

CITY OF HARTFORD  
PROPOSED BUSINESS MEETING MINUTES  
FEBRUARY 22, 2021

Commissioners Present: Ron Burleson; Frank Dockter; Richard A. Hall; Terry Tibbs;  
Members Absent: Dennis Goss; John Miller; Helen Sullivan  
Staff Present: Akinwale; Rodney-Isbrecht;

Mayor Richard A. Hall called the business meeting to order at 7:30pm.

Pledge of Allegiance was said.

Motion by Commissioner Terry Tibbs, supported by Commissioner Frank Dockter, to approve the agenda as presented.

Motion carried 4 – 0

**Guests:**

Chris Cowgill, Wightman's, is moving out of the area March 2021, this will be his last meeting. Ten bids were received for the Wendell Street project and recommends awarding contract to the low bidder Krone Excavating, LLC at a cost of \$309,141.00 contingent on MDOT's approval of the contract. The project construction should begin in early April.

Mike Hnatiuk, West Michigan Railroad, addressed Council's concerns of train cars moving through the train crossing on North Center with the gates deactivated. The gates are disengaged at times when there are a lot of train cars on the spur and parked in areas where it would engage the gates continually blocking the roadway traffic flow on North Center St. A railroad worker always checks to make sure the roadway is clear before they move a train car through the crossing when the gates are disengaged. CSX is parking extra train cars and parking them in the zone which would leave the crossing gates engaged/down and blocking traffic. West Michigan Railroad has extended the spur East behind Meacham Farms on 52<sup>nd</sup>. Most loading and un-loading of train cars is now being done outside of the City limits.

Tim Dibble, Hartford Motor Speedway – came to protest the invoice he received for the water meter on his new building. He does not own it, and cannot remove it as it stays with the building. The City Manager, explained new meters are charged to new customers based on the City's fee schedule.

**Public Comment:** None

**Communications:**

- Election May 4, 2021 – Hartford Public Schools has called a special election.
- Joint Meeting with Hartford Township & Fire Board March 24, 2021, 7pm @ the Fire Station
- West Michigan Railroad Response to Council's concerns.
- Lawrence Township – Public Hearing Off Road Vehicles
- LARA Communication – Transfer of Liquor License, 108 East Main St, Quick & Easy Mart
- MPSC Notice of Hearing – Consumers Energy Company
- Board of Review – Organization March 2, 11:30am; Protests March 9, 9am-Noon 2pm-5pm & 11, 2pm-5pm & 6pm-9pm. City Hall will be closed to the public for anything other than Board of Review on March 9 to comply with COVID rules.
- Ordinance – Water/Service Ready Serve Charge was included in the Council packet for review

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**Reports of Officers, Boards & Committees; Routine Monthly Reports from Departments:**

- A. **Police & Ordinance** – City Manager & Mayor had a discussion about blight ordinances, solution is to issue citations to habitual offenders.
- B. **Fire Dept** – procedures of the joint agreement were not followed at the February joint meeting. Board pay has to be agreed upon by the City & Township Boards and approved at the joint meeting, as well as the budget. The City Manager has concerns regarding the 10% average yearly growth to the budget and recommends amending the joint agreement to include language that address the level of the departments fund balance, growth of the department, spending down the fund balance before asking for an increase to the budget, and include a remedy if one of the municipalities does not agree to the presented budget.
- C. **Ambulance** – Bill Mears, Pride Care, due to COVID-19 revenue has fallen dramatically and will be taking a loss for the next few years. Expanding or building a building in the area as previously discussed would not be feasible at this time, however they would be open to leasing space if it were to become available. They are building a new facility in Dowagiac to encourage employee retention. Shortage of personnel has been at critical levels; in response they are sending three - five people to paramedic school as well as paying their living expenses. COVID-19 has also affected staffing and operations but the organization has still been able to maintain response times below the stated contract time of 12:00 minutes.
- D. **Van Buren County** – Commissioner Mike Chappell, Commissioners approved video meeting rooms for jails & courts, updated five-year recreation plan allowing for communities that do not have a recreation plan to apply for grants, accepted resignation of the road commissioner and hired his replacement.
- E. **Public Works** – no discussion
- F. **Wastewater Treatment Plant** – follow-up meetings with Wightman have not been set.
- G. **Treasurers, Investment & List of Bills** – no discussion
- H. **City Manager** – **Consolidation & Contamination Risk Reduction (C2R2) Grant; Clean Water & Drinking Water State Revolving Funds & the Strategic Water Quality Initiatives Fund (SWQIF) -** Exploring funding options to respond to the high priority issues of the Water & Sewer system, identified through the SAW grant & water reliability study. A rate increase will need to be part of the funding package. **Proposed Road Construction Projects Update:** Prospect & Wendell streets projects should begin in the spring. **Hartford Marathon Station** – The company is asking the City to accept the contaminated Right-of-Way as is. The City Manager has sent the request to EGLE for review and recommendation.

