



**CITY OF CENTERTON
SPECIAL
CITY COUNCIL MEETING
CALLED BY DARREN WARREN,
JUSTIN COWGUR AND AMY ROCHETTE
DECEMBER 20, 2021**

(1) Roll Call-

The Special City Council Meeting was called to order by Mayor, Bill Edwards at 6:30 p.m. Those present and answering roll call were Mayor Bill Edwards, Misty Elam, Darren Warren, Josie Reed, Keith Higginbotham, Justin Cowgur and Amy Rochette. Those present and not answering roll call were City Clerk Todd Wright, City Attorney Brian Rabal, Financial Director Pam Grant, HR Director Jocelyn Diaz, Police Chief Cody Harper, Police Captain Chris Kelley, Director of Public Works Lance Johnson, Fire Chief Matt Thompson, Planning Director Lorene Burns and Animal Services Director Cody Wilson.

(2) Discuss Purchasing Procedures –

Misty Elam made a motion to add Public Comments to the Agenda, with a 2nd from Justin Cowgur. All Council Members voted in favor and the motion carried.

Mayor Edwards opened the discussion regarding Purchasing Procedures.

City Attorney Brian Rabal cautioned the Council against spoiling evidence and hindering an ongoing, open investigation. He said Benton County Prosecuting Attorney Nathan Smith has advised the same.

Council Member Darren Warren addressed the Council, stating that “Title 3: Fiscal Affairs, Chapter 3.04: Purchases” was provided for the Council, prior to this meeting, for review. He also cautioned about discussing certain details regarding personnel, and current policies, with and ongoing investigation.

Justin Cowgur and Amy Rochette asked Financial Director Pam Grant to explain the current Purchasing process. Grant detailed those processes.

There was discussion regarding spending limits, receipts, work orders, open accounts, credits card accounts, on-hand inventory control, additional resources, etc.

Justin Cowgur asked how quickly we could get on a Purchase Order Process. Pam Grant said she would do the research. Cowgur said he would like to have that information for the January 2022 City Council Meeting. Cowgur asked if we could reduce the current spending limit. City Attorney Brian Rabal said that would have to be done by Ordinance. Cowgur asked if we could limit access to credit cards. Rabal said that is not in the Code, and apparently not in the SOP's. Cowgur asked Grant if we could shut down the credit cards. Grant said she could allow only one (1) credit card per department. Cowgur was fine with that, and asked that we shut down the Lowe's, Tractor Supply, Amazon cards, and allow Grant to control the Staples card. City Clerk Todd Wright agreed with those measures, and added that he would like to see some kind of checks-and-balances within the departments, prior to the invoices even getting to the Financial Department. Cowgur agreed, but thought this would be an effective immediate action. Amy Rochette agreed. There was discussion.

Amy Rochette recommended that for now, every receipt needs to be reviewed by the Finance Assistant, followed by review by the Finance Director, with final approval by the Mayor.

Josie Reed agreed with researching a Purchase Order System, looking at our SOP's, the number of credit card accounts, and the amount allowed to be spent on those cards, as well as looking at adding an additional employee to review purchases.

Darren Warren asked that these suggestions be brought to the upcoming Work Session. Amy Rochette asked that Department Heads be present, to help Council better understand their work flow.

No action was taken by Council.

City Clerk Todd Wright opened the Public Comment, with a three (3) minute time limit per comment.

Public Comment –

Jaimie George – 1017 Tarah Knolls Circle – Recommended a Purchase Order System for purchases, as well as a managed Inventory. Asked for accountability for city tax dollars. Recommended looking at additional Staff.

Jason McCoy – 1261 Clydesdale Drive – Asked for accountability for spending. Recommended a Purchase Order System for purchases, including open PO's. Asked about open accounts such as Amazon. Asked about Audit notes from 2019. He recommended repercussions for any misappropriation of funds. He recommended starting with whoever signed a check for those funds.

