

**MINUTES  
COUNCIL MEETING  
4:30 PM**

**CITY OF OIL CITY  
COUNCIL CHAMBERS  
FEBRUARY 24, 2025**

Meeting called to order with the Pledge of Allegiance by Mr. Kluck at 4:35 PM.

CALL TO ORDER

Members Present: Mayor Kluck, Councilman Massie, Councilman Walentosky, Councilman Craig, Councilman Gustafson.

ROLL CALL

Members Absent: None.

Recording Secretary: Jena Knight

**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

EXECUTIVE SESSION

The Regular City Council meeting was preceded by an Executive Session which began at 4:25 p.m. and ended at 4:35 p.m. There was a discussion related to personnel matters with no vote and nothing to report.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

A motion to Approve the Minutes of the Regular Meeting held February 10, 2025 was made by Councilman Craig, seconded by Councilman Massie and was approved.

APPROVAL OF  
MINUTES – REGULAR  
MEETING – FEBRUARY  
10, 2025

**REVISION OF AGENDA**

REVISION OF AGENDA

**WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS**

WRITTEN  
COMMUNICATIONS

A Letter was Received from the 55+ Softball League Requesting Use of the Mitchell Avenue Fields for League Play in 2025. The letter indicated that rehabilitation of the field will continue as soon as the weather permits. This will be in coordination with the City and the other leagues. Practice will be on Monday and Wednesday mornings and possibly evenings as available, beginning on May 1, 2025. The games will be on Monday and Wednesday mornings starting on June 2, 2025 and ending by Labor Day. They had a new request and it was to play one evening game on Tuesday and possibly another evening if the field is available. This would be contingent upon coordinating with the other leagues. They may also have additional days or Saturdays for special games and an event to celebrate Flag Day.

LETTER FROM 55+  
SOFTBALL LEAGUE –  
USE OF MITCHELL  
FIELDS FOR LEAGUE  
PLAY

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A motion to Approve the Requests of the 55+ Softball League for the 2025 Season was made by Councilman Walentosky, seconded by Councilman Craig and was approved.

The next item was a Communique from Venango Pride Requesting the Use of Justus Park for the Venango Pride event. It will be held on June 21, 2025 beginning at 11:00 a.m. and ending at 5:00 p.m. There will be music, activities, food and fun. There were no problems at the event in 2024.

**COMMUNIQUE FROM  
VENANGO PRIDE – USE  
OF JUSTUS PARK FOR  
VENANGO PRIDE  
EVENT**

Mayor Kluck commented that this event was held in 2024 at Hasson Park. It went very well and was well-attended. Councilman Gustafson asked if there were any problems. The answer was no.

A motion to Approve the Request of Venango Pride Requesting Use of Justus Park for the Venango Pride event on June 21, 2025 was made by Councilman Gustafson, seconded by Councilman Walentosky and was approved. Mayor Kluck abstained from the vote.

**MANAGER’S REPORT**

**MANAGER’S REPORT**

Mr. Schroyer informed all that Mayor Kluck had approached him about the tax status of the Church of the Nazarene on East Second Street. He said that the religious services have been dormant for quite some time. A letter was sent to the solicitor of the assessment office. He received correspondence stating “Please be advised that I brought the matter of the inactive Church to the attention of the Chief Assessor, who agreed the property should be on the tax rolls. All three parcels that make up the church property have been changed to taxable status for the 2025 tax year.” It appears that this was successful. Councilman Gustafson remarked that if the property is not being used for its intended purpose, then it should go back on the rolls. Mayor Kluck concurred. Perhaps this would be motivation to get vacant properties back on the tax rolls. Maybe the properties would be used or disposed of.

**CHURCH OF THE  
NAZARENE – TAX  
STATUS**

Mr. Schroyer commented that the City gave the church plenty of time to determine what they would do with the property. A considerable amount of time passed before being questioned about the use of the buildings. The

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buildings are in good condition. Hopefully, something will transpire with the church buildings. Mayor Kluck said that, if it should be open to religious services at some time, it could become tax exempt again. He just doesn't want to see another empty building in town.

Councilman Gustafson asked if anything has been settled with St. Stephen's Church yet. Mr. Schroyer said that it has not. The last that he had heard, the matter had gone through another form of appeal at the Vatican level. It is still in the appeal process. The City has been treating the situation with kid gloves. However, sooner or later, the City will need to take some action if things don't move along. There are barricades around the church. Mayor Kluck remarked that responsible property owners are what is needed. Councilman Walentosky said that he believes there is a more responsible leadership in the diocese these days. Mr. Schroyer said that the property is on a main thoroughfare in the City. He hopes that something will come of the property.

