

CITY COUNCIL MINUTES

City of Hillsdale

March 3, 2025

7:00 P.M.

Regular Meeting

Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance

Mayor Pro Tem Joshua Paladino opened the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Roll Call

Mayor Pro tem Josh Paladino called the meeting to order. Clerk Price took roll call.

Council Members present:	Joshua Paladino, Ward 4 Mayor Pro Tem R Greg Stuchell, Ward 1 Jacob Bruns, Ward 1 William Morrissey, Ward 2 Matthew Bentley, Ward 2 Gary Wolfram, Ward 3 Bob Flynn, Ward 3 Robert Socha, Ward 4
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Council Members absent:	None
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Also Present: David Mackie (City Manager), Attorney Tom Thompson, Katy Price (City Clerk), Jason Blake (DPS Director), Brandon Janes (IT), Kim Thomas (City Assessor), Kristen Bauer (City Engineer), Sonja Edwards, Jill Hardway, CJ Toncray, Jacob Pitts, Kevin Burkett, Sheri Ingles, Casey Sullivan, Shannon Gainer, Scott Sessions, Abe Dane, Tim Polelle, Drew Gamble, Rebecca Houghton, Mark Nichols, Richard Smith, Isaac Kirshner, Jenny Halloin, Clark Judge and Doug Ingles.

Approval of Agenda

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

Voice vote, approved unanimously.

Public Comment

Jack McLain, Hillsdale Twp., commented on Communication item CL Real Estate Keefer House Hotel letter.

Consent Agenda

Approval of Bills

- A. 1. City and BPU Claims of February 13, 2025: \$578,596.71
- 2. Payroll of February 13, 2025: \$204,040.89
- B. City Council Minutes of February 17, 2025
- C. Finance Minutes of February 17, 2025

Motion by Council Member Flynn, seconded by Council Member Morrissey to approve the Consent Agenda as presented.

Voice vote, approved unanimously.

Communication/Petitions

- A. County Clerk Office & Audit Verbal Update – Abe Dane
- B. Comcast Advisory Letter
- C. Keefer House Hotel LLC Letter
- D. Hillsdale County Commissioner Verbal Update – Doug Ingles

Abe Dane, County Clerk gave an update on the County Clerk office annual stats and court reports.

Dane also reported on the November 2025 election audit.

Doug Ingles, Hillsdale County Commissioner reported on Material Management Committee. Next meeting will be March 27, 2025 at 6:00 p.m. and the Lewis Emery Park grant project.

Introduction and Adoption of Ordinances/Public Hearings

A. Public Hearing: Establishing Special Assessment District 2025-10 Monroe Street

At the February 17, 2025 City Council meeting a public hearing date of March 3, 2025 was set to consider any objections to the improvements under consideration for reconstruction of Monroe Street. The total estimated cost for this project is \$737,112.50. By City policy adopted February 17, 2025, up to 50% of the total project costs may be covered through special assessment to the 15 parcels currently identified in the Monroe Street Special Assessment District (SAD #2025-10) which includes Monroe Street from Hillsdale Street to West Street.

Project cost split is in accordance with the City’s Policy on Special Assessment Districts for Street Projects updated at the February 17, 2025 meeting. It is important to note that the total assessed cost to the affected property owners will not go above the policy maximum assessment limits based on classification or 25% of the property value per Hillsdale Ordinance Chapter 2, Article V, Section 2-335, whichever is the lesser amount. Notice of the meeting was published once each week for two successive weeks in the local newspaper. Affected property owners were mailed information on the proposed district on February 18, 2025.

The City received one (1) letter in opposition and one (1) letter in favor of the project from affected property owners.

Mayor Pro Tem Paladino opened the public hearing 7:54 p.m.

Kevin Burkett, 53 Monroe St., asked about final amounts of assessment. He also inquired about the street bricks, stating the Hillsdale Historical Society received bricks from previous projects and would like to have more to complete a project at the poorhouse.

