

**CITY OF OWOSSO  
REGULAR MEETING OF THE CITY COUNCIL  
MINUTES SYNOPSIS  
TUESDAY, JANUARY 17, 2023**

**PRESENT:** Mayor Robert J. Teich, Jr., Mayor Pro-Tem Susan J. Osika, Councilmembers Janae L. Fear, Jerome C. Haber, Daniel A. Law, Emily S. Olson and Nicholas L. Pidek.

**ABSENT:** None.

**PROCLAMATIONS/SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS**

Audit Presentation. Gabridge & Company CPA Matthew Holland presented the annual audit for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2022. The City received an unmodified opinion.

**PUBLIC HEARINGS**

Special Assessment District No. 2023-04. A public hearing was conducted to receive citizen comment regarding the authorization of Resolution No. 5 for Special Assessment District No. 2023-04 for Center Street from King Street to North Street for street resurfacing. The following people commented in regard to the proposed special assessment roll: Paula Ray, Valeria Sawicki, and Lora McNew. The Council moved to approve the special assessment roll as presented.

**CITIZEN COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS**

Mayor Teich asked that people keep things civil and direct all comments and questions to him. Rob VanGorder, owner of Grease Rag Customs, responded to some of the negative comments made during the public hearing, saying that Corunna Avenue was redone quite nicely, and it was worth the inconvenience.

Tom Manke asked why the parks rules were being changed so that night fishing at Hopkins Lake would no longer be permitted. He also said he was very upset that the proposed changes would also prohibit concealed weapons license holders from carrying a gun in a park. Lastly, he asked if the sidewalk between Jerome Street and the river was considered to be park land or simply a sidewalk.

Judy Ford said she feels that holding a prayer at the beginning of a city meeting is a violation of the Constitution. Citizens can demonstrate their allegiance to the Country by showing up to government meetings and paying their taxes. She asked that religion and government not be mixed. Lastly, she noted that putting limits on when and where guns can be carried makes her feel safer.

Paula Ray asked if all cities use special assessments to pay for street improvements, drainage, and the like. She also said that she supports Ms. Ford's comments asking for the separation of religion and government.

Kimberly Singer, president of the Shiawassee Owosso Morning Kiwanis group, presented the City with a brand-new Bible. She said that someone had recently borrowed her Bible for a swearing-in ceremony and the group saw fit to give the City a Bible for everyone to use in the future.

Bonnie Wood said that prayer is an individual choice and she encouraged the Council to think about holding a moment of silence instead of a prayer. She went on to commend each Councilmember for their service, telling them to stay steadfast in their commitments and don't be ashamed about who you are.

Eddie Urban thanked City Engineer Clayton Wehner for his help in ensuring the sidewalk in front of his house has been properly fixed and will no longer trap standing water.

City Manager Henne addressed Mr. Manke's comments concerning firearms in City parks, noting that the language in the proposed Parks Rules regarding firearms is not changing. Firearms are allowed in the parks by Federal law.

Mr. Henne went on to address Ms. Ray's question regarding special assessments. He said each municipality is different in how they pay for street work, some may sell bonds, some may request a special millage, some may specially assess, and others may have the cash to perform the necessary work. It depends on the quantity of streets a city has as well as its tax-base. The City of Owosso has a long history of using special assessments to assist in street maintenance, going

back to at least 1911. The City has approximately 76 miles of streets it must maintain and it is essential to stretch every dollar to obtain the maximum amount of work. For example, special assessments allowed the City to maximize the recent \$10 million street bond to receive \$18 million of work.

Mayor Teich asked what would happen if the City did not specially assess residents for street maintenance. City Manager Henne indicated the City wouldn't do nearly as much maintenance or a street millage spreading the cost to all City residents would need to be passed.

Mayor Teich noted that he felt the pain of people that purchased their homes and didn't realize they could be specially assessed for the repaving of their street, saying it had happened to him when he purchased his first house in Owosso many years ago. He explained that special assessments allow them to stretch the City's dollars and maximize what can get done.

Councilmember Law pointed out there is no constitutional requirement to separate church and state, saying no such language exists in the U.S. Constitution. He said he was taught to respect the customs and culture of the people you are with, and no one asking anyone to subscribe to a particular religion.

Mayor Teich addressed the Bible donation, thanking the Morning Kiwanis group. He went on to note that he has been a Kiwanis member for 46 years, that it is a global service group whose focus is about giving back to the community and it is not religiously affiliated in any way. He indicated the Bible will be located in the Mayor's Office and will be available for anyone that would like to use it. He went on to note that the official swearing in of Councilmembers is not a religious ceremony, but those that wish may use the Bible for a ceremonial swearing in after the organizational meeting has concluded.

**CONSENT AGENDA**

The Consent Agenda was approved as follows:

Special Assessment District No. 2023-01. Authorized Resolution No. 4 setting a public hearing for Monday, February 6, 2023 to receive citizen comment regarding the proposed special assessment roll for Special Assessment District No. 2023-01 for North Street from Shiawassee Street (M-52) to Hickory Street for street rehabilitation.