**ST. STEPHEN'S  
CHURCH**

Mr. Schroyer then went on to say that the Oil Region Alliance has recently acquired several large parcels of property. There was a recent article in the newspaper about the purchase of the catholic school. He said that the ORA is looking into a reassessment of the properties. The City does not agree with this. The County doesn't agree either. The County has already retained an appraiser to have the property appraised. The County asked if the City would be amenable to work with them, at least in the initial stages, to see where things stand. He said that the property could be overvalued, undervalued or right where it should be. It is currently unknown. He doesn't know if a change of use would have a bearing on what the assessment is. The City is showing due diligence with this research. If it turns out this is where it should be, that will be fine. Mr. Schroyer doesn't believe the property is tax exempt. It remains to be seen how things will turn out.

**OIL REGION ALLIANCE  
- PROPERTY  
ACQUISITIONS/TAX  
STATUS**

Councilman Gustafson remarked that he believes that the ORA does pay tax on the bulk of the property that they own. Mayor Kluck believes it to be the case. Councilman Gustafson doesn't believe there should be any tax exempt property in the City. He believes that the City is overburdened with tax exempt property.

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Mayor Kluck said that the catholic school property is probably assessed a bit high. It is at \$5.8 million. Councilman Gustafson said that would be a hefty tax bill. Mayor Kluck said it would be \$67,000.00 in revenue for the City. Mr. Schroyer said that the City needs to get some properties back on the tax rolls. It would lessen the tax burden on the citizens.

Councilman Gustafson said that they all avail themselves of the City services. He was aware of the payment in lieu of tax program which the City had some time ago. Mr. Schroyer said that the university used to send a contribution to the City. The amount had been \$25,000.00 and was paid in lieu of taxes. The amount had been reduced over the last few years that they contributed. That amount no longer is received by the City.

Mr. Schroyer then informed Council that, on this date, he received an email from the Just for Jesus Ministry indicating that they will be holding another bucket drive in April or May. They would like to hold it on a Saturday. This item will probably be on an upcoming Council agenda.

**JUST FOR JESUS  
MINISTRY BUCKET  
DRIVE UPDATE**

Mr. Schroyer indicated that he and the staff had a discussion regarding demolition properties which are City-owned. Staff has identified 180 properties which the City owns. A lot of them are hillsides. They are not usable. There will be a discussion at the March 24, 2025 Council meeting to discuss the demolitions and the properties. Mrs. Anderson has identified properties and put them in categories for easy access. Some should be retained and some should be sold. There are a couple of large parcels which are attractive. There is a ten-acre parcel on Manning Street.

**CITY-OWNED  
PROPERTIES**

Mr. Schroyer stated that Rep. James and Sen. Hutchinson will be attending the April 14, 2025 Council meeting. The sale of properties will be a main topic of discussion for this meeting with these gentlemen. They will be asked about making properties easier to sell. Several of the properties are small lots which are next to houses in residential neighborhoods. It would be ideal for neighbors to purchase the properties and intermingle them with their current lots.

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He went on to say that staff is currently continuing to work on concerns and identify one issue which is important to their department. The narrative for the issue should encompass one sheet of paper. He will focus on the top two or three issues which he receives to pass along to the legislators. He does want to discuss with them the dispositions of the vacant properties and how to go about it in an easier fashion. He is optimistic that there could be some movement. It would make the City's job much easier. He would like to be able to approach a neighbor of one of the properties and offer it for sale.

Mr. Schroyer indicated that the Public Works Department maintains 60-80 properties in the summer. They do the grass maintenance. It would be nice to be able to eliminate some maintenance.

Mayor Kluck said that so many more things could be accomplished with less grass cutting.

Mr. Schroyer then stated that the IBEW should vote on the proposed contract this week. He hopes to hear the outcome of the vote the following week.

IBEW VOTE UPDATE

He commented that there will be a paving meeting in mid-March to discuss the 2025 paving schedule. Most of the programs and financing have been identified. The final touches will be placed on the program. Shortly after that, Council will be made aware of the schedule.

PAVING UPDATE

Mr. Schroyer informed Council that Chris Gorman met with PennDOT on this date regarding the tar and chip program. Several streets will be selected for tar and chip. The City is working with the Council of Governments for the annual joint seal coat program. Mr. Gorman will attend the next COG meeting in March to discuss the program.

