

CITY COUNCIL MINUTES

City of Hillsdale
March 18, 2024
7:00 P.M.

Regular Meeting

Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance

Mayor Stockford opened the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Roll Call

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

Council Members present:

- Adam Stockford, Mayor
- Anthony Vear, Ward 1
- R Greg Stuchell, Ward 1
- William Morrissey, Ward 2
- Cynthia Pratt, Ward 2
- Bruce Sharp, Ward 3
- Gary Wolfram, Ward 3
- Robert Socha, Ward 4
- Joshua Paladino, Ward 4

Also Present: Tom Thompson (City Attorney), Michelle Loren (Deputy City Clerk), Jason Blake (DPS Director), Scott Hephner (Chief HCPD/HCFD), Kimberly Thomas (Assessor), Doug Ingles (County Commissioner), Larry Walworth, Richard Smith, Joseph Hendee, Robert Eichler, and Sam Lair.

Approval of Agenda

Motion by Councilman Morrissey, support by Councilman Vear, to approve the agenda as presented.

All ayes. Motion carried.

Public Comment

Joseph Hendee addressed the Mayor and Council regarding the Hillsdale College Hotel Project. Mr. Hendee questioned what is going to happen to the Keefer Hotel project now that it is dead in the water. He questioned possible conflict of interest among councilmembers as the Hillsdale College Hotel Project progresses and Council has to vote on matters regarding it.

Sam Lair, Ward 3, expressed his lack of support for the NEZ application for 217 N. Manning St. and tax abatements in general.

A brief discussion took place addressing concerns over the Hotel Project.

Consent Agenda

- A. Approval of Bills
 - 1. City and BPU Claims of February 29, 2024 - \$1,435,777.32
 - 2. Payroll of March, 2024 - \$193,183.00
- B. City Council Minutes of March 4, 2024
- C. Finance Minutes of March 4, 2024
- D. Community Development Committee Minutes of March 7, 2024
- E. EDC Minutes of March 7, 2024
- F. Public Safety Committee Minutes of March 12, 2024
- G. Hillsdale College Taste of Manning Event Agreement
- H. BPU 8" Water Main Bore
- I. BPU WTP Generator ATS Installation

Motion by Councilman Morrissey, support by Councilman Socha, to approve the Consent Agenda.

Roll Call:

Councilman Morrisey	Aye
Councilman Paladino	Aye
Councilwoman Pratt	Aye
Councilman Sharp	Aye
Councilman Socha	Aye
Councilman Stuchell	Aye
Councilman Vear	Aye
Councilman Wolfram	Aye
Mayor Stockford	Aye

Motion passed 9-0

Communications/Petitions

A. Hillsdale College Hotel Project.

City Manager David Mackie explained that the Hillsdale College Hotel Project is in its concept/development stages. It was placed on the Agenda solely for the purpose of letting the public know the College had come before the Community Development Committee with a presentation about the intent to build a hotel and wanted to be transparent with the community.

Councilman Wolfram, a member of the Community Development Committee, stated the College project will not interfere with the Keefer Hotel as they will serve different clientele. However, they will be beneficial to one another. He assured

Mayor Stockford wanted to dispel any beliefs that the College and the Keefer have a direct attachment to each other.

Councilman Sharp commented the Keefer is well on its way to completion and will be a benefit to the community by providing hotel space for the community.

Councilman Vear commended the College for all of the events and activities they hold that are open to the public and their contribution to the community.

B. Community Electronics Recycling Event

C. TCO 2024-09 Blocking of Parking Spaces

Chief of Police explained to Council that the blocking of parking spaces was a request from the construction company working on the Keefer Hotel in order to accommodate a contractor trailer. The parking spaces will be blocked March 11, 2024 through December 31, 2024.

D. Hillsdale County Commissioner Update – Doug Ingles

Commissioner Ingles reported he had no update, but welcomed questions from Councilmembers. Councilman Vear questioned about the timeline of the Courthouse renovation. Commissioner Ingles stated the renovation is on track to be completed by the end of summer/early fall of this year.

