

CITY COUNCIL MINUTES

City of Hillsdale
February 21, 2022
7:00 P.M.

Regular Meeting

Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance

Mayor Adam Stockford opened the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Roll Call

Mayor Adam Stockford called the meeting to order. Clerk Price took roll call.

Council Members present: Adam Stockford, Mayor
R Greg Stuchell, Ward 1
Anthony Vear, Ward 1
William Morrissey, Ward 2
Cynthia Pratt, Ward 2
Bill Zeiser, Ward 3
Raymond Briner, Ward 4
Robert Socha, Ward 4

Council Members absent: Bruce Sharp, Ward 3

Also Present: David Mackie (City Manager), Attorney Tom Thompson, Katy Price (City Clerk), Scott Hephner (HCPD/HCFD), Jake Hammel (DPS Director), Kristin Bauer (City Engineer), Kim Thomas (City Assessor), Penny Swan, Lance Lashaway, Dennis Wainscott, Cindy Eckhardt, Martha Smith, Judie Palacios, Matt Loren, Victoria Ladd, Lee Webber, Sheri Ingles, Doug Ingles, Diane Staelens, Norman Bearman, Darrell Derr, Heidi Gochanour, Ken Cole, Michelle Rogers, Steph Myers, Diane Bowditch, Dewey Rogers, Emily Gilchrist.

Approval of Agenda

Motion by Council Member Morrissey, seconded by Council Member Socha to approve the agenda as presented.

By a voice vote, the motion passed unanimously.

Public Comment

Jack McLain, commented on the library board minutes of December 9, 2021 about grant money used for staff bonuses, etc.

Consent Agenda

- A. Approval of Bills
 - 1. City and BPU Claims of January 20, 2022: \$1,187,204.34
February 3, 2022: \$317,618.17
 - 2. Payroll of January 20, 2022: \$170,615.16
February 3, 2022: \$174,212.32
- B. City Council Minutes of February 7, 2022
- C. Library Minutes of January 13, 2022
- D. Operations & Governance Committee Minutes of January 26, 2022
- E. EDC Minutes of December 21, 2021
- F. EDC Special Meeting Minutes of January 28, 2022
- G. Shade Tree Commission Minutes of February 9, 2022
- H. BPU: WTP Backwash Piping Replacement
- I. 2022 Board of Review Schedule
- J. Hillsdale College Right of Way, Use and Noise Variance (Taste of Manning)

Motion by Council Member Morrissey, seconded by Council Member Socha to approve the Consent agenda as presented.

Roll call:

Council Member Stuchell	Aye
Council Member Morrisey	Aye
Mayor Stockford	Aye
Council Member Vear	Aye
Council Member Socha	Aye
Council Member Briner	Aye
Council Member Pratt	Aye
Council Member Zeiser	Aye

Motion passed 8-0

Communications/Petitions

- A. County Commissioner Update: Doug Ingles
- B. Comcast Programming Advisory Email
- C. Assessing/Code Enforcement Questions

Hillsdale County Commissioner Ingles reviewed plow truck/snow removal jurisdictional state regulations and how funding works for the County. In Michigan, County Road Commission is in charge of public streets and roads that are not in a city or village. County has 608 miles of primary roads and 600 of local roads. The City is responsible for maintaining streets inside of city limits.

Council Member Socha asked if the City could contract with the County to help each other.

Act 51 monies and funding could possibly be an issue if the City would contract with the County on this item.

Hammel stated that he has a great relationship with the County Road Commission. As many City departments have a good relationship with County departments.

City Assessor Thomas and Police Chief Hephner addressed the Assessing and Code Enforcement questions that was presented by Council Member Socha. Thomas reviewed the assessing and code information the department follow set by the State and Council.

All items presented for the purpose of information only.

Introduction and Adoption of Ordinances/Public Hearings

- A. Public Hearing: Special Assessment District SAD 22-05 (Uran St)

The total estimated cost for the project is \$320,000 with \$284,300 being paid by the City and \$35,700 being assessed to property owners. The project cost split is in accordance with the City's Policy on Special Assessment Districts for Street Projects presented to the City Council at their February 1, 2021 meeting. It is important to note that the total assessed cost to the affected property owners will not go above the policy maximum assessment limit of \$5,000 per parcel or 25% of the property value per Hillsdale Ordinance Chapter 2, Article V, Section 2-335, whichever is the lesser amount.

