

CITY COUNCIL MINUTES

City of Hillsdale
March 16, 2026
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 Morrissey, Ward 2
 Matthew Bentley, Ward 2
 Bob Flynn, Ward 3
 Robert Socha, Ward 4
 Joshua Paladino, Ward 4

Council Members absent: Gary Wolfram, Ward 3

Also Present: David Mackie (City Manager), Sam Fry (Assistant City Manager), Katy Price (City Clerk), Tom Thompson (City Attorney), Jason Blake (DPS Director), Rob Stiverson (City Engineer), Corey Murray, Jessica Flaughner, Mark Nichols, Penny Swan, Joseph Hendee, Doug Ingles David Morris, Jill Hardway, Joshua Waechter, B. Cortes.

Approval of Agenda

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

All ayes. Motion carried.

Public Comment Received From:

Joseph Hendee, Joshua Waechter

Consent Agenda

- A. Approval of Bills
 - 1. City and BPU Claims of February 26, 2026: \$1,442,950.17
 - 2. Payroll of February 26, 2026: \$215,264.02
- B. City Council Minutes of March 2, 2026
- C. Finance Minutes of March 2, 2026
- D. Planning Commission Minutes of January 21, 2026 and February 18, 2026
- E. TIFA Minutes of January 8, 2026 and January 20, 2026
- F. TIFA Targeted Development Minutes of January 8, 2026
- G. TIFA Review Committee Minutes of February 3, 2026 and February 24, 2026
- H. TIFA Dawn Theater Gov. Board Minutes of January 27, 2026 and February 24, 2026
- I. Zoning Board of Appeals Minutes of February 11, 2026
- J. Cemetery Board Minutes of March 4, 2026
- K. BPU: Eaton Relay Purchase

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

Roll Call:

Councilman Bruns Aye
Councilman Flynn Aye

Councilman Morrisey	Aye
Councilman Paladino	Aye
Councilman Socha	Aye
Councilman Stuchell	Aye
Mayor Sessions	Aye
Councilman Bentley	Aye

Motion passed 8-0

Communication/Petitions

- A. Keefer House Hotel Construction Update – Nick Fox
- B. Planning Annual Report
- C. 2026-27 Budget Review Dates
- D. 2026 E-Waste Collection
- E. Spring 2026 Brush Collection
- F. Hillsdale County Commissioner Update – Doug Ingles

Nick Fox Construction Manager gave a brief update on the Keefer House Hotel Construction.

County Board of Commissioner Ingles gave an update on the County. Next Board of Commissioners meeting is March 24 2026 at 9:00am, meeting will be held at City Hall, Council Chambers.

Items for information purposes only.

Introduction and Adoption of Ordinances/Public Hearings

None

Old Business

None

New Business

- A. Domestic Harmony Contract

Jessica Flaughter, Domestic Harmony Director gave an annual report of services from 2025.

Motion by Council Member Socha, seconded by Council Member Morrisey to approve the Domestic Harmony Contract in the amount of \$7,500.00.

Roll Call:

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

Motion passed 5-3

- B. City Mowing Contract Types A,B,C,D,F, and G

Motion by Council Member Socha, seconded by Council Member Morrisey to award the City Mowing contract to Finish Line Property Solution in the amount of \$402,904.25.

Roll Call:

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

Motion passed 7-1

C. Street Project Options and Special Assessment Policy Amendment

Sam Fry, Assistant City Manager, gave a brief background on street funding and potential funding options. For the current construction season, staff proposed three local street projects that assumed approximately \$935,000 in cost-share through special assessment revenue as part of the funding structure. If special assessments are not going to be used as a funding mechanism for these projects, that revenue will need to be replaced through other means, or the scope of the projects will need to be adjusted. Staff has developed a concept for Council to consider as it determines the best way to move forward. The below options are not mutually exclusive; rather, they can be used individually or in combination to help address the funding gap created by moving away from special assessments.

Option 1: Utilize the Street Sinking Fund Millage

One option would be for Council to consider levying the existing Street Sinking Fund millage (1.4 mills are available to levy in 2026, estimated to be \$310,000/year) in years when additional funding is required to complete planned projects. Council currently has the authority to levy this millage but has not done so in recent years.

Utilizing this tool periodically could help replace some of the funding shortfall created by moving away from the cost-share model that relies on special assessments. However, this option alone would not generate sufficient revenue to allow the City to accomplish multiple street reconstruction projects per year.

Option 2: Reduce Project Scope to Match Available Funding

If Council still wishes to complete the three proposed projects this year, staff would need to adjust the scope of those projects to account for the approximately \$935,000 funding gap created by the absence of special assessment revenue.

The most practical way to reduce project costs is to remove certain property-enhancing features from the project scope. These include: Curb and gutter replacement, Sidewalk repairs and replacement, Driveway approach reconstruction. These items collectively account for approximately 25% of the total project cost. By excluding these elements across the three projects, and removing the add-ons, the City could reduce project costs sufficiently to proceed using existing funding sources and balances while maintaining the integrity of the Special Assessment Policy.

Under this approach, the affected streets would receive new pavement from curb to curb, improving the driving surface and extending the life of the roadway approximately 15-25 years or more.

