

CITY OF HARTFORD  
PROPOSED BUSINESS MEETING MINUTES  
SEPTEMBER 25, 2023

Commissioners Present: Jane Danger; Frank Dockter; John Miller; Helen Sullivan; Terry Tibbs; Mayor Richard A. Hall  
Commissions Absent: Ramon Beltran;  
Staff Present: Rader; Rodney-Isbrecht; Prince;

Pledge of Allegiance was said.

Motion by Commissioner Dockter, supported by Commissioner Tibbs to approve the agenda as amended to include discussion about the railroad crossing on North Center Street.

Motion carried 6 – 0

**Guests:**

- Lori Antkoviak, Safe Harbor Children’s Advocacy Center – Provided information on the new Hartford Office on County Road 687 within in the Department of Health and Human Services, Social Services Building and provide court support children who have been victims of server physical or sexual abuse. The new office opened in February. Looking for Volunteers to work & speak up for children in Van Buren County. Non-profit organization, first two years funded by County Board of Commissioners.
- Brad Geesaman, Hartford Public Schools – Big Thank you to Mayor, Police Department & Fire Department for assistance in directing traffic & working the construction area getting kids in and out safely around Spaulding, Clark & Linden Streets. Provided information on the upcoming 3.3 million bond proposal to maintain the district, and the importance of voting yes for this funding to replace boilers, plumbing, windows and parking lots.
- Marcos Flores & Dora Cavasos, Community Hispanic Advocates, Thanks were expressed to Council for allowing the September 16<sup>th</sup> Hispanic Heritage Festival event in Ely Park. Angelica Mireles & Christina Mireles were presented a Certificate of Appreciation to acknowledge their hard work on the Hispanic Heritage Festival.

**Public Comment:**

- Mark Little, North Maple, Candidate for City Commissioner, comments regarding Employees, and Commissioners accountability.
- Charline Sikes, North Maple, comments regarding Candidates accountable for actions and character.
- Mike Menck, 38 Mairon Ave, working to make the meet the candidate night event and asking for the Interim Manager to mediate. Asking for Commissioner Beltran to reimburse the City for attorney fees he incurred on behalf of the City Commission
- Joe Truman, Zip Cannabis requesting the Council amend the marijuana ordinance to allow the word cannabis in their signage and also requesting a license to allow an outside consumption area at their establishment.

**Communications:**

- Notice of Public Hearing – Planning Commission October 9, 7:30pm review changes to Planning Commission & Zoning Board of Appeals Ordinance.
- Van Buren County Road Commission has a Hiring Event, September 26 open interviews.
- Knights of Columbus Tootsie Roll Drive October 6 – 8, 2023 in front of Harding’s.
- Comcast Notice of Program Changes
- Hartford Chamber After Hours Event at Safe Harbor Children’s Advocacy Center Wednesday. September 27
- Concisions Discipline Speaker Series Event October 18 in partnership with Tri-County Head Start at Area Agency on Aging in St Joseph

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- Notice of Public Hearing – AEP, Michigan Public Service Commission October 12
- Absent Voter Ballots are available to Registered Voters for the November 7, 2023 General Election

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

- Van Buren Conservation District August 2023 Program Update –
- Planning & Zoning Public Hearing October 9, 2023 – Planning Commission & Zoning Board of Appeals Ordinance
- A. **Police & Ordinance** – Chief Prince – Report on file. Short staffed due to illness in the department, Traffic Control around the School & Construction on Clark, Linden & Spaulding; Chief is going to be out for training & vacation; Lt. Ivy has been working with evidence coordination, risk management ordinances & policies; working on a dog bite complaint, where the dog has bit several officers & a citizen; thanks to Lt Ivy on apprehending & assisting the Sheriff’s Department; new recruit will be starting before the end of October. Council was appreciative for their service to the community; Police Department will be taking over Ordinance Enforcement.
- B. **Fire Department** – Ron Sefcik, Chairman of the Fire Board, four new policies’ have been adopted; 2023 audit is complete will be reviewed by Fire Board at their October meeting; an Attorney has been hired to set up 501c 3 status; waiting on second quote for the addition to the storage barn. Assistant Chief McGrew – Report on file – averaging 5-minute response time; Annual Pancake Breakfast & Lighted Parade night before the Pancakes this weekend; Drive through flu clinic past Friday, had about 20 participants; car seat check October 13 partnering with Bronson; Assistant Chief McGrew applied for a Michigan Fire Equipment Grant that was awarded to the City