Mayor Stockford opened podium to public 7:39 p.m.

Dewey Rogers, 187 Uran St. asked a questions on how the assessment was made.

City Engineer Bauer stated it's based on per parcel, each parcel is based off of a max of \$5000 and vacant lots are assessed less.

Jack McLain stated he didn't see how it was fair with businesses that have lots of road frontage and pay the same as a smaller business with less road frontage.

Mayor Stockford closed podium at 7:44 p.m.

Council Member Socha asked if the Special Assessment doesn't pass will the area be fix.

Manager Mackie stated no to Council Member Socha’s questions.

Mayor Stockford added that Hillsdale Terminal and Core Coyle submitted letters of opposition of the special assessment.

Manager Mackie reviewed the ways that were looked at for funding and assessments prior to the conclusion of how the special assessments were assessed.

Mayor Stockford asked Mr. Rogers if he is in favor, Rogers stated the roads need fixed but the \$5000 for him is a little excessive.

Council Member Vear stated that when Council looked at residential areas in special assessment districts and mentioned that Council decided on all properties being treated fair if they had more linear frontage or not.

Motion by Council Member Vear, seconded by Council Member Morrissey to establish the Special Assessment District 2022-05, Uran Street area. **Resolution #3489.**

Roll call:

Council Member Stuchell	Aye
Council Member Morrissey	Aye
Mayor Stockford	Aye
Council Member Vear	Aye
Council Member Socha	No
Council Member Briner	Aye
Council Member Pratt	Aye
Council Member Zeiser	Aye

Motion passed 7-1

B. Public Hearing: Special Assessment District SAD 22-06 (Morry St, Lynwood Blvd, Howell St)

The total estimated cost for this project, as broken out below, is \$1,080,000 with \$802,700 being paid by the City and \$277,300 being assessed to property owners. The project cost split is in accordance with the City’s Policy on Special Assessment Districts for Street Projects presented to the City Council at their February 1, 2021 meeting. It is important to note that the total assessed cost to the affected property owners will not go above the policy maximum assessment limit of \$5,000 per parcel or 25% of the property value per Hillsdale Ordinance Chapter 2, Article V, Section 2-335, whichever is the lesser amount.

STREET	PROJECT LIMITS	TOTAL ESTIMATE	CITY COST SHARE	ASSESSED SHARE
Morry St.	S. Howell to Walnut	\$ 230,000	\$ 212,800	\$ 17,200
E&W Lynwood Blvd	S. Howell to Reading	\$ 390,000	\$ 226,850	\$ 163,150
S. Howell St.	Hallett to south city limits	\$ 460,000	\$ 363,050	\$ 96,950
TOTALS		\$ 1,080,000	\$ 802,700	\$ 277,300

Mayor Stockford opened podium to public 8:01 p.m.

Ken Cole, Howell St resident is in opposition of the special assessment district. He has lived at his residents for 40 years and didn’t have to come talk to council before on funding issues. There is a lot of traffic on Howell St and believes it is unfair to assess just the residents on the street. He added that the HARPA funds may be an option to help fund street reconstruction and repair. He asked Council if special assessments are going to be the ongoing way of getting the roads fixed. Cole inquired about the 6% interest rate and how that was brought about.

Mayor Stockford stated that special assessments were going to be utilized as a mechanism for street reconstruction as well as grants and other means of funding.

Manager Mackie stated that the 6% interest rate is from the City Charter.

Brian Clark, Lynwood Blvd resident stated that he doesn't believe other areas such as Lynwood and Morry should help fund Howell Street as it is a major street and everyone uses that street.

City Engineer Bauer gave a brief overview of property tax disbursement and road funding. A very small portion of property tax is put towards the streets. The state gas tax is what helps street funding which the state determines the amount the City receives for roads.

Michelle Rogers Howell St resident across from hospital, sent a letter of opposition to the City. Street was damaged by large semi-trucks parking on the street when the McRitchie Unit was built. She had inquired about if the hospital is paying for their part and asked how long the road will last when redone. She understands special assessments on cul-de-sacs and small neighborhoods are needed but Howell Street is heavily traveled and is against the special assessment for this area.

City Engineer Bauer stated the hospital is assessed the same as all residents per parcel so a total of \$13,000. She mentioned that streets last for 18-20 years with proper maintenance.

