

CITY OF HARTFORD  
PROPOSED BUSINESS MEETING MINUTES  
DECEMBER 18, 2023

Commissioners Present: Frank Dockter; John Miller; Lindsay Morsaw; Nancy Spoula; Charles Weeden; Mayor Richard A. Hall  
Commissions Absent: Jane Danger;  
Staff Present: Rader; Rodney-Isbrecht; Ivy; Prince; Shultz; Staunton

Mayor Hall called the meeting to order at 5:30pm.

Pledge of Allegiance was said.

Motion by Commissioner Dockter, supported by Commissioner Miller, to approve the agenda as amended to move discussion of the Planning Commission Ordinances to the beginning of the meeting.

Motion carried 6 – 0

**Guests:**

- City Attorney Nick Curcio Spoke to the Commissioners & answered questions on the Planning Commission & Zoning Ordinance Amendments.

**Public Comment:**

- Rod Austin, 209 South Center St, Comments on Buildings in need to be demolished.
- John Spoula, 112 Bennett Ave, Welcome to new Council Members
- Dan Danger, 209 North Maple St, Open Meetings Act Violation on Discussion of Christmas Lights and Decorating City Hall. Expressed concerns regarding time change of Council meetings.
- Mike Menick, 38 Marion Ave, wants attorney opinion on Council Members contacting the City attorney.
- Juan Garcia, from Paw Paw, in process of buying a business in town and wanted to introduce himself.

**Communications:**

- Van Buren County Legal Self – Help Center Network
- City Hall will be closed in observance of Christmas & New Year Holiday. December 25-26, 2023 & January 1-2, 2024

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

- Hartford Public Library – 2023 November
- Van Buren Conservation District November 2023 Program Update.
- Van Buren Senior Services, Terry Tibbs is interested in staying on Senior Services Board.
- A. **Police & Ordinance** – Chief Prince – Report on file. Lieutenant Ivy presented information on the report. Department Radios will expire in December 2024, cost to replace \$40,000; Enrolled in 1033 program allows for acquisition of military surplus, have received rifles & pistols, ammunition, & a Humvee at no cost to the City. Working on evidence audit, &
- B. **Fire Department** – Robbie Harting, Fire Chief – Report on File; working on next year’s budget and 501c3 status. Donated to Shop with a Cop. Pole Barn addition is complete except for the doors, waiting on delivery.
- C. **Ambulance** – Report on File
- D. **Van Buren County** – No Representative
- E. **Public Works** –Report on File;
- F. **Wastewater Treatment Plant** – Report on File – Operator Contract expires in December.
- G. **Treasurers, Investment & List of Bills** –List of Bills \$411,693.32

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**H. City Manager** –Report on file – Spark Grant – Ely Park Improvement Survey, Public Input Session on January 11. 5pm-7pm at the Library, SWMI Planning Commission is assisting with the grant application; Police Union Grievance is moving to arbitration; City Attorney is seeking summary judgement on behalf of the City for reimbursement of academy costs from former employee; Worked with AMHawk to get water meter installed; Conditional offer has been made to fill an DPW position; Police Department Vacancy, Lt. Ivy found a grant to cover academy costs which also covers wages while at the academy, this grant will expire when grant funds are exhausted; Surf Fiber applied for right of way permit, working with the City attorney to be in compliance with the Metro Act. More research needs to be done to make sure the City Assets are protected.

Motion by Commissioner Miller, supported by Commissioner Dockter, to authorize the interim Manager to issue a right – of – way permit moratorium and to seek legal guidance to be in compliance with State law.

Motion carried 6 – 0

**Approval of Commission Minutes:**

Motion by Commissioner Spoula, supported by Commissioner Dockter, to approve the minutes of the November 27, 2023 business meeting of the Hartford City Commission, as presented and place them on file.

Motion carried 6 – 0

**Approval of Reports:**

Motion by Commissioner Miller, supported by Commissioner Dockter, to approve the November 27, 2023 list of bills in the amount of \$411,693.32

Motion carried 6 – 0

Motion by Commissioner Dockter, supported by Commissioner Miller, to accept the November 2023 reports of Officers, Boards & Committees and place them on file.

Motion carried 6 – 0

**Goals/Objectives:**

- Interim City Manager Reviewed Charter, Commission Rules, & Ethics Policy with Council

**Old Business:**

- Discuss & Consider 2024 Commission Meeting Schedule –

Motion by Commissioner Spoula, supported by Commissioner Dockter to set the 2024 Commission Meeting Schedule.

Motion carried 6 – 0

- Discuss & Consider City Manager Candidate Selection – How does Council want to proceed?

Discussion: Council reviewed the compilation of candidate’s evaluations they completed during the interview process.

Motion by Commissioner Dockter, supported by Commissioner Weeden to authorize the Mayor & Interim Manager to offer employment to Candidate Eldridge and begin contract negotiations.