Kim Thomas, Assessor answered Mr. Burkett’s question. Assessment Roll and final numbers will be presented at the next public hearing.

Shannon Gainer, 134 S. Howell St., spoke on the street being reconstructed as a truck route or industrial street with more requirements for heavier vehicles.

Mayor Pro Tem Paladino closed the public hearing at 8:20 p.m.

Council discussion ensued.

Motion by Council Member Morrissey, seconded by Council Member Stuchell to approve and establish the SAD 2025-10 Monroe Street as presented. **Resolution #3628.**

Roll Call:

Councilman Flynn	Aye
Councilman Morrissey	Aye
Councilman Socha	Aye
Councilman Stuchell	Aye
Councilman Wolfram	Aye
Mayor Pro Tem Paladino	Nay
Councilman Bentley	Aye
Councilman Bruns	Nay

Motion passed 6-2

B. Public Hearing: Establishing Special Assessment District 2025-11 Barry Street

City Manager Mackie gave a brief report and timeline of the SAD project.

The City received 16 letters in opposition of the project.

Mayor Pro Tem Paladino opened the public hearing at 8:29 p.m.

Tim Polelle, 11 Barry St., commented he opposed the SAD project. The petition submitted prior to the public hearing date being set should be valid. Recommend council to vote against the project and look into the policy.

Drew Gamble, Property owner, had questions on his property, the shared easement and the final assessed amount.

Jenny Halloin 47 S. West St., stated she was in solidarity with the letter writers and she is not in favor of the SAD project. Halloin had a few questions on street reconstruction.

Shannon Gainer, 134 S. Howell St., commented on SAD, the airport and funding.

CJ Toncray, 46 S. Broad St., is not in favor of the SAD as taxes have increased and hard for residents and landlords.

David Hambleton, 67 S. Howell St., is not in favor of SAD asked council to have final numbers of assessment for residents.

Richard Smith, 63 S. Broad St., commented on Barry Street elevation and rain pooling on Broad Street.

Sonya Edwards, 64 Barry St., commented on sidewalk and water issues at her property.

Mayor Pro Tem Paladino closed podium at 8:50 p.m.

Mayor Pro Tem Paladino proposed spending City funds out of the Capital Outlay Fund to do the SAD project and reduce the residential assessment amount for Barry Street property owners.

Councilman Flynn asked if council should table this project so staff can get numbers and see if funds would be available.

City Manager Mackie stated monies are available but funds are earmarked for specific projects which is done during the budgeting process. There are a few large upcoming projects these funds are needed for. The SAD policy was revised and approved unanimously by Council two (2) weeks prior. Staff reworked the policy to make it more equitable for everyone. Policy should be set to make all the districts uniform and not give special treatment. Mackie stated it was inappropriate to treat any one district favorably over another. The more money taken from General Fund, the less money will be available to do further streets projects.

Mayor Pro Tem Paladino stated council wouldn't be drawing from the pot.

Councilman Bruns stated it's not the City Manager's job to determine what's appropriate. Stated it was inappropriate for his opinion to be given to Council.

Councilman Bentley stated he was not against what the staff has done with the current policy but was in favor of Mayor Pro Tem Paladino's idea of spending funds to adjust the amounts for residents to pay for special assessments.

Councilman Socha expressed his displeasure with Mayor Pro Tem Paladino springing this idea of a different funding method right before a vote for the SAD project. The SAD Policy was revised two (2) weeks prior. Committees should review the policy and present to council. Socha wants districts uniform across the board to avoid backlash.

Councilman Stuchell commented that Hillsdale is a City Manager form of government. Mayor Pro Tem Paladino's idea may not be bad, but to bring it forth right before a vote doesn't give council enough time to review it. The City Manager and staff know all the ins and outs on these projects.

Councilman Flynn asked if the new idea should have been brought up prior to the public hearing for

Monroe St SAD.

Lengthy Council discussion ensued.