Carmen Avagaro – 1341 Montieri Drive – Asked for transparency. Recommended being diligent in being proactive with processes, as the city is growing quickly. Recommended talking to other cities our size. Agreed with lower spending limits and credit card control, as well as a Purchase Order System. Recommended a Credit Card Discipline Policy.

Katherine Smith – 11507 Hwy 72 – Expressed the importance of accountability.

Mac Ellis – 1641 Sweetbriar Way – Recommended using a Purchase Order System. Questioned the 2019 Audit. Emphasized the importance of reconciling receipts. He said misappropriation of funds is against the law. He asked Council to revisit Employee Premium Pay.

Lisa McCoy – Clydesdale Drive – Questioned the Amazon Account Review process. Pam Grant detailed the process. McCoy recommended an Internal Audit. She asked if she could have access to Amazon purchases for the City.

Carl Rabey – 122 Skinner Street – Recommended a Purchase Order System, lowering spending limits, and standard SOP's.

John Box – 742 Appleridge Drive – Asked for accountability from the City Administration in regard to spending. He questioned the lack of advancement in the city.

Elizabeth Edwards – 261 Sun Meadow Drive – Questioned a Department Head being able to approve their own spending. Recommended a checks-and-balances system within each department.

Jaimie Ascherman – 108 Hailey Drive – Recommended implementing a quarterly Internal Audit for Finances and gave examples, with repercussions in place. Recommended asking questions about spending more often. Recommended the Council Members being more involved, to have a better understanding of the roles and processes of the City Employees. Expressed the importance of a signature on a check or invoice.

Matt Thompson – Expressed disappointment. Recommended checks-and-balances in each department. He said a Purchase Order System may be difficult for him, in certain situations. He asked for Department Heads to be able to be involved in some of the solutions.

Lance Johnson – Expressed disappointment. Agreed that we need to be more accountable. Expressed the importance of purchasing from Amazon as a Park Supervisor, and also in Public Works. He said he can view his own purchase history, but no one else's. He said he is willing to work with a Purchase Order System.

Michael Commet – 268 Fern Street – Asked for accountability and responsibility. He said we need to identify the problem, fix it and move forward. He asked for Mayor Edwards to be accountable. Mayor Edwards briefly described his purchase approval process. He said he is very disappointed, and agreed that a Purchase Order System would be helpful.

Cody Ellis – 1641 Sweetbriar Way – Asked for accountability. Questioned the approval process for purchases. Was unhappy with the City being recognized in a negative light.

Randy Smith – Asked if there are items that are disapproved after purchase. Mayor Edwards said there are items that have been asked for that were not approved for purchase, but not after purchase.

Shannon Zappettini – 840 Napa Avenue – Stated that she is the Finance Assistant. She said she is neither a Department Head nor a Manager, but is an hourly employee. She said she pays invoices approved by the Financial Director. She said it is not her responsibility to approve or deny invoices.

Amy Rochette asked Mayor Edwards for accountability. Mayor Edwards said he let the city down. Justin Cowgur said we owe an explanation to the citizens.

Cowgur explained the process of Executive Session. He thanked the public for their input and said Council is fighting for accountability.

No action was taken by Council.

(3) Executive Session – Promotion of a Street Department Employee –

Misty Elam made a motion to enter into Executive Session at 9:22 p.m., with a 2nd from Amy Rochette. All council members voted in favor and the motion carried.

Darren Warren made a motion to exit the Executive Session and re-enter the City Council Meeting at 10:20 p.m., with a 2nd from Keith Higginbotham. All council members voted in favor and the motion carried.

Mayor Edwards no Action was taken in Executive Session.

Jason McCoy stated that he was disappointed that no action was taken, in regard to tonight's discussion. Several other citizens agreed.

(4) Adjourn-

Darren Warren made a motion to adjourn at 10:26 p.m. with a 2nd from Misty Elam. All council members voted in favor and the motion carried.

Bill Edwards, Mayor

Todd Wright, City Clerk