Motion carried 6 – 0

- Discuss & Consider – City Manager Performance Appraisal –

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Discussion: Interim Manager presented a sample performance review process.

**New Business:**

- Discuss & Consider – Distribution System Materials Inventory Verification - Change Order no. 3

Motion by Commissioner Miller, supported by Commissioner Morsaw to accept Wightman's recommendation to approve the change order no. 3 to Distribution System Material Inventory Verification.

Motion carried 6 – 0

- Discuss & Consider – Clark & Linden Streets Contract Modification

Motion by Commissioner Miller, supported by Commissioner Dockter, to accept Wightman's recommendation to approve the contract modification no. 5 to Clark & Linden Street Contract reduction.

Motion carried 6 – 0

- Discuss & Consider – Water Main Extension – Contract Modification no. 1

Motion by Commissioner Miller, supported by Commissioner Dockter to accept Wightman's recommendation to approve the contract modification no. 1 to the Hartford Township water extension project.

Motion carried 6 – 0

- Discuss & Consider – Van Buren County 2024 Citizen Planner Program

Discussion: Training will be at the VBISD in Lawrence and a good opportunity for those who are interested.

- Discuss & Consider – Section 3 Policy

Motion by Commissioner Miller, supported by Commissioner Dockter to approve the City's Section 3 Policy.

Motion carried 6 – 0

Discussion: Requirement of the CDBG Clark & Linden Street project. This is a policy that needs to be reviewed and updated often.

- Discuss & Consider – Fire Board Appointment

Motion by Commissioner Miller, supported by Commissioner Morsaw, to appoint Eric Germinder to the Fire Board.

Motion carried 6 – 0

- Discuss & Consider – Planning Commission Board Appointments

Motion by Commissioner Spoula supported by Commissioner Dockter, to appoint Eric Germinder to the Planning Commission.

Motion carried 6 – 0

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Motion by Commissioner Miller supported by Commissioner Dockter, to appoint Gage Gardner to the Planning Commission.

Motion carried 6 – 0

- Discuss & Consider – Waste Water Treatment Plant Operator Contract

Motion by Commissioner Miller supported by Commissioner Dockter, to approve the Waste Water Treatment Plant Operator Contract with Andrew Warner as presented.

Motion carried 6 – 0

- Discuss & Consider – Accept Vehicle Asset for HPD Use

Motion by Commissioner Dockter, supported by Commissioner Miller, to accept the Vehicle Asset (Humvee) for HPD use.

Motion carried 6 – 0

- Discuss & Consider – List Station Alarm System

Discussion: Current alarm systems are dedicated phone lines underground and are not maintained and is difficult to get someone out for repair in a timely manner. It is recommended to upgrade to wireless for more reliable alarm service.

Motion by Commissioner Dockter, supported by Commissioner Miller, to accept the proposal from Gasvoda in the amount of \$6,720.00 to upgrade the lift station alarm system.

Motion carried 6 – 0

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

- Discuss & Consider – Resolution 2023 – 026 Board of Review Alternate Starting Dates

Motion by Commissioner Miller, supported by Commissioner Spoula, to adopt Resolution 2023-026 Board of Review Alternate Starting Dates.

Motion carried 6 – 0

- Discuss & Consider –Resolution 2023-027 Board of Review Accepting Letters of Protest

Motion by Commissioner Miller supported by Commissioner Morsaw, to adopt Resolution 2023-027 Board of Review Accepting Letters of Protest.

Motion carried 6 – 0

- Discuss & Consider –Resolution 2023 -028 Board of Review Poverty & Asset Test Guidelines

Motion by Commissioner Miller supported by Commissioner Dockter, to adopt Resolution 2023-028 Board of Review Poverty & Asset Test Guidelines.

Motion carried 6 – 0

- Discuss & Consider –Proposed Zoning Ordinance Amendment No. 335-2023 Establish Planning Commission – Second Reading

Discussion: Council will need to reappoint the planning commission members at Councils next meeting.

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- Discuss & Consider –Proposed Zoning Ordinance Amendment No. 336-2023 Designate Zoning Board of Appeals – Second Reading

Discussion: The Interim Manager will reach out to the City Attorney for clarification on Councils authority with additional ordinance amendments as discussed by the Attorney and bring those findings back to the next Council meeting.

- Discuss & Consider –Proposed Amendment to Code of Ordinance Chapter 30, 30.01-30.99 No. 340-2023 – Second Reading

Motion by Commissioner Miller supported by Commissioner Spoula, to adopt Ordinance 340-2023 Amendment to Code of Ordinance Chapter 30, 30.01-30.99 Ordinance Officer.

Motion carried 6 – 0

**Adjournment:**

Motion by Commissioner Dockter, supported by Commissioner Miller, to adjourn the meeting at 8:08pm.

Motion carried 6 – 0

Respectfully Submitted,

RoxAnn Rodney-Isbrecht, City Clerk