



**WATONGA CITY COUNCIL MEETING
MINUTES FOR MARCH 16, 2021**

In accordance with the Oklahoma Open Meeting Law, this Agenda was posted March 12, 2021 Prior to 5:00 PM. at the Watonga City Hall, on the door of the City Clerk's office, located at 117 North Weigle, Watonga, Oklahoma.

The City Council of the City of Watonga did meet at 6:00 PM on Tuesday, March 16, 2021 in the Auditorium of Watonga City Hall, located at 117 North Weigle, Watonga, Oklahoma for a scheduled meeting.

Invocation & Pledge of Allegiance:

Council Present: Julie Almaguer, Kendra Baker, Travis Bradt, Ryan Bruner, Allen Cowan, Lindsey Doyel, Mina Green and Bill Seitter. Also present, Mayor Gary Olsen, City Manger Larry Mitchell, City Attorney Jared Harrison and City Clerk Verlen Bills.

Declaration of a Quorum: at 6:01 PM.

CONSENT AGENDA

A. **Approve the Minutes** of the previous Special Council Meeting held February 19, 2021.

Motion to approve the Minutes of the previous Special Council Meeting held February 19, 2021 was made by Allen Cowan and seconded by Travis Bradt.

Mayor Olsen called for a vote;

J. Almaguer abstained K. Baker abstained T. Bradt aye R. Bruner aye
A. Cowan aye L. Doyel aye M. Green aye B. Seitter aye

Motion carried.

B. **Approve the Monthly Reports** from EMS, Fire Department, City Treasurer, Library and Watonga Police Department.

Mr. Mitchell: I also handed out a report from our Code Enforcement and Building Inspection Office. This is the first one of these we have done, but we will try to start doing this on a monthly basis so Council can see the activity. And, if you notice, unfortunately, there were 10 letters or notices sent out. It is getting to be that time of year.

Mr. Seitter: I appreciate the addition to the Treasurer's report showing the payments for Sales Tax and Use Tax reimbursement.

Motion was made by Ryan Bruner and seconded by Allen Cowan to approve the Monthly Department Reports which included reports from EMS, Fire Department, City Treasurer, Library, Watonga Police Department and Code Enforcement / Building Inspector's Office.

Mayor Olsen called for a vote;

J. Almaguer abstained K. Baker nay T. Bradt aye R. Bruner aye
A. Cowan aye L. Doyel aye M. Green aye B. Seitter aye

Motion carried.

C. Approve the Monthly Financial Report for February 2021 from RS Meacham.

Jeanna King from RS Meacham presented the Monthly Financial Report: Thank you for allowing me to present to you this evening. If you have any questions, please feel free to stop me and I will do my best to answer those for you. I did bring a new Light & Water Report to replace that page of the Financial Report.

Currently we are eight months into the fiscal year and we should be at 67% of budget in revenues or greater and 67% or less in expenditures. Also, I want to point out that this Financial Report does reflect the budget amendments that were approved by Council last month. So, these budget numbers should look better than they did last month because we have these amendments incorporated this time.

So you will look in the General Fund the total revenue in the very last column is 70% of budget. Which is great news. Your total expenditures are at 62% of the budget which is also a good number to have. We had Workman's Comp Premium that was paid in February, along with some other liability and property insurance. Those only happen quarterly so the Financial Report does not look as great as it did last month in the General Fund. But those things do not happen every single month. So, year-to-date, we are at a net loss of approximately \$107,000. However, that is still above budget, because we budgeted to have a net loss of about \$463,000 in the General Fund for the year.

In Light & Water, again, we're looking at that 67% as your target number. The number that changed in the Report that was handed out just now, is going to be the Administration Expenses, down in the last section. There was about \$54,000 in bad debt that was written off in February. However, this should not be reflected in the Financial Report. We have not been carrying that on the books officially. So, Dacia Phillips and I will get in Caselle (the accounting software) and get all that lined out. This correction to the Financial Report is about \$54,000 better than the original report. That's why we needed to show this change. The Light & Water Office has been working to get rid of some of those really old accounts or inactive accounts, where they're not here any longer.

Mr. Seitter asked, to confirm, the line that changed was Administration Expenses and this was the only line?

Ms. King confirmed, yes. that was the only line changed. And, this brings us to a much favorable position. Your monthly total for February is showing a net income now of \$22,919. In total, the Light & Water year-to-date has a net loss of about \$175,000. But, we have had almost \$375,000 expended in capital projects. So, operationally, we have \$199,135 net income year to date. So that's definitely a respectable number to have there.

On the Grant Fund, we can just move right past as there was not any activity in February.

In the Public Works Account year-to-date, we have a net income of \$28,907 which is above budget. The significant activity relates to expenditures that are part of the grants for the CEC Corporation doing the work at the airport.

Next is the Sales Tax Fund, we will just go to the net income line. Year-to-date we have a net income of \$39,923. That is almost \$20,000 above projections, a good place to be.