Motion by Commissioner Dockter, supported by Commissioner Tibbs to accept the \$20,000 MIFEG Grant that was awarded to the City for the Fire Department.

Motion carried 6 – 0

- C. **Ambulance** – Ambulance report has to figure out how to report for each municipality, current software reporting is for all of Van Buren County. New Ambulance Rig will be stationed in Hartford.
- D. **Van Buren County** – Mike Chappell – Early Voting Grant authorized & submitted to the State; Use of County Property by several organizations was approved; authorized 8 new patrol cars.
- E. **Public Works** – Staunton, not in attendance; Report on file; Water Tower communication controller is not working, Department Staff has had to monitor the water levels every three to four hours. Gasvoda has proposed that it may have been caused by a power surge, cost to replace estimated to be \$15,000; As the water extension project begins there will be a PFAS informational meeting on Monday October 16, at VBISD Conference Center to provide residents additional information on connecting to the system.
- F. **Wastewater Treatment Plant** – Report on file; Continuing property clean up and construction projects.
- G. **Treasurers, Investment & List of Bills** – Shultz not in attendance; \$982,165.01 List of Bills
- H. **City Manager** – Report on file – Out due to illness last week, Letter of Support sent to Hartford Township new Building Project; A customer experienced damage to property during the Clark & Linden project, the requested compensation has been issued; Hiring a full-time police officer also looking for part time officer; water grant/loan application to the State was not approved; interviews for the deputy clerk are complete and an offer of employment was made; request to be the moderator of meet the candidate forum, Council did not have any objection; working with union representatives over police departments & City concerns;

Administrative Salary employee Pay Structure Discussion: Pay structure for Clerk & Treasurer but not quite ready to present the information., Interim Manager opened up for Council discussion, Commissioner Dockter not happy with part time office hours and wants to work towards having staff to re-open to full time hours. MML salary survey available for Councils review, proposed salary

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adjustments & stipend would cost about \$13,000 adjustment to budget. Clerk & Treasurer have been putting in additional hours per week beginning Januarys thru July since the beginning of the year.

Motion by Commissioner Miller, supported by Commissioner Danger to accept the salary amendment for the City Clerk & City Treasurer within the memorandum from the Interim Manager and provide the onetime stipend for the City Clerk & City Treasurer as recommended by the Interim Manager

Motion carried 6 – 0

**Approval of Commission Minutes:**

Motion by Commissioner Dockter, supported by Commissioner Danger, to approve the minutes of the August 28, 2023 business meeting of the Hartford City Commission, as presented and place them on file.

Motion carried 6 – 0

Motion by Commissioner Tibbs, supported by Commissioner Danger, to approve the minutes of the August 30, 2023 special business meeting of the Hartford City Commission, as presented and place them on file.

Motion carried 6 – 0

**Approval of Reports:**

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

Motion carried 6 – 0

Motion by Commissioner Danger, supported by Commissioner Miller, to approve the September 25, 2023 list of bills in the amount of \$982,165.01

