

CITY COUNCIL MINUTES

City of Hillsdale

December 15, 2025

7:00 P.M.

Regular Meeting

Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance

Mayor Scott Sessions opened the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Roll Call

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

Council Members present:

Scott Sessions, Mayor
R Greg Stuchell, Ward 1
Jacob Bruns, Ward 1
William Morrisey, Ward 2
Matthew Bentley, Ward 2
Gary Wolfram, Ward 3
Bob Flynn, Ward 3
Robert Socha, Ward 4
Joshua Paladino, Ward 4

Council Members absent:

None

Also Present: David Mackie (City Manager), Attorney Tom Thompson, Katy Price (City Clerk), Jason Blake (DPS Director), Mark Hawkins (HCFD), Brandon Janes (IT), Doug Ingles, Sheri Ingles, Mark Nichols, Brant Cohen, Felicia Finch, Aidan Sullivan.

Approval of Agenda

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

All ayes. Motion carried.

Public Comment from:

Lance Lashaway, Felicia Finch- Hillsdale Twp.

Consent Agenda

- A. Approval of Bills
 - 1. City and BPU Claims of November 26, 2025: \$945,331.49
 - 2. Payroll of December 4, 2025: \$215,525.48
- B. City Council Minutes of December 15, 2025
- C. Finance Minutes of December 15, 2025
- D. Cemetery Minutes of November 12, 2025
- E. LAC Minutes of December 10, 2025 & DART Accessibility Plan
- F. 2026 Committee Meeting Dates

Council discussion on Finance and Council minutes of December 15th should be December 1st.

Motion by Councilman Morrisey, support by Councilman Socha, to approve the agenda as amended with the above changes.

Roll Call:

Councilman Bruns	Aye
Councilman Flynn	Aye
Councilman Morrisey	Aye
Councilman Paladino	Aye

Councilman Socha	Aye
Councilman Stuchell	Aye
Councilman Wolfram	Aye
Mayor Sessions	Aye
Councilman Bentley	Aye

Motion passed 9-0

Communication/Petitions

A. Hillsdale County Commissioner Update – Doug Ingles

Doug Ingles, County Commissioner, gave a brief update on the County.

Introduction and Adoption of Ordinances/Public Hearings

A. Public Hearing – Hillsdale's Energy Waste Reduction (EWR) Plan

David Mackie, City Manager/BPU Director stated the State of Michigan adopted a very aggressive Energy Waste Reduction (EWR) law in late 2023. The BPU's staff has been working with Michigan Municipal Electric Association (MMEA) and American Municipal Power (AMP) over the last year to develop a plan that meets the EWR requirements at the least cost to our customers. The City's Plan would collectively cost our customers about 2.5 percent. After the Public Hearing on December 1st the City Council requested staff attempt to update the Plan to charge all customers by their kwh usage. The purposed plan showed the examples of residential and commercial usages and charges.

Mayor Sessions opened podium at 7:17p.m.

No public comment, Mayor Sessions closed podium at 7:17 p.m.

Lengthy Council discussion ensued on laws, flat rate for residential and percentage usage for commercial, administrative costs, fines and penalties if not in compliance with the state.

Motion by Council Member Flynn, seconded by Council Member Wolfram to approve the BPU EWR Plan and submit to the State of Michigan as presented.

Roll Call:

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

Motion passed 5-4

Old Business

A. Keefer House Hotel LLC OPRA Resolution Amendment

Keefer House Hotel, LLC requested an additional extension of the completion date to June 30, 2026. The amendment would ensure the State Tax Commission does not revoke the OPRA certificate while the project remains ongoing, as OPRA's are subject to State Tax Commission review after being approved at the local level.

Brant Cohen, CL Real Estate, reviewed the progress made at the hotel and further plans moving forward.

Motion by Council Member Morrisey, seconded by Council Member Socha to approve the extension for the OPRA Keefer House Hotel LLC as presented. **Resolution #3660.**

Roll Call:

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

Motion passed 6-3

New Business**A. Resolution Establishing Guidelines for Poverty Exemption from Property Taxes**

Council discussed they would like have the resolution come before them to discuss the guideline and resolution every year. Council amended the resolution to reflect the change.

Motion by Council Member Socha, seconded by Council Member Flynn to amend the resolution to remove "All income and asset limits shall be adjusted for each year based on the updated federal poverty guidelines as published annually in the prior year by the State Tax Commission.

Roll Call:

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

Motion passed 9-0

Motion by Council Member Socha, seconded by Council Member Flynn to approve the resolution as amended. **Resolution #3661.**

Roll Call:

Councilman Socha	Aye
Councilman Stuchell	Aye
Councilman Wolfram	Aye
Mayor Sessions	Aye
Councilman Bentley	Aye
Councilman Bruns	Aye
Councilman Flynn	Aye
Councilman Morrisey	Aye
Councilman Flynn	Aye

Motion passed 9-0

B. Hillsdale Substation New Pole Location Change Order

Kent Power was asked by the BPU to quote the proposed change order to better utilize the substation more effectively and safely. The substation is an asset that should last the BPU for over 50 years. The new pole location change order totals \$354,883 with an additional \$17,494 in previous change orders for necessary work. The request was for a combined \$372,327 in change orders.

