happy to be a part of this council.

Commissioner Melanie Cozzi said the farmer's market is closed for the season. She updated the City Council on how they were able to provide Link at the market. The service was provided last year as well. This year they applied for the Link match program that allowed any SNAP dollar spent to be doubled by the Link match. This service was for fresh fruits and vegetables. With the SNAP program they were able to provide four hundred and sixty-one dollars in sales of fresh local food and four hundred and seven dollars were applied directly to the Link match program. Mayor Ken Williams asked if there was a way to promote the program more to get a higher turnout. Commissioner Melanie Cozzi stated she noticed when an advertisement was put into the newspaper, they had more customers.

Mayor Ken Williams said he had a great time at the reception for the new train car, Silver View. He said there is eagerness in the rehabilitation of the train car. He thanked everyone for an open and honest discussion.

Commissioner Terry Schuster moved to adjourn the meeting, Seconded by Commissioner Kurt Wilson.

Roll Call: Cozzi, Krug, Schuster, Wilson, Williams. No Nays.

Adjourn: 6:58 P.M.

Ken Williams, Mayor

Attest: _____
Cheryl Hilton, City Clerk