Introduction and Adoption of Ordinances/Public Hearings

None

Old Business

A. Set Public Hearing for Confirmation of Special Assessment Rolls:

- 22-07 Westwood Area
- 2024-08 W. St. Joe/Griswold Streets

Council received plans for proposed street improvements in the Westwood Area to be funded by special assessment. On October 3, 2022, Council adopted Resolution No. 3516 establishing the Westwood Area Special Assessment District (SAD 22-07). Council also received plans for proposed street improvements to W. St. Joe and Griswold Streets to be partially funded by special assessment on August 21, 2023 and adopted Resolution No. 3572 establishing the W. St. Joe/Griswold Special Assessment District (SAD 2024-08).

City Assessor Kimberly Thomas briefed Council on the Special Assessment rolls for the street projects in the Westwood Drive Area and on W. St. Joe/Griswold Streets. Ms. Thomas took questions from Council and requested a public hearing be set for April 15, 2024 at 7:00 p.m. in order to confirm the special assessment rolls.

Motion by Councilman Sharp, support by Councilman Vear, to set a public hearing for April 15, 2024 at 7:00 p.m. to receive comment regarding the confirmation of the Special Assessment Rolls.

New Business

A. NEZ Application for 217 N. Manning Street – Nicholas Rorick

An application for a Neighborhood Enterprise Zone Certificate was received by the City Clerk on February 21, 2024 for Nicholas Rorick for a proposed new facility to be built at 217 N. Manning Street. The Economic Development Corporation’s Business Review Committee met on March 7, 2024 to review the application at which time they voted to recommend Council approval of the application for a 12 year term. Marketing & Economic Development Coordinator Sam Fry recommended Council adopt Resolution No. 3589 to approve the application.

Ms. Thomas answered various questions posed by Council and explained the workings of an NEZ.

Mayor Stockford expressed his concerns about NEZs stating he felt they are not necessarily fair as the recipient is given a tax break while the rest of the property owners are seeing tax increases and are being special assessed with no tax breaks being afforded them.

Motion by Councilman Socha, support by Councilman Sharp, to adopt Resolution No. 3589 approving a 12 year Application for NEZ Certificate for 217 N. Manning Street for a term of 12 years.

Roll Call:

Councilman Paladino	No
Councilwoman Pratt	No
Councilman Sharp	Aye
Councilman Socha	Aye
Councilman Stuchell	Aye
Councilman Vear	Aye
Councilman Wolfram	Aye
Mayor Stockford	No
Councilman Morrissey	Aye

Motion carried. 6-3

B. Police Vehicle and Equipment Purchase

Police Chief Scott Hephner and the Public Safety Committee requested approval of the purchase of a 2024 Chevrolet Silverado 1500 Police Package Vehicle from Berger Chevrolet in the amount of \$51,522.00 and an additional \$16,000.00 for fitting costs. Chief Hephner did a price comparison between the Silverado and another Tahoe, a \$10,000.00 difference, the Tahoe being the higher of the two. Chief also stated that the Tahoe has no guarantee on delivery time while the Silverado is in inventory and available.

Chief Hephner also requested Council approval for the replacement of six (6) Taser units for the Police Department from Axon. Chief explained that Axon does not extend their product liability certificate to units more than five (5) years old and the department’s current units will be five (5) years old in May of 2024. Replacement cost for six (6) handles with a four (4) year warranty, six (6) batteries, and twelve (12) training cartridges is \$16,360.56.

Funding for these purchases will come from the Fire Department and Public Safety Equipment, Vehicles, and Building maintenance Millage Fund.

Motion by Councilman Stuchell, support by Councilman Socha, to approve the purchase of a 2024 Chevrolet Silverado plus fitting at a cost of \$51,522.00 plus \$16,000.00 funded by the Public Safety Millage Fund.

