

# CITY COUNCIL MINUTES

City of Hillsdale

April 1, 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), Katy Price (City Clerk), Jason Blake (DPS Director), Scott Hephner (Chief HCPD/HCFD), Alan Beeker (Planning/Zoning), Brandon Janes (I.T.), Dan Poole (HCFD), Doug Ingles (County Commissioner), Hannah Jordan, Cassandra Farmer, Abe Dane, Missy DesJardin and Lance Lashaway.

## Approval of Agenda

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

All ayes. Motion carried.

## Public Comment

None

## Consent Agenda

- A. Approval of Bills
  - 1. City and BPU Claims of March 14, 2024 - \$1,558,487.14
  - 2. Payroll of March 28, 2024 - \$193,610.01
- B. City Council Minutes of March 18, 2024
- C. Finance Minutes of March 18, 2024
- D. March 2024 Board of Review Minutes
- E. Public Services Minutes of March 25, 2024
- F. Farmers Market Use Agreement
- G. US-12 Daughters of the American Revolution Use Agreement

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

Roll Call:

Councilman Paladino	Aye
Councilwoman Pratt	Aye
Councilman Sharp	Aye
Councilman Socha	Aye

Councilman Stuchell	Aye
Councilman Vear	Aye
Councilman Wolfram	Aye
Mayor Stockford	Aye
Councilman Morrissey	Aye

Motion passed 9-0

**Communications/Petitions**

A. 2024 Assessor Report

B. Bertakis Light Up Parade Letter

C. Xfinity Residential Service Agreement Update

D. Hillsdale County Commissioner Update – Doug Ingles

Commissioner Ingles reported Bankers Road is in poor condition the Road Commission is planning on doing a two inch overlay over four and a half miles. Board of Commissioners are in discussion on the future District Court location.

**Introduction and Adoption of Ordinances/Public Hearings**

A. Public Hearing- Municipal Civil Infraction Ordinance Amendment

On February 26, 2024, City Staff and City of Hillsdale Public Services Committee (PSC) met to review and discuss the Municipal Civil Infraction language and Fines included in Sections 20-31 through and including Section 20-33 of Article II, Chapter 20 of the Code of Ordinance of the City of Hillsdale. The PSC has discussed this information at a number of meetings and requested City Attorney Tom Thompson provide some updated language.

Council discussion ensued the proposed ordinance and fine increases.

Mayor opened podium at 7:10 p.m.

With no public comment Mayor closed podium at 7:11 p.m.

Motion by Councilman Vear, support by Councilman Socha, to approve the Ordinance Amendment to Municipal Civil Infraction.

All ayes. Motion carried.

B. Public Hearing- Use & Occupancy for Principal Residence Owners Ordinance Amendment

On February 26, 2024, City Staff and City of Hillsdale Public Services Committee (PSC) met to review and discuss the current Use and Occupancy Permit requirement for properties occupied by the owner as their principal residence. The current Ordinance requires the owner to apply and pay for a permit, but provides that if they plan to occupy the residence and they had a professional home inspection by a licensed third-party inspector then they could bypass the inspection by the Fire Department.

Discussion from council ensued on not requiring principal resident owners to apply and pay for a use and occupancy permit but will continue to have rentals apply for an inspection and permit.

Mayor opened podium at 7:14 p.m.

Missy DesJardin, Ward 3, commented on the inspection process and home inspector background. DesJardin suggested Council look to contract with a state certified inspector to help alleviate staffing shortages. She stated that home inspections are very important to have, safety is important.

With no other public comment Mayor closed podium at 7:17 p.m.

Motion by Councilman Paladino, support by Councilman Vear, to approve the ordinance amendment for Principle Residences and Use and Occupancy Permits.

All ayes. Motion carried.

#### C. Adoption of Renewable Energy Systems Ordinance

Alan Beeker, Planning Administrator, reported with the growing need and popularity of renewable energy sources, the Planning Commission has amended Secs. 36-431 & 36-432. The PC saw Renewable Energy Systems becoming a viable use for both commercial and residential property owners in the future. The ordinance was initially presented to Council for adoption on 12/3/2023. Council sent it back to Planning Commission with directives to make amendments to the proposed ordinance. The included ordinance reflects the new guidelines and Council directives for Renewable Energy Systems.

Motion by Councilman Paladino, support by Councilman Vear, to approve the ordinance amendment for Principle Residences and Use and Occupancy Permits.

Motion by Councilman Sharp, support by Councilman Morrisey, to adopt the Renewable Energy Systems Ordinance.

All ayes. Motion carried.

#### Old Business

None.

#### New Business

##### A. 2024-25 Proposed Budget and Setting Public Hearing

Karen Lancaster, Finance Director, stated the Fiscal Year 2024-25 proposed budget document is included in the Council packet. This document represents the preparation and collaboration of department heads and the City Manager. Revenue and expenditures have been carefully reviewed to meet Council's expectation of a General Fund balanced operating budget. The General Fund is budgeted to have a small surplus of \$6,243. Pursuant to Charter requirements, City Council should set a public hearing for May 20, 2024 at 7:00 p.m.

Motion by Councilman Stuchell, support by Councilman Socha, to set a public hearing for May 20, 2024 at 7:00 p.m. for the budget.

All ayes. Motion carried.