**CURRENT BUSINESS**

CURRENT BUSINESS

The first item was the Recommendation of Firefighter Promotions. Mr. Schroyer said that, as was discussed a few weeks ago, there were a couple of openings in the Fire Department. There are some good part-time employees in the department. Chief Alex recommended two candidates for the positions. They did very well as part-time employees. Mr. Schroyer and Chief Alex interviewed both

RECOMMENDATION  
OF FIREFIGHTER  
PROMOTIONS

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of them. They did well. The Civil Service Commission recommended both of them for the full-time jobs with the Fire Department. They have a strong understanding of firefighting principles, problem-solving abilities and a commitment to serving the community. They will be valuable assets to the department.

Chief Alex then introduced both candidates. Teddy Theiss and Jolene Hurrelbrink will be the new full-time firefighters. Mr. Theiss has a good background in law enforcement and EMS. Mrs. Hurrelbrink has a lot of history with EMS, both military and civilian.

Mr. Schroyer said that Mrs. Hurrelbrink may be the City's first full-time female firefighter. She may be the inspiration for other young women to become firefighters.

A motion to Approve the Promotions of Teddy Theiss and Jolene Hurrelbrink to Full-Time Firefighters was made by Councilman Walentosky, seconded by Councilman Gustafson and was approved.

The next item was the Resignation of Mary Woodworth as the Utility Office Assistant. Mrs. Woodworth has a medical background and will be obtaining a job in the medical field again. Her last day will be March 7, 2025. The job has been posted internally and an advertisement was placed in the newspaper for the position.

**RESIGNATION OF  
MARY WOODWORTH -  
UTILITY OFFICE  
ASSISTANT**

A motion to Approve the Resignation of Mary Woodworth as the Utility Office Assistant was made by Councilman Gustafson, seconded by Councilman Craig and was approved.

The next item was Discussion Regarding the Marina Construction Contract. Mrs. Ryen of Community Development was present to speak of this matter. She provided to Council a recommendation from Harold Best of StruXures. She recommended awarding the contract as outlined by Mr. Best, contingent upon approval by DCNR.

**DISCUSSION – MARINA  
CONSTRUCTION  
CONTRACT**

She went on to say that, at the time of the DCNR application, in 2022, the project was to rehab the marina restrooms in the amount of \$68,000.00 plus \$3,800 to StruXures for design. In the time period between 2022 and now, inflation has taken a toll on the project and bids. She

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has been actively seeking additional funds in order to “fund the gap.” She said that the City may have to “close the gap.”

Mr. Schroyer asked Mrs. Ryen how much the City has already committed to the project. The answer was that the project has a \$34,000.00 grant from DCNR, a \$15,000.00 grant from the Phillips Charitable Trust and the City originally had \$19,000.00 in it.

Mr. Schroyer then asked about the bid. Mrs. Ryen said that the bid is listed as General Construction - \$65,545.00, Plumbing Construction - \$19,875.00 and Electrical Construction - \$7,014.00. The total is \$92,434.00.

Councilman Walentosky what the shortfall is. The answer was \$25,000.00. Mrs. Ryen said that DCNR has not approved yet because there were only two bidders. They want to see three or more. She doesn't know what could have been done differently. The City advertised twice in the paper and it was on the website. She is not permitted to make phone calls to solicit bids.

Councilman Gustafson remarked that there was quite a disparity in the bids for general construction. It was about \$50,000.00. Mrs. Ryen said that the second bidder did not itemize the bid as was required. She said that the City is still “at the mercy” of DCNR. She talked with Mr. Schroyer and it was decided that this should be presented to Council. If it is decided to vote at a later time, this would push the timetable back. The contractor is waiting to get an award letter. She cannot do this until she receives approval from DCNR. She believes that the problem was that it is a “small job.” It also requires state prevailing wage. Contractors with small jobs don't want to have to deal with the labor standards and paperwork.

Mr. Schroyer said that the City only had one bidder for the City Hall roof job in the amount of \$250,000.00. There are limited contractors in the county. Unless there is a larger project, no bids come in from big cities such as Pittsburgh or Buffalo. The current project is not large. He recommends moving along while Mrs. Ryen pursues getting the approval from the DCNR. It is an important project for the City. The City may have to kick in some additional money. Mrs. Ryen is looking at more grant

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funding. Mr. Schroyer would not be averse to adding more money in order to make the project happen. Since there is some grant money there, it would be good to keep things going. It could wind up being a fall project.

Mayor Kluck said that he would like to approve the project, pending the DCNR approval. Mrs. Ryen is hoping that they don't require the City to rebid the project. It would be expensive, with the cost of advertising, etc.