Special Assessment District No. 2023-03. Authorized Resolution No. 4 setting a public hearing for Monday, February 6, 2023 to receive citizen comment regarding the proposed special assessment roll for Special Assessment District No. 2023-03 for Lee Street from Clark Street to Ada Street for street resurfacing.

Bid Award – 2023 Storm Sewer Lining Project. Approved bid award to Insituform Technologies USA, LLC for the 2023 Storm Sewer Lining Project in the amount of \$63,519.10, plus a contingency of \$20,000 for additional lining services required during the calendar year, and further approved payment to the contractor up to the contract amount, plus the contingency, upon satisfactory completion of the work or portion thereof.

Bid Award – 2023 Street Program – Contract No. 1. Approved bid award to The Glaeser-Dawes Corporation for the 2023 Street Program – Contract No. 1 in the amount of \$463,416.02, authorized a contingency amount of \$40,000.00 to be utilized upon written authorization, and further approved payment to the contractor up to the contract amount, plus the contingency, upon satisfactory completion of the work or portion thereof.

Professional Services Agreement – Fire/EMS Billing. Authorized a professional services agreement with AccuMed Billing, Inc. for Fire and EMS billing services in the amount of 6.3% of monies collected.

2023 Park Rules and Regulations. Approved proposed revisions to the Park Rules and Regulations for 2023.

Warrant No. 625. Authorized Warrant No. 625 as follows:

Vendor	Description	Fund	Amount
Municipal Employees' Retirement System (MERS)	One Time Extra Contribution (assigned General Fund Balance)	General	\$500,000.00

Boards and Commissions Appointments. Approved the following Mayoral Boards and Commissions appointments (Marr appointment was added to the agenda):

Name	Board/Commission	Term Expires
Robert Hooper	Owosso Historical Commission	12-31-2025
Toni Marr	OMS/DDA Board - filling unexpired term of D. Acton	06-30-2025

**ITEMS OF BUSINESS**

Audit Acceptance. Approved resolution accepting and placing on file the City of Owosso Financial Report for the Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 2022.

American Legion Post 57 Exterior Work Project - Letter of Support. (This item was added to the agenda.) Approved the authorization of a letter of support pledging the advance of \$32,824.00 to American Legion Post 57 for exterior rehabilitation work to their building at 201 E. Mason Street, contingent upon the receipt of a SHPO grant reimbursing the City.

**COMMUNICATIONS**

Nathan Henne, City Manager. City Manager Report, December 2022.

Tanya S. Buckelew, Planning & Building Director. December 2022 Building Department Report.

Tanya S. Buckelew, Planning & Building Director. December 2022 Code Violations Report.

Tanya S. Buckelew, Planning & Building Director. December 2022 Inspections Report.

Tanya S. Buckelew, Planning & Building Director. December 2022 Certificates Issued Report.

Kevin D. Lenkart, Public Safety Director. December 2022 Fire Report.

Kevin D. Lenkart, Public Safety Director. December 2022 Police Report.

**CITIZEN COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS**

Mayor Teich recognized the City’s two newest boards and commissions members thanking them for volunteering their time. He went on to say that one of his goals during his tenure is to strengthen the City’s boards and commissions, noting that doing so will only improve the City. Patty VanLuven thanked the Council for spending the City’s money wisely, at the same time she said she really feels for people that struggle with the costs of home ownership. She recommended the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) group as an organization that might be able to assist. Lastly, she encouraged everyone to think broadly about religion, and remember that this is a public space and people should not be forced to submit to any religious practice.

Tom Manke reminded everyone that the County Treasurer has access to funds to assist home owners that are in danger of losing their homes for back taxes. He also thanked the City Manager for clarifying the parks rules for him.

Richard Bowen said for a number of years he has been walking around town at night for exercise and has never had trouble until last Sunday. He said he was harassed by three young men causing him to feel cornered and very threatened, and he had nothing with him to defend himself. He was eventually able to get away and called the incident in to the police. He suggested people carry at least a whistle with them while they are out and about so they call attention to themselves if they need to.

Eddie Urban told a story about an occasion when he was once denied communion at a relative’s church because he wasn’t a member there and how angry it made him.

**NEXT MEETING**

Monday, February 06, 2023

**BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS OPENINGS**

Building Board of Appeals – Alternate - term expires June 30, 2024

Building Board of Appeals – Alternate - term expires June 30, 2025

Downtown Historic District Commission – term expires June 30, 2023

Downtown Historic District Commission - term expires June 30, 2024

Owosso Historical Commission – 1 term expires December 31, 2025

Zoning Board of Appeals – Alternate – term expires June 30, 2024

Zoning Board of Appeals – Alternate – term expires June 30, 2025

**ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:52 p.m.

Robert J. Teich, Jr., Mayor  
Amy K. Kirkland, City Clerk

Note: Complete printed copies of the minutes and any ordinances contained therein are available to the public at the Office of the City Clerk and the Shiawassee District Library – Owosso Branch during regular business hours or on the Internet at [www.ci.owosso.mi.us](http://www.ci.owosso.mi.us).