##### B. Updated Fund Balance Policy

Karen Lancaster, Finance Director, reviewed that the City Council adopted a resolution to set the minimum fund balance of the General Fund to 15% of expenditures. The policy was updated in November of 2022 to include all operating funds of the City. This revised policy is seeking approval to increase the minimum fund balance in the General Fund to 25% of expenditures. At 25% the fund balance would equal approximately \$1,383,000.

Motion by Councilman Morrisey, support by Councilman Vear, to approve the Updated Fund Balance Policy for the increase of 25%.

All ayes. Motion carried.

##### C. Budget Amendments for FY 2024 Budget (Resolution)

Karen Lancaster, Finance Director, reported the Uniform Budget and Accounting Act of 1968, as amended, requires the City to make amendments to the budget when appropriations exceed the current budget. These amendments must be approved by the City Council.

In the General Fund, the City Council adopts a budget for each department, so the amendments address any budget needs by department, rather than by fund total. For all non-General Funds, a budget amendment is only necessary if the City finds the total fund appropriation will exceed the budget adopted by Council.

Motion by Councilman Morrissey, support by Councilman Sharp, to approve the resolution for Budget Amendments for the FY 2024 Budget. **Resolution #3590.**

All ayes. Motion carried.

D. Joint Early Voting Site Agreement Amendment

Katy Price, City Clerk stated on September 18, 2023 City Council approved the City of Hillsdale to enter into a combined Early Voting Site agreement with the County to save taxpayer funds. In 2023 all municipalities in the Hillsdale County approved the agreement except for Somerset Township. On March 21, 2024 the Somerset Township Board approved entering into the Joint Early Voting Site agreement. The current EVS agreement would need amended to include Somerset Township and it would require an approval of all public bodies before April 15<sup>th</sup>.

Abe Dane, Hillsdale County Deputy Clerk answered a few questions regarding early voting on the County end.

Motion by Councilman Socha, support by Councilman Vear, to approve the amended Joint Early Voting Site Agreement with the County adding Somerset Township and authorize the City clerk to sign on behalf of the City.

Roll Call:

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

Motion passed 7-2

E. Domestic Harmony Service Agreement

Hannah Jordan, Executive Director, reported Domestic Harmony is celebrating 44 years. The City has supported Domestic Harmony for many years. They provide victims of domestic violence and their children vital services such as: crisis intervention, 24-hour supportive counseling, and transportation, temporary shelter, housing placement assistance, information and referrals in legal and financial matters. These services are free of charge to those who reside in Hillsdale County.

Council discussion ensued on police engagement and amount for the service contract.

Motion by Councilman Socha, support by Councilman Sharp, to approve the service agreement with Domestic Harmony in the amount of \$6000 for fiscal year 2024-25.

Roll Call:

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

Motion passed 9-0

F. Solicitors and Peddlers Registration/Permit Fee Increase

David Mackie, City Manager, reported on March 25, 2024, the City of Hillsdale Public Services Committee met to review and discuss the current Solicitors and Peddlers Registration/Permit Fee. The Committee has discussed this item at a number of public meetings. After review of the ordinance and discussion with members of the public the Committee approved recommending to City Council that the registration/permit fee be increased from \$25 to \$50. A permit is good for a calendar year.

Council discussion ensued on location of food trucks and where they are allowed to set up along with questions about brick and mortar restaurants setting up their own food trucks elsewhere within the city and having to pay the fee.

Council sent item back to Public Services Committee to review the language.

Motion by Councilman Socha, support by Councilwoman Pratt, to approve the solicitor and peddler fee increase from \$25 to \$50.

By a voice vote, the motion passed unanimously.

G. Closed Session 8:07 p.m.

Motion by Councilman Socha, support by Councilwoman Pratt, to go into closed session for the purpose of discussion of purchase of real property.

Out of Closed session 8:37 p.m.

Motion by Councilman Sharp, support by Councilman Morrisey, to resume meeting.

By a voice vote, the motion passed unanimously.

**Miscellaneous Reports**

A. Proclamations – Autism Awareness Month

Mayor Stockford read proclamation aloud.

B. Appointment- Board of Public Utilities – Steve Wells

Motion by Councilman Vear, support by Councilman Socha, to appoint Steve Wells to the Board of Public Utilities.

All ayes. Motion carried.

C. Other- None

**General Public Comment**

None

**City Manager Report**

City Manager David Mackie updated Council on nominating petitions which are available to pick up in the City Clerk's office until April 23, 2024 by 4p.m.

Airport fuel sales and update on airport hangar.

Keefer House Hotel tour for Council members.

Budget meeting Monday, April 8, 2024 at 6:00 p.m.

**Council Comment**

Councilman Stuchell thanked Mr. Mackie and the rest of staff that helped with the St. Anthony set up for Easter visual.

Councilman Socha suggested that Council bring forth their objections to their no votes. Specifically for the Early Voting Site agreement amendment.

Mayor Stockford shared his concerns on the Agreement amendment with the County and doesn't believe it should be done.

Attorney Thompson mentioned that the agreement was to add Somerset Township to the agreement not necessarily approve the agreement in whole as it has already been approved.

**Adjournment**

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

By a voice vote, the motion passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 8:55 p.m.



Adam Stockford, Mayor



Katy Price, City Clerk