Councilman Walentosky said that the marina is used frequently. There are fishing tournaments held; people use the bike trail, etc. It is important to have nice facilities there. Mrs. Ryen said that the scope of work with this project is mostly ADA-related. Councilman Gustafson commented that he hopes it all will be "vandal-resistant." Mrs. Ryen said that there will be more security lighting, etc. Councilman Walentosky asked if there will be cameras at the location. Mrs. Ryen said that there will be cameras. She said that there will be cement work to be done. New partitions will be placed in the restrooms as well as handicapped grab bars, etc. Everything will be ADA accessible. Sensor lights and vandal-proof lights will be installed. New paint will be done as well. Landscaping will be part of the project.

A motion to Approve the Marina Construction Contract Pending DCNR Review and Approval was made by Councilman Massie, seconded by Councilman Craig and was approved.

Mr. Schroyer then asked if Council wanted to consider the additional funding or see how things progress with DCNR. Mayor Kluck would like to see how things go, but if the City needs to provide money, that would be fine. Council concurred. Councilman Walentosky believes that the marina area is attractive to the City and visitors. He thinks things are moving in a positive direction. Councilman Gustafson remarked that, if the City provides \$25,000.00, then the total that the City would have provided would total \$44,000.00, to include the \$19,000.00 already done. Mayor Kluck said it is well worth it. It is a nice recreational area.

Mr. Schroyer asked if there are any in-kind services for the project. Mrs. Ryen said that there are. A study had to be done on the building and there was cash for that. Mr.



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Schroyer said that Public Works will perform some work, etc.

Councilman Gustafson asked if the policy remains the same for the restrooms. They have always been locked at night. Mrs. Ryen said that is the case unless there are overnight campers at the camp site. Councilman Gustafson asked if the Police Department does that. The answer was yes.

Councilman Gustafson then commented that the Hasson Park restrooms are in need of repair as well. Mrs. Ryen said that is true and are being designed. There is some money set aside for that project. StruXures is working on that design. It has been reviewed. Some changes will be made.

The next item was an Arts Presentation by Barbara Pierce. Mrs. Pierce said that the City supports ARTS Oil City significantly. She wanted to report on some things which were previously mentioned.

**ARTS PRESENTATION –  
BARBARA PIERCE**

Mrs. Pierce said that ARTS Oil City oversees the Transit studio rentals. They are currently at 92% occupancy. That was significant. It is in everyone's best interest to maintain a good occupancy. Since the ribbon cutting ceremony, five new creatives have moved into the building. There are now two small vacant studios. She is trying to market them. With the five new people in the studios, there have been more homes purchased. Some of the people are new in starting businesses. Two of the folks are "transplants" to the area. This is good for local businesses.

She went on to say that Erie Arts and Culture is interested in funding artists in Venango County. There are several rural counties in their region that they fund through the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts. They had a grant application which ended at the end of the year. She encouraged a lot of people in the community to apply for it. Venango County had six grant recipients. Out of them were two ARTS Oil City people. This funding is through DCED. It is the PA Grant for Working Artists. Two of the artists who received grants were in the Council audience on this date. They were CJ Hurley and Tracey Lander-Garrett. Mr. Hurley is an artist and Mrs. Lander-Garrett is a writer. Mrs. Pierce said that Sean Carey also received a grant, as did Rafi Perez and Klee Perez. John Burnstein was also a

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recipient.

Mrs. Pierce also spoke about Bridgeway Capital ACRE Program. The last that she reported was that the status was pending for getting into the program. Everything was finalized for entry into the program in late December. The intensive nine-month program has kicked off. There was an opportunity to fill fifteen spots. Eighteen spots were filled because the applicants were so strong. The other communities were Uniontown and State College.

Mrs. Pierce remarked that it would be nice to congratulate the people involved with the program. It is an intensive program. It is a mix of natives and transplants and people who are in very different levels of their creative careers. Angela Wyant of the pottery studio, Amanda Peka, Caleb Lewis, Crystal Roser, Rachel Stein are the Oil City people and also some people outside of the City who consider Oil City their "hub" include Kate Ziegler (Titusville), Ryan Beichner (Venus), Heidi Wiertner (Emlenton). Relocated artists include CJ Hurley, Tracey Lander-Garrett, Christopher Dahl, Cassie Rhodes, Chelsea Rhodes, Skylar Austin and Scott McCray.

Mrs. Pierce indicated that it is a big deal that the City participates in the ACRE program. She wanted to share all of this information with Council. She also said that the investment which Bridgeway Capital is making in the City is approximately \$75-100,000.00.

Mayor Kluck thanked Mrs. Pierce for all of her work with the arts community. She said that if there was not the City's backing, she would not be able to do what she has been doing with the arts.

