

Osawatomie, Kansas. **June 26, 2025.** The Council Meeting was held at Memorial Hall located at 411 11th Street. Mayor Nick Hampson called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. Council members present were: Schasteen, Diehm, Dickinson, Henness, Bratton and Caldwell. Council members Macek and Filipin were absent. City Staff present at the meeting were: City Manager Bret Glendening, Deputy City Manager Michele Silsbee, City Attorney Jeff Deane, City Clerk Tammy Seamands and Public Safety Officer Scott Polster. Members of the public were: Nancy Thompson, Brian McCauley, Nocole Henness, Jacki Glendening, Nicole Dickinson, Karen LaDuex, Brad Dickinson, Elizabeth Redd, Tyler England, Joseph Casel, Marvin Halvorsen, Joe Karhoff, Oliver Tanner, Brandon Willey, Jamie Kehl, Christy Birchard, Gayle Faddis, Dean Inscore, Polly Inscore, Rhonda Synder, Bert Snyder, Doug Walker, Mark Fuchs, Deenna McQuay, Micheal McCoy, Jillie Powell, Michelle Chester, Jeff Dorsett, Meredith Stewart, Sierra Bell and a couple of unidentified attendees.

INVOCATION. – First Elder Marvin Halvorsen – Blessed Hope Seventh Day Adventist Church

CONSENT AGENDA.

- A. June 26, 2025 Agenda
- B. June 12, 2025 Meeting Minutes
- C. Pay Application(s)
- D. Special Event Permit(s)
- E. AP Report – May 2025

Motion made Dickinson, seconded by Schasteen to approve the consent agenda as presented. Yeas: All.

COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC.

First Elder Marvin Halvorsen – Blessed Hope Seventh Day Adventist Church – This year we took on a new project that we have not done in the past and that is helping those that are in need. The Ministerial Association has a program where they help people but they are limited in funds and how much they can do. The church has helped 16 people this year. We have supplied rides to doctor appointments, clothing, repaired a vehicle, helped with rent, food, and helped someone find a job. We stay with the person and help beyond just giving money.

Nicole Dickinson ~ asked questions and expressed her concern regarding the Levee Loop project and the use of the utility easement on her property. This is not a minor construction inconvenience, this is a fundamental issue of property rights, government overreach, and procedural accountability. I appreciate the city's work to improve infrastructure but we have serious concerns on how this project is being handled. Why can't the city pause for sixty days to meet the impacted residents and explore compromises. We are asking for transparency, fairness and a legal process that respects the rights of the people that live here. We have started a petition and there are already 337 signatures to stop or halt the sidewalk.

Brad Dickinson ~ I want to express my concerns regarding the safety and privacy of my family. Being on the side street we see a lot of traffic already. We have had toys and landscaping items stolen out of our yard and had drug paraphernalia found on the sidewalk. So, I am concerned with the city wanting to invite people from out of town to come past our property. The sidewalk is very close to our house already so I do not know how we would have any privacy with bikers coming that close to the house. I also have questions about the legal authority of the easement documentation. Were there any alternative options considered that did not involve constructing a whole new path? It seems like a waste of grant or tax payers' money to rip up a perfectly good sidewalk that we already have that is ten years old to build a bigger one. I ask the council for full transparency of the easement use and any easement documents to clarify our property.

Christina Birchard ~ I have a question on the Transportation Alternatives map. What does the solid green line that runs from Main to South Street mean?

Dean Inscore ~ Thank goodness for social media. That is how everyone got her tonight. I want to thank everyone for showing up and showing support for just being a part of the city. The city council has hired the city manager and it is thier job to oversee his actions. A lot of things going on with the City Manager is a direct reflection of everyone here that has been elected to do that job. If you cannot open your packet and protect the citizens of Osawatomie from our city manager and assistant city manager and make decisions for the citizens that elected you, then you need to remove yourself so that we can get someone in here that can. The city is trying to tear down as many houses as they can and replace them with people from out of town. That is fine but you guys are in charge and not him. He is off the hook and is doing things that are unethical. You cannot get a call back from either one of these people. These are your hires. I suggest that you oversight your employees because you are the boss of the city manger and assistant city manager. Everyone in here is a customer of the City of Osawatomie and should be treated that way.