However, the full rebuild that was originally proposed and the property-enhancing features would not be included in an effort to trim cost while keeping the project boundaries largely the same.

Staff recommended amending the policy to reflect the following that special assessments are not required for every local street project. Projects proceeding without a special assessment district will not include curb and gutter replacement, sidewalk repairs and replacement, or driveway approach reconstruction, and may utilize lower-cost surfacing treatments and if property owners in a proposed project area support a special assessment district, a full reconstruction project including these property-enhancing features will be designed.

Lengthy Council discussion ensued on the options of funding and street conditions.

Jason Blake DPS Director and City Engineer Rob Stiverson reviewed the condition of streets. Discussion on pavement replacement, leveling course patching, ADA sidewalk replacement, drive approaches and SADs.

Motion by Council Member Morrissey, seconded by Council Member Flynn to adopt 2026 resolution to update the policy used to establishing and allocating costs for Special Assessment Districts. **Resolution #3669.**

More council discussion ensued.

Councilman Socha moved to call to the question, seconded by Mayor Sessions.

Roll Call:

Councilman Paladino	Aye
Councilman Socha	Aye
Councilman Stuchell	Aye
Mayor Sessions	Aye
Councilman Bentley	Aye
Councilman Bruns	Aye
Councilman Flynn	Aye
Councilman Morrissey	Aye

Motion passed 8-0

Debate ended.

Motion by Council Member Morrissey, seconded by Council Member Flynn to adopt 2026 resolution to update the policy used to establishing and allocating costs for Special Assessment Districts. **Resolution #3669.**

Roll Call:

Councilman Socha	Aye
Councilman Stuchell	Aye
Mayor Sessions	Aye
Councilman Bentley	Aye
Councilman Bruns	Aye
Councilman Flynn	Aye
Councilman Morrissey	Aye
Councilman Paladino	Aye

Motion passed 8-0

Motion by Council Member Morrissey, seconded by Council Member Flynn to direct city staff to proceed with option 2 as presented for the three streets discussed, Oak, South Streets and Arch Avenue.

Roll Call:

Councilman Stuchell	Aye
Mayor Sessions	Aye
Councilman Bentley	Aye
Councilman Bruns	Aye
Councilman Flynn	Aye
Councilman Morrissey	Aye
Councilman Paladino	Aye
Councilman Socha	Aye

Motion passed 8-0

Council discussion about millage availability and the sinking fund to repave Oak Street from Fayette Street to College Street.

Motion by Council Member Socha, seconded by Council Member Morrissey to approve levying the sinking fund up to .5 mill to repave Oak Street from Fayette Street and College Street.

Roll Call:

Mayor Sessions	Nay
Councilman Bentley	Nay
Councilman Bruns	Nay
Councilman Flynn	Aye
Councilman Morrissey	Aye
Councilman Paladino	Nay
Councilman Socha	Aye
Councilman Stuchell	Nay

Motion failed 3-5

Motion by Council Member Bentley, seconded by Council Member Paladino to have city staff create an RFP and bid out to repave Oak Street from Fayette Street to College Street.

Roll Call:

Councilman Bentley	Aye
Councilman Bruns	Aye
Councilman Flynn	Aye
Councilman Morrissey	Aye
Councilman Paladino	Aye
Councilman Socha	Aye
Councilman Stuchell	Aye
Mayor Sessions	Aye

Motion passed 8-0

Miscellaneous Reports

- A. Proclamations – None
- B. Appointment- David Morris- Airport Advisory Committee
- C. Other –None

Motion by Council Member Socha, seconded by Council Member Flynn to approve the appointment of David Morris to the Airport Advisory Committee.

All ayes. Motion carried.

General Public Comment Received From:

Joseph Hendee, Penny Swan.

Mr. Hendee tossed GIS copies to Clerk Price regarding Lifeways property.

City Manager Report

Manager Mackie read aloud an appreciation letter from the Union City Village Manager, recognizing the BPU employees for their assistance in restoring electricity through the Mutual Aid Agreement following the March 6 tornado. We extend our thanks to the entire BPU team.

Council Comment

Councilman Bentley asked about residency requirements for residents to run for office. He also spoke on Market House closure at end of month and asked City Manager Mackie about Sam Fry’s job title and about the last few Hillsdale Collegian articles which led to a lengthy discussion between Council and City Manager Mackie.

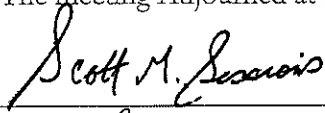
Councilman Flynn had a few questions on a spring cleanup for leaves.

Mayor Sessions thanked everyone for joining the meeting.

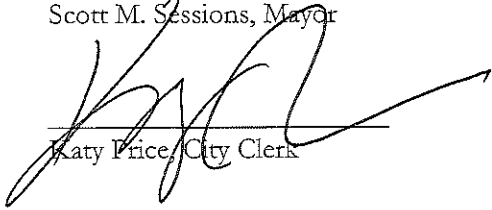
Adjournment

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

The meeting Adjourned at 9:10 p.m.



Scott M. Sessions, Mayor



Katy Price, City Clerk

View meeting online: ^{MAR 17} City Council Meeting February 16th, 2026 (YouTube Channel)