**Approval of Commission Minutes:**

Motion by Commissioner Dockter, supported by Commissioner Tibbs, to approve the minutes of the January 25, 2021 business meeting of the Hartford City Commission, as presented and place them on file.

Motion carried 4 – 0

Motion by Commissioner Tibbs, supported by Commissioner Burlison, to approve the minutes of the February 10, 2021 joint meeting of the Hartford City Commission, Hartford Fire Board, and Hartford Township Board as presented and place them on file.

Motion carried 4 – 0

**Approval of Reports:**

Motion by Commissioner Dockter, supported by Commissioner Burlison, to accept the January 2021 departmental reports as presented and place them on file.

Motion carried 4 – 0

**Goals/Objectives:** None Discussed

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**Old Business:** None Discussed

**New Business:**

Motion by Commissioner Tibbs, supported by Commissioner Burleson, to appoint Carlos Ledesma to the fire board as the City's representative per the Fire Board Agreement.

Motion carried 4 – 0

Motion by Commissioner Tibbs, supported by Commissioner Burleson, to appoint Walter Devisser Jr as deputy Mechanical Inspector.

Motion carried 4 – 0

Motion by Commissioner Dockter supported by Commissioner Tibbs, to partner with Hartford Chamber to provide the Strawberry Festival in the amount of \$250.00

Motion carried 4 – 0

Motion by Commissioner Burleson supported by Commissioner Tibbs, to enter into the Van Buren County Law Enforcement Agencies Mutual Police Aid Agreement.

Motion carried 4 – 0

Motion by Commissioner Burleson supported by Commissioner Tibbs, to award MDOT Contract #20-5550 Prospect Street contract to Brenner Excavating Inc in the amount of \$579,764.05.

Motion carried 4 – 0

Motion by Commissioner Tibbs supported by Commissioner Dockter, to award MDOT Contract #21-5017 Wendell Ave contract to Krohn Excavating LLC in the amount of \$308,241.00 contingent on the MDOT's approval of the contract.

Motion carried 4 – 0

**Resolutions, Ordinance, Proclamation's:**

Motion by Commissioner Tibbs, supported by Commissioner Burleson to adopt resolution 2021-001 accepting the 2019/2020 Fiscal Year Audit.

Motion carried 4 – 0

Motion by Commissioner Burleson, supported by Commissioner Dockter to adopt resolution 2021-002 entering into MDOT Contract #21-5017.

Motion carried 4 – 0

Motion by Commissioner Tibbs, supported by Commissioner Dockter to adopt resolution 2021-003 entering into MDOT Contract #20-5550.

Motion carried 4 – 0

Motion by Commissioner Tibbs, supported by Commissioner Dockter, to adjourn the meeting at 8:41pm.

Motion carried 4 – 0

Respectfully Submitted,

RoxAnn Rodney-Isbrecht, City Clerk

County of Van Buren, State of Michigan, 19 West Main St, Hartford, MI 49057