Jeff Dorsett ~ I am an advocate of a healthy lifestyle, bicycling, and walking. I want to say that I agree that growth is tough on everybody. I did have a nice yard until my easement was torn up in the back for sewers and in the front for cable tv. It was a bitter pill that I swallowed and accepted knowing that is the purpose of an easement. There is a tremendous financial benefit for the trails within the town. From the counters that we have had on the Flint Hills Trail/Mile Zero there have been 6,000 visitors in the last 18 months. People are coming to town specifically to use our trail. As a part of these grants, we are a part of Mid America Region Council so our trails are showing up on the Kansas City bicycle trails. 1.5 – 2 M people in the metropolitan are now seeing our trails so this is a way for us to draw people that will spend money to our community. There is an economic benefit for people coming in and spending their money and making this a more livable place.

Doug Walker ~ I am a 40-year resident here and a trail advocate. When I was in the legislature, I was an advocate for the Prairie Spirit Trail. Constituents of mine filed petitions with over 1,000 signatures opposing the trail. I tried to counter the opposition with facts, figures and what the trail could do for the communities economic. There was a lot of misinformation out there and I have heard some of that misinformation tonight. People think that the crime will be there but these things do not happen. This brings good people into the community. I encourage the council to have the courage to do what is right. This trail if it goes through will be here long after

your gone from this council. You could leave a lasting legacy. That was my view on the Prairie Spirit Trail. I could get beat for supporting it, but today proves that it is a very good amenity for the State of Kansas. I encourage you to look at the big picture and what it is going to do for our community in the long run. There will be opposition but a year after this is done the opposition will dissipate and people that oppose it now will enjoy it then. I encourage you to do the right thing, listen to the people that oppose the project and try to give them the information that they need. As I listen to the questions, the answers are all there. You followed the procedures that you were supposed to. Just see that they get the information that they need and help them to understand that in the long run that this is a good project.

Polly Inscore ~ I think that the trail is a great idea. I think that the citizens in this room should decide where it goes. I think that we should know where every single one of you live so that we can send it through where you live so that we can take away your easement and your privacy. I am just floored that this is happening in Osawatomie, Kansas. What I have seen and heard is very disappointing. Easements given away to people that have political connections, right of ways being taken and favoritism. Dean, Neil, and Sam do not have to work in this community but if they are not here to provide the services that they do then you will be getting Johnson County trucks coming to this city with their Johnson County prices and wait times. I ask that Dean, Neil, and Sam be treated with the upmost respect and that there is no more harassment. To put people out of their homes because they are low-income, minorities, elderly or because they are invisible to you is wrong. As the City of Osawatomie comes together and starts talking amongst themselves and things start becoming exposed, I hope that we find out just how tax dollars are being spent. I want to know why a town this size has a deputy city manager. What does the city manager and deputy city manager do with their time besides torment the tax payers and harass people that do not deserve it? Your citizens are your job; they are your bosses. Please do not ever forget that.

Sierra Bell ~ I think that some of you should be acting professional and not rolling your eyes when comments are made about you. Community is very important to me. Why are we not taking care of the things that we already have? Why are we building new things that we eventually are not going to take care of? We have a park that nobody goes to because it is so poorly maintained. Roads and sidewalks are so torn up. There are things that we need to be taking care of and they just are not. Why are we building and trying to capitalize off this small town when we don't take care of the things that we already have? I think that small businesses should be opening, people can come and ride on the trail, get a cup of coffee or eat at the Mexican restaurant – that is great but there is a different way to go about that. We don't need to continue building. Why are we advertising the pedestrian overpass when we don't have funding for the project?

Oliver Tanner ~ I am a disabled veteran and have been here about two years. I bought a parcel of land here for an amazing price. I came here for an opportunity to build a permanent home for my family. We are working on trying to open a business here. I do not really care about your legacies. I do not care about something cute for the town. I am sure that this trail will be just as wonderful as the splash pad that was going to be on Main Street. From the time that I have been here the track record is not great. I do not care about bringing people from Olathe or Overland Park or to get big money down here. What I care about is building the community in this town. I do not have a lot of money. I am trying to build something with the little bit that I have and I cannot compete with big money coming in down here. There is no opportunity here if this is the

way this town is going to go. After listening to both sides here tonight, I hope that you pay attention to is the argument regarding violation of rights. I do not know enough about this project to say that you are or are not violating rights. The purpose for government at its core is to protect the rights of the people. If any part of this is violating the rights of the people, then shut it down.

