

A Regular Meeting of the Otsego City Commission was held on Monday, February 16, 2026.

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Withee at 7:00 p.m. with the following Commissioners present: Chuck Moore, Wayne Rayburn, and Jason Smith. Absent: Lauri Krueger. Also present: City Manager, Aaron Mitchell; Director of Public Works, Michael Bosch; and Finance Director/Treasurer, Brian Kelley.

The audience joined the Commission in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Commissioner Moore moved to excuse Commissioner Krueger, seconded by Commissioner Smith. CARRIED

On a motion by Commissioner Smith, seconded by Commissioner Rayburn, the February 2, 2026, Regular Minutes were approved as submitted.

#### REMARKS FROM THE AUDIENCE REGARDING AGENDA ITEMS

None.

#### **I. PRESENTATIONS:**

##### A. COUNTY COMMISSIONER DUGAN UPDATE

Allegan County Commissioner Dugan gave an update on current County activities.

#### **II. PUBLIC HEARING:**

#### **III. PLANNING AND ZONING:**

#### **IV. ORDINANCES:**

#### **V. REQUESTS:**

##### A. CONSIDERATION OF THE OFFICIAL ACCEPTANCE OF THE WATER RATE STUDY FROM BEDZINSKI & CO

City Manager Mitchell explained that when the Waste Water Treatment Plant Asset Management Plan was being created, it was decided to proceed with a Water & Sewer Rate Study. He commented that both of these studies have provided valuable information. City Manager Mitchell stated that both the Water & Sewer Rate Study documents will be available on the City's website.

Commissioner Moore moved to accept the Water Rate Study from Bedzinski & Co.; seconded by Commissioner Rayburn. CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

##### B. CONSIDERATION OF THE OFFICIAL ACCEPTANCE OF THE SEWER RATE STUDY FROM BEDZINSKI & CO

Commissioner Smith moved to accept the Sewer Rate Study from Bedsinski & Co.; seconded by Commissioner Moore. CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

#### **VI. AGREEMENTS:**

#### **VII. RESOLUTIONS:**

## **VIII. APPOINTMENTS:**

## **IX. DISCUSSION ITEMS:**

### **A. WATER & SEWER RATES**

At this time, City Manager Mitchell presented a PowerPoint that outlined five discussion questions, which included: why do we need the increase? how do we know that an increase is needed? how bad is the increase we need? what increase is needed to fix it? and what do these increases mean to me and my bill? He explained in detail the effects the increases would have on utility bills. He distributed a worksheet to the Commission and audience that explained in detail an example of a current bill compared to a bill with the rate increases.

In regards to the cost of replacement of the lead services, he explained that the City is applying for loans and grants that could help get all of the services in compliance all at one time, instead over several years that would be much more expensive. He explained that the repairs that we have to complete, are not in our mains, it is the services lines from the mains to the house. At this time, Director of Public Works Bosch explained the process of replacing the lines and why they need to be replaced. He answered questions of the audience.

City Manager Mitchell answered questions of the audience and Commission. He explained the loan and grant process. He also stated that there are other options that the City is looking at in the future, such as monthly billing, etc. Commissioner Moore asked if it is possible for residents to make monthly payments on their water bills currently or in the future. City Manager Mitchell stated that residents are welcome to make monthly payments on their utility bills. He suggested that residents call City Hall and the staff will be glad to assist them in setting up their payments. A resident thanked City Manager Mitchell for the news article which explained the situation, and showed that an increase is needed.

City Manager Mitchell stated that at the next meeting, on March 2<sup>nd</sup>, he will be formally asking the City Commission to set the rates for the 2026-2027 fiscal year. He explained that this is needed so that Finance Director Kelley can prepare the budget

### **B. NORTHSIDE PARK PLAYGROUND**

City Manager Mitchell reviewed the quote that was received from the original firm that designed the Northside Park playground. He stated that the City had received \$45,000, from our insurance provider. He commented that the quote for materials was \$40,000, and the cost of their management team to supervise our DPW employees was \$109,000. City Manager Mitchell stated that we have two options: 1 – do nothing, as it is a thirty-year-old structure that will need to be replaced in the next ten years; 2 – have the DPW employees reconstruct the playground and make it as close as possible to the original structure, for a much lower cost. Commissioner Moore suggested to possibly have the high school CAD students assist with the plans for the structure. A discussion took place on the next steps. It was the consensus of the Commission to have the DPW assemble a similar playground.

## **MANAGER'S REPORT**

The City Manager commented and gave updates on the following:

1. Update on 240 Helen – demolished and an RFP is being prepared.
2. Memorial Day festivities planning meeting is scheduled on February 25<sup>th</sup>.

## **COMMUNICATIONS**

None.

## **REMARKS FROM THE AUDIENCE**

None.

## **COMMISSIONER'S' COMMENTS**

Commissioner Rayburn – he thanked everyone for attending and for their comments.

Commissioner Moore – he commented that he is glad that the City paid for the Water & Sewer Rate Study. He commented that it pains him to have to raise rates, but he stands behind how and why rates have to be increased.

Mayor Withee – she commented that she is thankful that there is not a need for a large increase in sewer rates. She commented that in the past years there was sewer capital improvement work that was required and the City raised sewer rates for the improvements. She commented that we do not have a choice with the water rates, as there are no other viable options, because at this time we couldn't cover an extensive repair, if needed. She commented that if the loan is not available, we can apply again, or just go out to bond to get the lead services completed all at once.

A brief discussion amongst the Commission and the audience took place regarding the loan and grant options.

## **ADJOURN**

Commissioner Smith moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Commissioner Rayburn.  
CARRIED. 8:15 p.m.

Angela Cronen  
City Clerk