The next item was Introduction of New Police Department Lieutenants. Mr. Schroyer said that a selection process and testing for two lieutenant positions were completed. There were five candidates and four passed the test. He, Chief Ruditis and Lt. Love interviewed the gentlemen. The two top candidates for the positions were in attendance for introduction. Chief Ruditis then presented Brandon Rosenberger and Jordan Anderson as the new lieutenants in the department. They were hired at the same time and are being promoted together. They take on extra responsibilities in the department.

**INTRODUCTION OF  
NEW POLICE  
DEPARTMENT  
LIEUTENANTS**

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A motion to Approve the Promotion of Brandon Rosenberger and Jordan Anderson to Police Lieutenant was made by Councilman Massie, seconded by Councilman Walentosky and was approved.

The next item was a Reminder of the Upcoming Visit of Rep. Lee James and Sen. Scott Hutchinson at the April 14, 2025 Council meeting.

REMINDER –  
UPCOMING VISIT OF  
REP. JAMES & SEN.  
HUTCHINSON

**FISCAL, CONTRACTUAL, AND BUDGETARY  
TRANSFERS**

The following Vouchers were presented for Council’s review and approval.

FISCAL,  
CONTRACTUAL AND  
BUDGETARY ANSFERS  
  
VOUCHERS

General Fund	\$	247,660.18
Water & Sewer		208,071.25
Liquid Fuels Tax Fund		5,200.66
Arts Council		186.94
Payroll Account		103,834.57
Industrial Park		890.33

A motion to Approve the Vouchers was made by Councilman Gustafson, seconded by Councilman Craig and was approved.

The next item was the December 2024 Financial Reports.

DECEMBER 2024  
FINANCIAL REPORTS

Councilman Gustafson thanked all for their hard work in keeping costs down and making the City run smoothly.

A motion to Approve the December 2024 Financial Reports was made by Councilman Gustafson, seconded by Councilman Craig and was approved.

**RESOLUTIONS & ORDINANCES**

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ORDINANCES

**INFORMATIONAL**

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**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Joseph Sanfillippo was in attendance and informed all that he is a ten-month resident of the City. He hails from Brooklyn, New York. He hopes to get involved with the community and make a difference.

**CITY COUNCIL REPORTS/COMMENTS**

CITY COUNCIL  
REPORTS/COMMENTS

Councilman Gustafson commented on the break up of the ice on the river and creek.

WINTER WEATHER  
COMMENTS

Councilman Walentosky remarked that it has been a rough winter. Mayor Kluck said that we have been spoiled over the last couple of winters.

Mayor Kluck asked about salt for the roads. Mr. Gorman said that on February 21, two loads were delivered, two loads on February 22 and three on this date. Mayor Kluck lauded kudos to Public Works. He said that the roads have been taken care of very well this winter.

**ADJOURNMENT**

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before Council, a motion to adjourn the meeting at 5:24 p.m. was made by Councilman Gustafson, seconded by Councilman Walentosky. Motion approved.

**PERSONS IN ATTENDANCE**

Mark Schroyer, Staff  
Kelly Ryen, Staff  
Chris Gorman, Staff  
Jeff Wenner, Staff  
Jason Herman, Staff  
Michelle Hoovler, Staff  
Cory Ruditis, Staff  
Tom Lawton, Staff  
Tim Alex, Staff  
Yvonne Greene, Staff  
Eric McFadden, Staff  
Sam McSparren, Staff,  
Kobe Kahle, Staff  
Teddy Theiss, Staff

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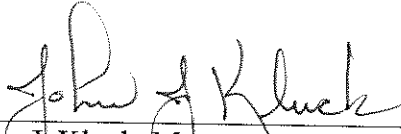
Jolene Hurrelbrink, Staff  
Brandon Rosenberger, Staff  
Jordan Anderson, Staff  
Joseph Sanfilippo  
CJ Hurley  
Paul Myers  
Barbara Pierce  
Tracey Lander-Garrett

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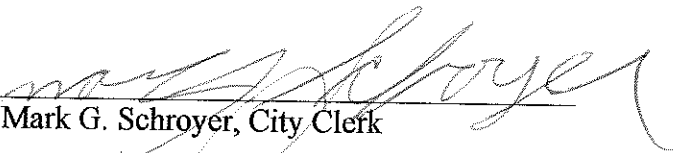
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APPROVED BY COUNCIL THIS

10th DAY OF March, 2025

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
John J. Kluck, Mayor

I hereby certify the foregoing to be a true and correct copy of the minutes of the Council meeting of February 24, 2025.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Mark G. Schroyer, City Clerk