Motion carried 6 – 0

**Goals/Objectives:** None Discussed

**Old Business:**

- Discuss & Consider City Manager Search – Review Forms & Process
  - Adverting campaign has started on the radio, ad in newspaper, posted on various news outlets & job list serves, to Facebook & ad sent to surrounding local governments. Applications accepted through October 13.
  - Interim Manager recommends either a committee to pre-screen candidates or the manager pre-screen. Council preferred to have applications pre-screened and recommendations made by the Interim Manager.
  - The Interview process & questions to ask each candidate. It is recommended the Interim Manager asks all the questions so the Council can listen and focus on the answers.
  - Interview Evaluation Form for each candidate to be filled out after the interview.
  - Reference check and conditional offer of employment. Commissioner Tibbs would like to have a site visit from the candidate's area before they are hired along with the bank ground check.
  - The draft contract has been reviewed by the City Attorney if there are changes please have them to the Interim Manager before the interview process starts.
  - Working on an Evaluation Form & evaluation process after hire.
  - Interview Scheduling
  
- Discuss & Consider – 106 South Center Street Demolition Proposals –

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Motion by Dockter, Supported by Tibbs to award the 106 South Center Street Demolition to Cross Excavating in the amount of \$49,070.50 as presented.

Motion carried 6 – 0

Discussion: Bids came in over the grant amount. The proposal assumes there is asbestos present. The County Treasurer gave a recommendation to seek additional asbestos studies to rule out asbestos which would save on disposal costs. The amount of the grant to cover costs of demolition is about \$39,000

- Discussion North Center Street Railroad Crossing: Commissioner Tibbs concerned about the condition of the North Center Street Railroad Crossing. Mayor Hall has been in contact with the owner. They are anticipating additional rail traffic. The Railroad has received grants to upgrade the crossing.

**New Business:**

- Discuss & Consider – Crossing Guard Program

Motion by Commissioner Miller, supported by Commissioner Dockter to approve the agreement with Hartford Public Schools to provide Crossing Guards as presented. .

Motion carried 6 – 0

Discussion: Updated agreement includes up to 2 hours a day to cover school crossings & raised the wage to \$13.00 per/hour.

- Discuss & Consider – City of Hartford Employee Handbook Amendment

Motion by Commissioner Dockter, supported by Commissioner Miller to amend the City of Hartford Employee Handbook to offer part time employees benefits as presented.

Motion carried 6 – 0

- Discuss & Consider Building Code Official

Discussion: Council has three options; 1. appointed interim building official Garrett Reitneour submitted a proposal at a cost of 50/50% permit fee split and City would be responsible for paying all inspections. 2. Safe Built submitted a proposal at a cost of 100 %. Permit fees. 3. Issue a RFQ to see what other options exist for building official and inspections services. The building department must be self-sufficient. Safe Built uses local inspectors, permit fees will need to be raised with an additional 10% for administration fees to the City to cover it's costs. .

Motion by Commissioner Miller, supported by Commissioner Docker, to accept the proposal from Safe Built and authorize the Interim Manager to work with the City Attorney to negotiate a one year contract that includes adding 10 % administration fees to the overall proposed building permit fees.

Motion carried 6 – 0

Motion by Commissioner Tibbs, supported by Commissioner Danger, to authorize the Interim Manager to negotiate with the Interim Building Inspector for services provided. .

Motion carried 6 – 0

- Discuss & Consider Clark & Linden Street Contract Modification 2 & 3

Motion by Commissioner Miller, supported by Commissioner Tibbs, to approve Contract Modifications 2 & 3 for the Clerk & Linden Streets Contract as presented.

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Motion carried 6 – 0

- Discuss & Consider Stripping Parking Lots, Streets & Crosswalks

Motion by Commissioner Miller, supported by Commissioner Dockter, to approve the proposal from Ace Parking Striping in the amount of \$17, 547.50.

Motion carried 6 – 0

Discussion: Mayor Hall would like to wait until spring; it is recommended by the Interim City Manager & Police Department that it be done before winter due to safety concerns.

- Discuss & Consider Request from Zip Cannabis

Motion by Commissioner Miller, supported by Commissioner Sullivan, to deny Zip Cannabis request to allow for name “Zip Cannabis” to be on the exterior signage. .