William Mullaly, Howell St resident doesn't understand the special assessment. He is in favor of fixing the streets but not sure this is a good option and submitted a letter of opposition. He asked Council to find ways to fund the street fund. He inquired about the possibility of a sales tax option for the city. Attorney Thompson said it was illegal for sales tax as Michigan isn't a state that allows that. He stated he loves that the roads are getting fixed and is willing to pay for it but asked Council to continue to find other ways of funding.

Jack McLain spoke on the 6% interest amount and asked about Manager Mackie's bonus incentive for roads.

Heidi Gochanour, Lynwood Blvd resident stated she is not in favor of the special assessment, reported that the hospital has heavy traffic at all times of the day, and employees constantly park on Lynwood. She doesn't feel the hospital assessed amount is high enough for the traffic they create. She mentioned the special assessment is not feasible for her budget. She also submitted an opposition letter at the meeting.

Mayor Stockford closed podium at 8:30 p.m.

Council Member Socha asked City Manager if this assessment didn't pass what would be the next course of action with the flooding issues the areas have.

Manager Mackie stated the City could split off Lynwood and do that area but Howell and Morry would not be done.

Council Member Vear, commented that if Council votes the project down, it will be many years until the street will be brought back up for discussion again.

Council Member Briner asked if Council had looked at an income tax possibility. As it is a funding option for the streets.

Mayor Stockford stated Council did look at the income tax option but was voted down by the residents years ago.

Council Member Socha stated he is generally against taxes and special assessments but the need for this area is great as Howell Street is the main entrance into the City. He and his wife made a donation to help reconstruct the road system in the City, previously.

Further Council discussion ensued.

Motion by Council Member Vear, seconded by Council Member Morrissey to establish the Special Assessment District 2022-06, Morry St, Lynwood Blvd, Howell St). **Resolution #3490.**

Roll call:

Council Member Stuchell	Aye
Council Member Morrissey	Aye
Mayor Stockford	No
Council Member Vear	Aye
Council Member Socha	Aye
Council Member Briner	No
Council Member Pratt	No
Council Member Zeiser	Aye

Motion passed 5-3

Old Business

New Business

Miscellaneous Reports

A. Proclamation – None

B. Reappointments—Chris Bahash – TIFA Board

Motion by Council Member Socha, seconded by Council Member Stuchell to reappointment Chris Bahash to the TIFA board.

By a voice vote, the motion passed unanimously.

C. Other – None

General Public Comment

Jack McLain, commented that he believes he is one of the top donors to the TIFA Dawn Theater. He appreciates ArtWorks and The Friends of the Dawn Theater as they put on a good show. His family wasn't allowed to attend the Open House fundraiser as his tickets didn't have names on them specifically. McLain inquired about the occupancy and permitting processes as the numbers on the building do not meet code. He also stated that City is losing a great Council Member as Briner will not be running again for ward four.

Police/Fire Chief Hephner stated that the fire department does not issues the occupancy permits.

Dennis Wainscott, commented on Comcast raising fees. He asked Council why the City can't open up their own cable as a revenue source.

Penny Swan, thanked all the council member that voted no on Special Assessment District #2022-06.

City Manager's Report

Manager Mackie stated the fundraising event at The Dawn Theater was a very tremendous event. It is a great venue for weddings, graduations, dances and other events.

Flooding issues were caused during the last storm, there were some calls from county residents around the airport that put claim that the airport may have caused it.

Mackie addressed Wainscott's question on the city having a cable system. He mentioned it is very costly to start up and the focus has been on the roads and other higher priorities.

Council Comments

Council Member Pratt asked how long ago did the City put together an income tax proposal.

Mayor Stockford stated that he believes it was around 2011 – 2012.

Council Member Stuchell mentioned that The Dawn Theater event was great and thanked all involved.

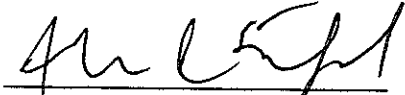
Mayor Stockford agreed with Stuchell on the Dawn Theater event. He enjoyed seeing the transformation.

Adjournment

Motion by Council Member Briner, seconded by Council Member Socha moved to adjourn the meeting.

By a voice vote, the motion passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 9:10 p.m.



Adam L. Stockford, Mayor



Katy Price, City Clerk