Motion by Council Member Morrisey, seconded by Council Member Socha to approve the Substation change order in the amount of \$372,327.00.

Roll Call:

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

Motion passed 9-0

C. Dial-A-Ride Annual Funding Resolution

Each February the City of Hillsdale submits an application to the State of Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) to apply for financial assistance under Act 51 for public transportation known as Dial-A-Ride Transit (DART). The Resolution of Intent required by MDOT as part of the application process. The resolution outlines the anticipated balanced budget for the 2026-2027 fiscal year of \$411,467.00 and projected funding sources. This budget is similar but not necessarily identical to the budget Council will approve in June as it covers a different fiscal year (October 1, 2026-September 30, 2027). It is anticipated that we will receive 18.0% of operational costs from federal sources and 33.1804% from the state. The remaining 48.8196% will come from local sources (ticket fares and general fund). The resolution also appoints Jason Blake, Public Services Director, as the Transportation Coordinator.

Motion by Council Member Morrisey, seconded by Council Member Flynn to approve the MDOT Dial-A-Ride Annual Funding Resolution as presented. **Resolution #3662.**

Roll Call:

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

Motion passed 9-0

D. Proposed Special Assessment District 2026-1, Rescinding Resolution #3659- Cancel Public Hearing on January 5, 2025

Sam Fry, Assistant City Manager, reported during the December 1, 2025 regularly scheduled council meeting, Council approved plans, specifications and drawings for SAD 2026-1, Arch Ave. Street Reconstruction Project and set a public hearing date of January 5, 2026 for consideration to establish the 2026-1 District. On December 3, 2025 City Staff received notice from the Michigan Department of Transportation that the City had been awarded a Transportation Economic Development Category F Grant (TEDF F) for the resurfacing of Industrial Drive. The Grant award is in the amount of \$375,000 with a 42% local match and will be funded for FY27.

With the Congressional appropriation for a reconstruction project on Arch Ave. in addition to the currently awarded TEDF F Grant on Industrial Dr., City staff recommended the projects be sent out for bid as one project in an effort to layer grant funding and obtain lower unit pricing.

The City Manager and Director of Public Services recommend the following streets for inclusion in the proposed SAD for street rehabilitation projects and potential associated utility work during the 2026 construction season:

Proposed SAD 2026-1: Arch Ave. (.33 mi): Mechanic Rd to W. Carleton Rd (M99)
Industrial Drive. (.62 mi): Mechanic Rd to Beck Rd.
Proctor Dr. (.075 mi): Industrial Dr. to dead-end cul de sac

Lengthy council discussion followed on the additional areas of the proposed SAD 2026-1, grant funding and the Special Assessment District Policy.

Motion by Council Member Bentley, seconded by Council Member Morrisey to rescind the resolution 3659 of necessity, cancelling the public hearing on January 5, 2025 and direct the City Engineer to prepare plans, specifications, and cost estimates for the above listed project areas pursuant to City Ordinance Article V, Division 3, Section 2-333, and submit to Council no later than the first regular meeting of January 2026 for consideration of establishment of a Special Assessment District. **Resolution #3663.**

Roll Call:

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

Motion passed 9-0

E. Special Assessment District Discussion

Sam Fry, Assistant City Manager reviewed a flow chart of process for establishing a special assessment district, which includes project, established plans, costs, public hearing, notices, petitions in favor or not, prepare assessment roll, 2nd public hearing, notices, confirm special assessment roll, etc.

No action taken.

Miscellaneous Reports

- A. Proclamations – None
- B. Appointment- None
- C. Other - None

General Public Comment

None

City Manager Report

Reviewed the City Manager report in the packet. Happy Holidays.

Council Comment

Councilman Flynn thanked everyone involved for the Light up Parade. Thanked Mr. Walters and others for the “Light up the Courthouse Square” for the season. (Trees wrapped with lights with business and organizations support). Flynn stated it looked great downtown and would like to see more participation from businesses and organizations to help with events and other items within the City.

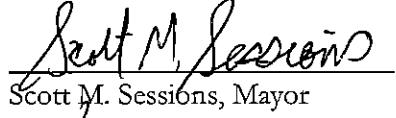
Councilman Bentley asked about Council rules and procedures and Roberts Rules of Law.

Mayor Sessions, Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

Adjournment

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

The meeting Adjourned at 9:32 p.m.



Scott M. Sessions, Mayor



Katy Price, City Clerk

View meeting online: [City Council Meeting December 15th, 2025 - YouTube](#)