Motion carried 6 – 0

Discussion: Interim Manager & City Attorney has recommended amending the marihuana ordinance to remove this rule. Ordinance will need to go to the Planning Commission for their recommendations.

Motion by Commissioner Miller, supported by Commissioner Tibbs, to deny Zip Cannabis request to amend the City’s Marihuana Ordinance to issue a license for a designated consumption area.

Motion carried 6 – 0

Discussion: Council was not opposed to amending the ordinance to allow Cannabis on signage and options for licensing for a designated consumption establishments not currently allowed under the ordinance.

- Discuss & Consider Early Voting Agreement

Motion by Commissioner Tibbs supported by Commissioner Danger, to approve \$1,500 to Van Buren County for furnishing the Early Voting Site. .

Motion carried 6 – 0

- Discuss & Consider Lions Club Request

Motion by Commissioner Miller, supported by Commissioner Danger, to partner with the Hartford Lions Club to decorate with Christmas Lighting in Ely Park in the amount of \$1,000.00.

Motion carried 6 – 0

- Discuss & Consider MML Pool Director Election

Motion by Commissioner Miller, supported by Commissioner Tibbs, to not cast a vote for incumbent candidates for director elections of MML.

Motion carried 5 – 1 (Dockter)

**Resolutions, Ordinance, Proclamation’s:**

- Discuss & Consider – Resolution 2023 – 024 – Excessive Force Policy

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Motion by Commissioner Miller, supported by Commissioner Hall, to adopt resolution 2023 – 024 Excessive Force Policy as presented.

Motion carried 6 – 0

- Discuss & Consider – Resolution 2023 – 025 Early Voting Agreement

Motion by Commissioner Miller, supported by Commissioner Tibbs, to adopt resolution 2023 – 025 Early Voting Agreement as presented.

Motion carried 6 – 0

Discussion: The Agreement spells out joining other jurisdictions in Van Buren County, providing the Early Voting Site and charge backs to community's to provide Early Voting to Van Buren County registered voters. Estimated cost for labor to the City would be about \$1,200 cost per/election. Charges for equipment & consumables are split evenly by the 22 participating jurisdictions. Labor will be split by 1<sup>st</sup> 50% of total cost per/22 jurisdictions and the other 50% by number of voters (City would be 3%).

- Discuss & Consider – Ordinance 332-2023 Amending Chapter 110.01 Regulating Garage Yard, Basement & Private Sales

Motion by Commissioner Tibbs, supported by Commissioner Danger, to adopt Ordinance 332 – 2023 Amending Chapter 110.01 Regulating Garage Yard, Basement & Private Sales as presented.

Motion carried 6 – 0

- Discuss & Consider – Ordinance 333-2023 Amending Chapter 110.03 Regulating Private Places, Peddlers Solicitors

Motion by Commissioner Miller, supported by Commissioner Danger, to adopt Ordinance 333 – 2023 Amending Chapter 110.03 Regulating Private Places, Peddlers Solicitors as presented.

Motion carried 6 – 0

- Discuss & Consider – Ordinance 334 – 2023 Title XCI Prohibit Housing Discrimination

Motion by Commissioner Tibbs, supported by Commissioner Dockter, to adopt Ordinance 334 – 2023 Title XCI Prohibit Housing Discrimination

Motion carried 6 – 0

- Discuss & Consider – Amendment to Ordinance 51 & 52 Water/Sewer Discounts – First Reading

Discussion: Current ordinance does not address customer disputes, leaks, and lawn meter discount program.

- Discuss & Consider – Ordinance no. 337 - 2023 Amendment to Chapter 93.01 & 93.02 Fire Code– First Reading

Discussion: Fire Department has reviewed the proposed ordinance.

**Adjournment:**

Motion by Commissioner Miller, supported by Commissioner Sullivan, to adjourn the meeting at 10:15pm.

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

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Motion carried 4 – 2 (Dockter, Tibbs)

Respectfully Submitted,

RoxAnn Rodney-Isbrecht, City Clerk