Joe Karhoff ~ The city manager told me that he cannot understand me and called me a name. He should be canned. You should have a talk with him. They took my mailbox down and have not put it back up. He has been doing a lot to me.

Rhonda Snyder ~ I own property behind the elementary school. I have three family members that have been affected by the city's decisions. I think that it has been done where there is not very much transparency. Had they been forewarned that this was up and coming I think things would have been handled differently. As far as bringing people in, I am an advocate for health, exercise, and bicycles. However, we are bringing people in while we are letting our patrons leave because they are upset. Both of my daughters have been impacted by both the city manager and assistant city manager. I feel that they have an unhealthy sense of control and they thrive on making the patrons be at their mercy with their decisions. That is very unhealthy when they work for you guys. My daughter is now leaving Osawatimie. My nephew built a new home here and they lost his final inspection so then he had to put out several thousands of dollars to get a hard surface driveway when the final inspection was done. That is uncalled for and unhealthy. I have walked the John Brown Park and it is embarrassing. We want to invite people in here to visit the museum and if they fell going into there that would be a lawsuit. I have contacted the Kansas State Tourism and I am researching who oversees that road work.

Micheal McCoy ~ I was wondering when you were going to fix the ditch and the road on Brown. My neighbor and I get water damage. The water runs down the alley, through my yard and under my house. Michele does not answer phone calls or return calls.

OTHER DISCUSSIONS/MOTIONS

Nick Hampson ~ Clearing the Path is a citywide initiative to improve pedestrian and bicycle access through bridges, trails, and sidewalk programs. There were over 470 residents that responded to two public planning studies (PSP & II). Clearing the Path addresses real barriers to safety and access (railroads, river, sidewalk gaps).

We have secured \$3 M in state and federal pedestrian funding, \$1.5 M in Cost Share used on 6th St reconstruction and \$1.5 M in Transportation Alternatives. We have launched appraisal process for temporary easements (required by federal law)

We will continue working on easement negotiations, begin design finalization, pursue additional grant opportunities for pedestrian bridges and complete PSP III Mile Zero Trailhead Masterplan (currently going on, survey linked on the Clearing the Path page)

There is currently 2,476 ft of new sidewalk, 855 ft of poor condition sidewalk (as identified in PSP II study) being replaced/ADA upgraded, an additional 355 ft of good condition sidewalk

that is not ADA compliant replaced and we have added 18 ADA compliant crossings. The trail width must be 10 ft to meet AASHTO/federal compliance, this is a federally funded grant

Residents Can Stay Involved by attending council meeting, applying to be on the trail commission and contact staff with feedback.

Motion made by Caldwell, seconded by Bratton to take a five-minute recess and return at 6:58 p.m. Yeas: All.

The council meeting resumed to open session at 6:58 p.m.

PUBLIC HEARINGS. – None.

PRESENTATIONS, PROCLAMATIONS AND APPOINTMENTS.

APPOINTMENT – MARIAH CURTIS – ARTS COMMISSION – Motion made by Schasteen, seconded by Dickinson to appoint Mariah Curtis to the Arts Commission as presented. Yeas: All.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS. – None.

NEW BUSINESS

RESOLUTION 1313 – 2026 BUDGET POLICY – As we work to finalize our 2026 budget, our primary concern is always balancing what we want to do and what we need to do with the property tax dollars that will be required to do them. A very close, secondary concern is on interfund transfers: particularly the transfers OUT of our enterprise or utility funds. For years the city has relied on transfers from utilities to keep property taxes down. The effect of this as we have all seen, is a neglect of the utilities and a myopic view of what the true costs of this municipal government are.