Motion by Mayor Pro Tem Paladino, seconded by Council Member Stuchell to table the SAD 2025-11 Barry Street project.

Roll Call:

Councilman Morrisey	Nay
Councilman Socha	Nay
Councilman Stuchell	Aye
Councilman Wolfram	Aye
Mayor Pro Tem Paladino	Aye
Councilman Bentley	Aye
Councilman Bruns	Aye
Councilman Flynn	Aye

Motion passed 6-2

Council discussion continuing public hearing in April, on timeframe of construction, scheduling and the budget.

Old Business

None

New Business

None

Miscellaneous Reports

A. Proclamations – None

B. Appointments- None

C. Other - None

General Public Comment

Jill Hardway, 157 Oak St., commented on the MDOT Road Diet, public hearing process.

CJ Toncray, 46 S. Broad St., commented she was assessed with a special assessment. She enjoyed the council discussion.

David Hambleton, 67 S Howell St., thanked City Manager, Engineer and staff for their job. Council is voted in by the residents and budgets should be managed by elected officials.

Jake Pitts, 53 Morry St., would like more police presents on the south part of the town by the UB Church. Vehicles are traveling to fast in that part of town.

Tim Polelle, 11 Barry St., commented on the Barry Street SAD project and asked for some clarification moving forward.

Richard Smith, 63 S. Broad St., spoke on the Mitchell Research Center building and basement repairs it needs.

Jeff Fajkas, spoke on the budget.

Shannon Gainer thanked Mayor Pro Tem Paladino for funding idea for SADs and discussion council had. Spoke on the airport as well.

Scott Sessions, 102 Coldspring Cir., commented council should motion to extend meeting after 10:00 p.m.

City Attorney Thompson stated no action items can be started after 10:00 p.m. without a motion.

Jack McLain, Hillsdale Twp., stated police presence is needed south of Hillsdale and around school jones. McLain mentioned that committee meetings are all posted and there are more than one (1) college in Hillsdale.

City Manager Report

Manager Mackie reported March Board of Review is scheduled for, Monday, March 10th 9am-3pm, Tuesday, March 11th 3pm-9pm at City Hall. Appointments are recommended but not required.

Manager Mackie reported Aldi Store will hold a grand opening on Thursday, March 13th.

Manager Mackie reported spring cemetery cleanup is scheduled for Monday, March 17th.

Manager Mackie reported No curbside leaf collection the spring.

Manager Mackie reported Council will be presented with the budget on April 7th. Budget meetings will be set up April 17th and April 24th with Finance director and department heads.

Manger Mackie reported Council water and sewer facilities tour is March 15th.

Council Comment

Councilman Flynn commented on brush collection, Dawn Theater and TIFA agreement.

Councilman Stuchell commented the agreement is with CL Real Estate and TIFA. No money is being lost.

Mayor Pro Tem Paladino commented on the Airport facility tour for Council.

Councilman Socha stated he didn't think Mayor Pro Tem was disingenuous. The idea presented was thrown out at council and seemed like it was courting favor to those on Barry Street.

Councilman Wolfram asked if staff could look at drafting special assessment language in a resolution or policy so the assessment figures were presented for property owners.

Councilman Bentley asked the attorney about the Mayor Pro-Tem position if Mayor Pro-Tem Paladino wasn't elected Mayor at the election.

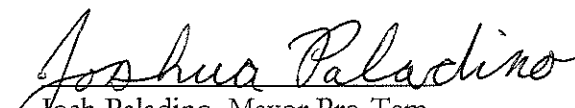
Councilman Bentley announced he was running for the Mayor's seat in August 2025.

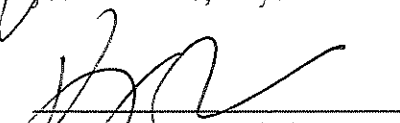
Adjournment

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

By a voice vote, the motion passed unanimously.

The meeting Adjourned at 10:26 p.m.


Josh Paladino, Mayor Pro-Tem


Katy Price, City Clerk