Ms. King continued: In the Street and Alley Fund, we did have some activity in February. The \$2,500 in Capital Outlay was a capital expense and that relates to the drainage project that is ongoing, I believe. So, year-to-date we have a net income in the Street and Alley Fund of \$37,616.

On to Sales Tax and I hate to end with this because we all know it is not great news. But, if we consider both Use Tax and Sales Tax, we are down 26%. In dollars, we are down about \$196,000 compared to the same time period last year, and that includes the March deposit. Year-to-date, Sales Tax is down \$446,000 and Use Tax is down \$150,000.

Mr. Seitter asked, would it be fair to say, all the months this year are being compared to the higher months of the previous year. And now, March of this year and March of last year have very similar numbers, does this indicate that we are leveling out?

Ms. King: Yes, I see what you're saying. In March of 2020 we started to see the decline. It was about \$141,000 in March of 2020. This March we are actually slightly above that. So hopefully, the huge decreases will tend to level out through the end of the year, which is about when the COVID-19 pandemic started, it's hard to believe that it's been that long.

And I believe we are still paying back the over payments in Sales Tax and Use Tax.

City Treasurer Rodney Jacks confirmed this.

Ms. King added, that will be skewing the numbers some.

Ms. King asked to take questions and thanked the Council.

Motion to approve the Monthly Financial Report from RS Meacham presented by Jeanna King was made by Allen Cowan and seconded by Lindsey Doyel.

Mayor Olsen called for a vote;

J. Almaguer aye

K. Baker aye

T. Brady aye

R. Bruner aye

A. Cowan aye

L. Doyel aye

M. Green aye

B. Seitter aye

Motion carried.

D. **Review and accept** the list of claims against the City of Watonga for the month of February, 2021.

Mr. Bradt asked about the Volunteer Pay to the Pension and the fact that it is all the same amount.

Mr. Mitchell explained that the Volunteers all get the same amount for a stipend.

Mr. Cowan asked about the \$14,496 to OMAG.

Between Mr. Mitchell, Mr. Jacks and Mr. Cowan it was determined that was the premium for Worker's Comp Insurance.

Mr. Jacks went on to explain Ewing Insurance is the local Insurance broker for OMAG.

Mr. Seitter asked, in the Street Department, there is \$14,000 to Vision Roll for roll-offs?

Mr. Mitchel explained that this was for brush cleanup from the recent storms.

Mr. Seitter asked, are we done with this?

Mr. Mitchell and Mayor Olsen both replied, we hope to be done (with the storms).

Mr. Bruner asked if we will get any reimbursement for this as the storm was declared disaster?

Mr. Mitchell: We have submitted our claim for that but it has to meet a certain threshold before they are approved or declared and there tends to be some lag in getting this done.

They are working on this, I sat in on a conference call / Zoom Meeting. There were six different people in this meeting all at different locations and they were working on three different storms, back to the ice storm in October of last year. And these State Employees are trying to work from home and get this work done.

Bill Seitter made the motion to accept the list of Claims against the City of Watonga for the month of February, 2021. Motion was seconded by Julie Almaguer.

Mayor Olsen called for a vote;

J. Almaguer aye

K. Baker nay

T. Brady aye

R. Bruner aye

A. Cowan aye

L. Doyel aye

M. Green aye

B. Seitter aye

Motion carried.

ACTION AGENDA

1. **Consideration, Discussion and Action:** The recommendation of Mayor Gary Olsen to appoint Dwight McGee to the Watonga Housing Authority Board for a 3 year term.

It was announced that Dwight McGee had asked to be removed from consideration. This Agenda Item died for lack of a motion.

2. **Consideration, Discussion and Action:** To enter into Executive Session to discuss and provide information to Watonga City Council regarding all current personnel matters regarding Watonga Police Department employees as authorized under Title 25 Section 307.B(1),(4) and (7).

Motion was made by Bill Seitter to enter into Executive Session to discuss and provide information to Watonga City Council regarding all current personnel matters regarding Watonga Police Department employees, as authorized under Title 25 Section 307.B(1),(4) and (7).

Motion was seconded by Julie Almaguer.

Mayor Olsen called for a vote;

J. Almaguer aye	K. Baker aye	T. Brady aye	R. Bruner aye
A. Cowan aye	L. Doyel aye	M. Green aye	B. Seitter aye

Motion carried at 6:19 PM.

Mr. Jacks collected all the Cell Phones from the room, except the Cell Phone of Kendra Baker.

3. **Consideration, Discussion and Action:** To exit Executive Session and reconvene Open Session.

Motion to exit Executive Session and reconvene Open Session was made by Allen Cowan and seconded by Ryan Bruner.

Mayor Olsen called for a vote;

J. Almaguer aye	K. Baker aye	T. Brady aye	R. Bruner aye
A. Cowan aye	L. Doyel aye	M. Green aye	B. Seitter aye

Motion carried at 7:36 PM

4. **Council Comments:**

Mrs. Baker: I have a question about the conditions of our roads on the east side of town. There are still barriers every which way and people can not get home.