Regarding our utilities, we continue to move forward with design of the new water plant and replacing water mains as part of the larger water distribution project. We have replaced every electric meter in town and are working on replacing water meters. We have completed our lead and copper service line inventory. We NEED to smoke test sewers and find the last remaining portions where I & I exist. We have completed millions of dollars on street improvements, both full depth replacements as well as mill and overlay, and we have increased our stormwater system's capacity to reduce the likelihood of localized flooding during heavy rain events. We are spending hundreds of thousands of dollars annually on the debt retirement for the generators and converting the distribution system to 12470/7200kV, and we are well into construction of the 5MW solar array.

All our street projects are financed with debt that is retired by property taxes. Our benefits package for employees that are not working for an enterprise fund are also financed by property

taxes. Day to day operational expenses of the Police, Fire, Municipal Court, Administration, Public Works, the Library and Cabin are all financed by property taxes. But, if the 2026 budget were ready to be adopted today, property taxes would comprise ONLY 20% of the total city budget. The rest of the budget is covered with sales taxes, franchise fees, utility rate charges, and other miscellaneous revenues.

However, the budget as it stands today is NOT ready for adoption. There is still much work that needs to be done to keep the mill levy at the same rate it is for 2025, roughly 78 mills. The current draft of the 2026 budget requires approximately \$900,000 more property tax dollars than the 2025 budget. The current draft of the 2026 budget also has an overall increase of almost \$2,000,000, or 12% more than last year's budget. Now obviously, this isn't where we will end up. As I stated, there's still quite a bit of work to do on the budget.

As we look to the future with the goal of reducing the levy, to facilitate a turn in that direction, we must continue to broaden our tax base. This includes selling more electricity and water. It also involves bringing in more sales tax dollars and increasing the number of commercial and residential properties within the city. Last year we discussed the need to see a minimum 3-5% annual increase in property valuations JUST to keep pace with inflation. We achieved that again this year. However, if we are to continue with the improvements we are making, we must continue to move forward incrementally and all of us; the governing body, staff, and public need to continue to keep in mind that "Rome wasn't built in a day" and "Osawatomie does not need to be rebuilt overnight." **Motion** made by Schasteen, seconded by Caldwell to approve Resolution 1314 – Establishing budget policies for the City of Osawatomie as presented. Yeas: All.

RESOLUTION 1314 – 2025 RNR NOTICE TO COUNTY CLERK FOR 2026 BUDGET
- This resolution does two things. First, it directs staff to notify the county clerk that the city's intention is to exceed the revenue neutral rate (requirement of state law). This must be done no later than July 20. Secondly, it directs the city manager to finalize the 2026 budget and prepare the notice of public hearing for both the RNR hearing as well as the budget itself (also a requirement of state law). Publication must occur at least 10 days prior to the hearing being held and the hearing must be held no later than September 20.

More importantly however, we expand on the 2026 budget policy resolution, specifically as it relates to the property tax levy. The current draft of the 2026 budget has property taxes comprising just over 20% of the total 2026 budget. The past two budgets have seen the mill levy comprise between 15% and 17%, with each tax levied fund receiving approximately 1/3rd of the total property tax dollars levied.

In the bond and interest fund, we are levying property taxes sufficient only to retire the obligations due in 2026, but after we account for portions of that debt that are being retired by the utility funds (primarily, Sewer), the bond & interest fund does not meet the 25% goal for fund balance. Twenty-five percent of the fund's annual expenditures is just shy of \$500,000. The 2025 budget got us closer to that 25% goal with a budgeted cash reserve of \$100,000. The 2026 budget gets us even closer. Targeted mill levy is 30 mills.

In the employee benefits fund, we are only levying for benefits for those employees who are not working in either one of the utility funds or the golf course. Those funds pay for the benefits of those employees. I am happy to report that we expect a 25% fund balance by the end of 2025. As such, we will budget to maintain that fund balance, while providing for the fund's expenditures and we will be able to lower the mill levy in this fund to approximately 16 mills. Twenty-five percent of this fund's average annual expenditure is approximately \$250,000.

The Industrial Promotion Fund hasn't had a property tax levy for a couple of years. This year, I am proposing a small levy (less than 1 mill) to provide assistance to businesses along 6th Street to give their facilities a facelift. In my mind, this program would function much like the façade program that Louisburg has in place, whereby businesses apply for the program with a plan to improve their facility's "curb appeal", and once approved, the business owner makes the improvements. Upon completion, the city would reimburse the business owner for a portion of the cost. I would also propose waiving the building permit fees for the program.

