



ORLAND CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING

Tuesday, November 19, 2024

CALL TO ORDER

Meeting called to order by Mayor Chris Dobbs at 6:30 PM.

ROLL CALL

Councilmembers present:

Councilmembers Bruce T. Roundy, John McDermott, Jeffrey A. Tolley, Vice Mayor Matt Romano and Mayor Chris Dobbs

Councilmembers absent:

None

Staff present:

City Manager Pete Carr; City Attorney Greg Einhorn; Police Chief Joe Vlach; City Clerk Jennifer Schmitke; City Engineer Paul Rabo, Library Director Jody Meza

CONSENT CALENDAR

- A. Warrant List (Payable Obligations)
- B. Approve City Council Minutes from November 5, 2024
- C. Receive and File Economic Development Commission Minutes from October 8, 2024
- D. Receive and File Library Commission Minutes from September 9, 2024
- E. Solid Waste Collection Rate Annual Adjustment
- F. Annual Review and Adjustment to Water and Sewer Rates
- G. Library Management Position

Councilmember Tolley asked to pull item 4F.

ACTION: Councilmember Tolley moved, seconded by Councilmember Roundy, to approve items A-E and G on the consent calendar as presented. Motion carried by a voice vote 5-0.

Councilmember Tolley expressed concerns about raising water and sewer rates. In response, the other Councilmembers emphasized the challenges of catching up on deferred rate increases versus maintaining steady adjustments. Councilmembers highlighted the importance of rate increases to support ongoing maintenance of the City's infrastructure. Despite this discussion, Councilmember Tolley reiterated his opposition to the proposed rate hikes.

ACTION: Councilmember Romano moved, seconded by Councilmember Roundy, to approve item F on the consent calendar as presented. Motion carried by a voice vote 4-1 (Councilmember Tolley voted no).

PRESENTATION - Presentation by Pioneer Community Energy to Consider Co-funding an Assessment Study to Determine the Feasibility of the City Joining Pioneer JPA

Mr. Carr introduced Gina Stassi-Vanacore and Lisa Delaney from Pioneer Community Energy, who provided an overview of their Community Choice Aggregator (CCA) program. They explained that CCAs allow local governments to procure electricity for residents and businesses while utilities like PG&E handle transmission and distribution. Pioneer prioritizes ratepayer savings, local control, and energy efficiency, offering electricity rates below PG&E's. Ms. Delaney spoke about key benefits of joining Pioneer Community Energy including:

1. **Stable and Competitive Rates:** Significant cost savings for customers, with \$85 million saved from 2018-2023 and \$21 million more projected for 2024.
2. **Local Control:** Membership includes a seat on Pioneer's Board of Directors, ensuring representation and public transparency.
3. **Advocacy:** Strong legislative and regulatory representation, including support for biomass energy.
4. **Economic Growth:** Prioritization of local contracts fosters job creation and business attraction.
5. **Customized Community Programs:** Includes incentives for solar and battery systems, agricultural pilots, energy rebates, and bioenergy initiatives.

Pioneer is interested in expanding into Glenn County and proposed a \$30,000 feasibility study to assess the potential, with Pioneer funding half the cost. The remaining \$15,000 would be shared by Glenn County, Orland, and Willows if they participate. The study will evaluate financial feasibility, projected rates, and power supply costs ahead of a potential October 2027 service launch.

Mr. Carr shared that the EDC reviewed the proposal on November 14 and recommended moving forward with the feasibility study. The County Board of Supervisors will consider it on November 26, and Willows will consider it on December 10.

Councilmember McDermott requested additional details about how PG&E carryover programs and solar customer benefits would transition to Pioneer. Ms. Stassi-Vanacore clarified that these programs would seamlessly transfer from PG&E to Pioneer.

Mayor Dobbs inquired about the process for residents and businesses wishing to opt out and whether the City could proceed with Pioneer independently if Willows and Glenn County chose not to participate after the feasibility study. Ms. Stassi-Vanacore assured that Pioneer would conduct community outreach to educate residents and emphasized that participation is voluntary. She also confirmed that the City could choose to move forward with Pioneer independently after the feasibility study is completed.

Vice Mayor Romano inquired about fees on Pioneer bills, and Ms. Stassi-Vanacore provided an estimated percentage of savings. When asked about the process for the City leaving Pioneer in the future, she explained the procedure for dissolving the agreement if necessary. Regarding energy sourcing, Ms. Stassi-Vanacore clarified that Pioneer purchases energy rather than producing it and achieves lower rates than PG&E by avoiding legacy costs, corporate overhead, and legal litigation expenses.

Councilmember Roundy expressed support for exploring the program, highlighting the potential utility savings for the community. Councilmember Tolley also voiced his support for evaluating the program.