Roll Call:

Council Member Pratt	Aye
Council Member Sharp	Aye
Council Member Socha	Aye
Council Member Stuchell	Aye
Council Member Vear	Aye
Council Member Wolfram	Aye
Mayor Stockford	Aye
Council Member Morrissey	Aye
Council Member Paladino	Aye

Motion carried 9-0

Motion by Councilman Wolfram, support by Councilman Vear, to approve the purchase of six (6) Taser handles, six (6) batteries, and twelve (12) training cartridges.

Roll Call:

Council Member Sharp	Aye
Council Member Socha	Aye
Council Member Stuchell	Aye
Council Member Vear	Aye
Council Member Wolfram	Aye
Mayor Stockford	Aye
Council Member Morrissey	Aye
Council Member Pratt	Aye
Council Member Paladino	Aye

Motion carried 9-0

C. Set Public Hearing for Amending Parking Violation Fines

On March 12, 2024, the Public Services Committee met to review the City’s current parking fines. It was noted the fines had not been adjusted in many years. After reviewing Section 32-56 through and including Section 32-57 of Article II of Division II, Chapter 32 of the Code of Ordinances of the City of Hillsdale, the Public Services Committee recommend Council raise off parking fines from \$10.00 to \$20.00 and handicap parking violations from \$50.00 to \$100.00. Chief Hephner requested a public hearing be set for April 15, 2024 for Council discussion and to take public comment.

Motion by Councilman Stuchell, support by Councilman Vear, to set a public hearing for April 15, 2024 to amend Sections 32-56 and 32-57 of Article II of Division II, Chapter 32 of City Charter.

All ayes. Motion carried.

Miscellaneous Reports

- A. Proclamations – None
- B. Appointment- Zoning Board of Appeals – Jordan Adams for a partial term ending November, 2025.

Motion by Councilman Sharp, support by Councilman Socha, to appoint Jordan Adams to the Zoning Board of Appeals for a partial term ending November, 2025.

All ayes. Motion carried.

- C. Other- None

General Public Comment

Richard Smith addressed Council regarding the condition of the Mitchell Research Center Building.

Larry Walworth addressed Council regarding his dissatisfaction with police reports received by FOIA. He feels the information is contradictory and wants to see the matter addressed. Mr. Walworth went on to commend Kimberly Thomas for her follow-up on the many various violations around the City. He then went on to express his concern about the many dogs at large in the City and the danger of it.

City Manager Report

City Manager David Mackie updated Council on the various street and BPU projects going on in the City. The Westwood Area project has started. Refresher notices of various street closures will be sent out to residents affected by the project. BPU valve replacement is set to begin by the schools week of March 25.

Mr. Mackie clarified the Keefer Project is not dead and is still on track.

Council will receive the first draft of the 2024-25 Budget at the April 1, 2024 meeting.

Council Comment

Councilman Socha rebuked the actions of organizations/unions supporting the defund police movement causing delays in purchases of police vehicles.

Councilman Sharp asked for the community's patience with the boil water alerts over the summer as the BPU makes progress with sanitation improvements.

Councilman Paladino remarked about huskies at large. Mr. Paladino also proposed researching library funding and the Mitchell.

Mayor Stockford announced the Congressman Wahlberg got \$425,250.00 for Arch Avenue Reconstruction and Storm System included in the last funding bill. Mr. Mackie responded that yes, it is earmarked and we are waiting to hear from the Federal Government

Adjournment

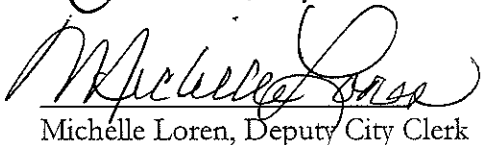
Motion by Councilmember Sharp, seconded by Councilmember Socha to adjourn the meeting.

By a voice vote, the motion passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 8:25 p.m.



Adam Stockford, Mayor



Michelle Loren, Deputy City Clerk