Lastly, our general fund catches nearly everything else that this municipality does. From administrative staff to manage the day-to-day operations, to code enforcement, police, fire, public works, to the library and the cabin, the departments in the general fund interact with the public in some way, shape, or form, on a daily basis and with that in mind, we built the budgets in the general fund with our five goals in focus:

1. Clean the community up;
2. Repair & maintain Streets;
3. Invest in hard infrastructure;
4. Invest in soft infrastructure;
5. Renew focus on economic development, including housing of all types.

We also continue to focus our efforts on expanding the tax base. Whether it is property taxes, sales taxes, utility revenues or all the other user charges and fees for services that we have in place, we cannot solely depend on locally collected property taxes to finance our efforts. The more outside dollars we can collect to help build this community, the better. This fund lacks adequate fund balance. The General Fund should have a carryover of \$950,000+. For 2026, there is a \$250,000 budgeted cash reserve.

There is still work to be done on the general fund budget. While we are working towards building fund balances in all of our budgeted funds, we cannot do so overnight nor can we do so in one budget year. The mill levy for the general fund in 2026 is forecasted to be: 30 mills.

If we are to build this community and do so in a fiscally responsible and sustainable way, we must continually keep not only our goals in mind, but always be looking for opportunities to enhance this community. **Motion** made by Dickinson, seconded by Diehm to approve Resolution 1314 – Regarding the governing body's intent to levy a property tax exceeding the revenue neutral rate as presented. Yeas: All.

EXECUTIVE SESSION – None.

COUNCIL REPORTS

Cathy Caldwell ~ I am looking forward to Lights on the Lake. My grandson will be singing the National Anthem.

Kenny Diehm ~ Lights on the Lake is this weekend and fireworks will be starting soon.

Kevin Schasteen ~ I have heard a lot of good comments about Main Street.

MAYOR'S REPORT – Main Street is looking nice. I am glad that the striping has finally gotten done.

Lights on the Lake is this weekend.

Fireworks will be sold June 29th through July 5th but the discharge of fireworks did not change. The discharge of fireworks ends at 11 p.m. on the July 4th.

John Brown Jamboree and parade was last week. I did have a couple of citizens reach out to say that was a really fun time for their families. Thank you to the John Brown Jamboree Committee and anyone that had anything to do with putting that together for our community. That is a lot of volunteer time and we do appreciate that.

CITY MANAGER & STAFF REPORTS.

Bret Glendenning ~ We had presented a Charter Ordinance on transient guest tax amendments. I did get into contact with the Kansas Department of Revenue. They stated that changing any of the definitions of what is a transient guest is they would no longer enforce or collect the transient guest. I did contact the League and found out that there is a sizable push across the state to do something like what we are proposing because of the World Cup so we are going to hold off and see what the state decides to do.

The Cabin and the Park is a state park so we cannot touch anything in the park without the State's permission. It is true that the curbs and things are in terrible condition and that is true, but we cannot do anything with them. One of the things that we have applied for is Congressional Directed spending to repair or replace all the curb and gutter, pull all the bricks up, put down concrete and then reinstall the bricks. The state has equipment in the park right now so that they can power wash the stone at the Cabin and then to put a sealant on it.

Michele Silsbee ~ We are working on water meter replacements. This project will continue into the fall. There will be a small disruption to service while we replace each water meter. Crews have been asked to knock on doors. I have not received any complaints or heard of any. They have also been asked to go to the next house if the meter is spinning.

Public Works have been working on John Brown Jamboree and then Lights on the Lake. Once that is done, we will be doing some grading of the alleys, working on a replacement project on Retan. We have a section of the street that has completely failed by Sonic. We will also be doing ditch work at Brown Ave. and South Street and filling in potholes. I encourage people to

use text my gov or call in to report potholes because even though we are out and about we might not notice all of them.

OTHER DISCUSSION/MOTIONS.

Motion made by Schasteen, seconded by Bratton to adjourn. Yeas: All. The mayor declared the meeting adjourned at 07:24 p.m.

/s/ Tammy Seamands
Tammy Seamands, City Clerk