Orland resident and EDC Chairperson Ron Lane recommended moving forward with Pioneer and inquired about the opt-out process, citing a negative experience he had heard from a Nevada County resident.

The Council directed staff to proceed, and Mr. Carr confirmed he would present a letter of intent at the December 3rd meeting.

ADMINISTRATIVE BUSINESS

A. Replacement of Underground Utilities on a Section of Swift Street

City Engineer Paul Rabo reported that on October 1, 2024, the City Council directed staff to seek partnership funding from the Glenn County Transportation Commission for the reconstruction of Swift Street, from East Street to Woodward Avenue. He emphasized the importance of replacing aging water mains and laterals before roadwork begins to ensure long-term utility reliability and street durability.

While the sewer main is relatively new and does not require replacement, the water infrastructure is outdated and undersized, with replacement costs estimated at \$400,000 for construction alone. Additionally, the clay sewer lines, which have exceeded their expected lifespan, also need replacement.

The total estimated cost for upgrading water and sewer infrastructure, including engineering and contingencies, is approximately \$1.4 million. Mr. Rabo provided a preliminary project estimate that incorporates both utility replacements and street reconstruction.

Mayor Dobbs emphasized the importance of updating the water and sewer lines concurrently with road repaving to ensure long-term infrastructure reliability. Vice Mayor Romano requested clarification on the project cost estimates. Councilmember Roundy highlighted the potential use of Measure J funds to support road maintenance projects like this one. Councilmember Tolley inquired about additional engineering costs and questioned the criticality of updating the utility lines as part of this project. Councilmember McDermott emphasized the importance of upgrading the water lines to enhance firefighting capabilities and ensure public safety.

Orland resident Earl Megginson stated his support for the project and asked the City to consider the residents that live on that street.

Mr. Lane recommended that the water and sewer lines should be replaced at the same time.

ACTION: Councilmember Roundy moved, seconded by Councilmember McDermott, to approve the replacement of water and sewer infrastructure on Swift Street from East Street to Woodward Ave, prior to reconstruction of the street surface. Motion carried by a roll call vote 4-1.

Ayes: Councilmembers Tolley, Roundy, McDermott, Mayor Dobbs

Noes: Vice Mayor Romano voted no

B. Update to ARPA Project Budget including Feline Population Reduction, Queen Bee Bucks

Mr. Carr reported that the Council allocated ARPA funds to support COVID-19 recovery efforts, focusing on public safety, business support, and parks improvements. After reviewing fund usage on May 21, 2024, and again on October 15, the Council confirmed alignment with funding objectives.

Mr. Carr noted that ARPA allocations were updated to reflect late 2023 Council decisions. Key changes include removing EV chargers, adding repainting projects for City Hall and the 824 4th St. buildings, planting trees in parks, and increasing funding for Queen Bee Bucks.

On November 12, the County Board of Supervisors allocated \$25,000 of its ARPA funds to a spay/neuter reimbursement program for cats and dogs in partnership with Orland. County staff will work on logistics details.

Mr. Carr reported the EDC also recommended allocating \$20,000 to support another round of the Queen Bee Bucks BOGO program for the holiday season and noted that \$22,000 remains available for future allocation or retention in the General Fund.

The Council unanimously supported moving forward with the Queen Bee Bucks program, emphasizing its positive impact on supporting local businesses and expressing hope that it could launch in time for the holiday season. The Council also expressed appreciation for the progress on the Cat/Dog reimbursement program in partnership with the County, highlighting its potential benefits for the community. Additionally, the Council agreed to prioritize painting City Hall before addressing other city buildings and requested bids for the project.

County resident Kristy Rumble shared her views on painting the City buildings.

County resident Valerie Johnson expressed her gratitude to the City for advancing the reimbursement program and stated she is not supportive of the County's addition of dogs.

Orland resident Heather LeDonne expressed her concerns about the new reimbursement program, particularly her disagreement with including dogs and euthanasia.

Orland resident Alex Enriquez suggested modifying the Queen Bee Bucks program by moving away from the BOGO structure and instead focusing on increasing the proportion of local dollars reinvested into the community.

Mr. Carr mentioned that City staff could contact the painters to include City Hall in their proposals for the project.

ORAL AND WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Ms. Rumble asked the City to consider flashing crosswalk signs in the school zones on Hwy 32.

CITY COUNCIL COMMUNICATIONS AND REPORTS

Councilmember Tolley:

- Attended the EDC meeting on November 12th.

Councilmember Roundy:

- Will be attending the Arts Commission meeting November 20th.

- Will be attending the Transportation Commission and Transit Committee meeting November 21st.

Councilmember McDermott:

- Nothing to Report.

Vice Mayor Romano:

- Nothing to Report.

Mayor Dobbs:

- Nothing to Report.

MEETING ADJOURNED AT 8:08 PM

Jennifer Schmitke, City Clerk

Chris Dobbs, Mayor