Mr. Mitchell responded, Workman and A street repairs should be starting soon. We are waiting on insurance and bonds from the contractors and as soon as we get that we will have a pre-construction conference and get them started. That should be coming pretty soon.

At other locations, the roads need to dry out before Mr. Woldridge can really do anything. We are developing a list of problems and Mr. Woldridge is trying to get some prices for asphalt so that we can go out there and repair those problems.

There was discussion about how bad some locations are getting. Mrs. Baker noted that people were having to drive through yards to get down the street.

Mr. Bradt mentioned several other problem areas.

Mr. Mitchell allowed that some of our streets were poorly constructed years ago with no proper base. Moisture has gotten underneath the asphalt and add to this record breaking cold.

Mr. Bradt agreed and emphasized that nothing can be done until the streets dry out.

Mr. Cowan: asked the question of upcoming events with the change on government. Today we have eight Council Members and it is going to become a group of five Council Members, if my understanding is correct. Today, the Mayor has a wage or compensation and the Council Member are compensated. Whenever this change in government takes place, do we need to make some adjustments for compensation to the Mayor and Council?

Mayor Olsen answered that was already done.

City Attorney Jared Harrison noted, that was part of the lengthy Ordinance No. 674 that was passed at the previous Council Meeting of February 19. Mr. Harrison reviewed a few other items that were part of that Ordinance for this transition.

Mr. Seitter asked to confirm, the Municipal Election is April 6 and the next meeting following that, the new Council will be seated?

Mr. Mitchell: On April 20, the current council will open the meeting and then we will transition.

Mr. Harrison: We will still need a quorum of this Council to start that meeting, and then we will transition off to the races as a Council Manager Government.

5. Mayor Comments;

Mayor Olsen: I want to take this time to thank you all for allowing me the honor of serving as your Mayor, and as a Member of the Council for the 10 years that I served as a civil servant, I appreciate that. And, I want to thank all the Employees, Fire, Police the Light & Water Department, the Street & Alley, the Library and the Parks Department and all the Supervisors, and Employees, they've all done a good job. I really appreciate them. I recommend to other people in the community that they need to get together and put in their time in as I have done, it's been a wonderful experience.

I will start the next meeting. But I will not get to finish the meeting. So good luck to all of you in the upcoming election. And thanks again.

6. City Manager Comments;

Mr. Mitchell: I have a couple of good news items. I attended the Annual OMPA Board Meeting last week. During the meeting, they announced that OMPA will not pass on any additional cost due to the recent storms, and I think freeze is probably the wrong word to use here, but basically, they are going to maintain the current rates to OMPA communities. The rates will be fixed for the next couple of years. So, the only increase in your utility bill will be increases in the actual usage, but the rates will not change for the next year. I think that's very good news.

They said, typically they pay four or five dollars per unit of natural gas, and I am not sure what that unit is, but whatever that measurement is, at one point during the storm, for about a four day period they were paying as much as \$400 per unit. And , there were utility companies in Texas that were paying as much as \$1200 per unit. OMPA reported that the highest price they had ever seen in the past was \$35.00 per unit.

Travis Bradt: What OMPA is saying is that they will maintain the current rate?

Mr. Mitchell: For the next two years. What they have done is to refinance that cost over 10 years. So in year three, you may start seeing a bump up the utility rates.

The other good news is what we talked about earlier, The repairs at Workman and A Avenue. It's just another indication of the delays that you see from the fact that nobody is in an office. We got a call today from a bonding company, asking for some information. I think we'll get the bonds and insurance for the contractor rather quickly and get that job up and running shortly.

And a final thing, a public announcement. In 2015 the Council approved a rate structure that included a hookup fee of \$25.00 per meter. But, after 5 PM, that charge would go to \$50.00 for after hours, weekends and holidays. We have not been charging that extra \$25.00, but due to certain situations in request for utilities over the weekends and on holidays, we are going to start implementing that extra \$25.00. We just want to let everybody know that after April 1 the after hours service charge will be \$50.00.

We had some of our employees called out at two or three o'clock in the morning to turn on somebody's utility. As soon as the water meter was turned on, something would start leaking, so they went back 15 minutes later and turned it off. I think that's asking a little bit too much of our employees.

7. **Adjourn;**

Motion to adjourn was made by Allen Cowan and seconded by Julie Almaguer.

Mayor Olsen called for a vote;

J. Almaguer aye

K. Baker aye

T. Brady aye

R. Bruner aye

A. Cowan aye

L. Doyel aye

M. Green aye

B. Seitter aye

Motion carried at 7:46 PM

Mayor Gary Olsen

City Clerk, Verlen Bills

NOTICE:

The Governor signed HB 1031 on Wednesday February 10, 2021 amending the Open Meeting Act for the State of Oklahoma. It allows for Video Conferencing and Teleconference, but the City of Watonga will require a quorum to be present in person. And, remote locations must be listed on the Meeting Notice. As a Meeting Notice is posted 48 hours (2 working days) previous to a meeting, the City Clerk will need to be informed of any remote locations before this time. So, please allow the City Clerk's Office 48 hours or 2 working days notice at 580 623 4669.