

CITY OF HARTFORD
PROPOSED BUSINESS MEETING MINUTES
APRIL 30, 2025

Commissioners Present: Peter Aranda; Jane Danger; John Miller; Nancy Spoula; Charles Weeden; Mayor Richard A. Hall
Commissions Absent: Lindsay Morsaw;
Staff Present: Brown; Matthews; Ricks; Rodney-Isbrecht; Shultz

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

Pledge of Allegiance was said.

Motion by Commissioner Aranda, supported by Commissioner Spoula, to approve the agenda as presented.

Motion carried 6 – 0

Guests:

- Mayor presented former Commissioner Frank Dockter a key to the City for his contributions to the residents of Hartford.

Public Comment:

- Mike Menck, Marion Ave resident, ongoing complaint about the condition of the neighbor's carport that is next to his house and causing damage to cars in his driveway.

Communications:

- Indiana Michigan Power Electric Customers MPSC Notice of Hearing, May 14, 2025 @ 9:30am.
- Indiana Michigan Power Electric Customers MPSC Notice of Hearing, May 15, 2025 @ 10am.
- Open Position for School Crossing Guard
- May 1, 2025 5:30pm Zoning Board of Appeals Meeting & Public Hearing
- May 1, 2025 6:30pm Special Council Meeting Truth in Taxation to set Millage Rate
- May 1, 2025 7pm Joint City, Township, and Fire Board Meeting @ 436 East Main Street.
- May 19, 2025 5pm Public Hearing Truth in Taxation
- May 19, 2025 5:15pm Public Hearing Proposed 2025/2026 Budget
- Van Buren Conservation District Tire/Electronic Recycling May 22, 2025 3pm-7pm at City Hall North Parking Lot
- May 26, 2025 – City Hall will be closed in observance of Memorial Day
- Notice to City of Hartford Property Owners – 2025 Mowing Season, make a plan to mow your property
- Mayor & City Commissioner Seat, petitions are available and due to Clerk by July 22, 2025 4pm.

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

- DDA** – 2025 March minutes.
- Hartford Public Library** – Celebrating their 100th Anniversary Celebration August 16, 2025 Noon-3pm.
- Police & Ordinance** – Brian Matthews, Chief, continuing working to fill full and part time positions. Council will need to determine the level of staffing based on number of hours covered. 24-hour will need additional funding to cover all shifts. Met with the Reserves, to make sure summer programs are covered. Proposing a camping ordinance. Vetting the applicant for Crossing Guard position. Ordinance violations will be handled by Officers on duty. Promoted Officer Poole to Sergeant. Introduced Officer Orvis. Poole & Orvis took the creed & oath and were pinned by their family member.
- Fire Department** – Rob Harting, Chief, not in attendance, Reports submitted
- Ambulance** – Report on file

CITY OF HARTFORD
PROPOSED BUSINESS MEETING MINUTES
APRIL 30, 2025

- F. **Van Buren County** – Commissioner Mike Chappell, working to build a new Central Dispatch Center. Providing formal IT services to the Village of Paw Paw.
- G. **Public Works** – Ricky Ricks Supervisor, started picking up brush & leaves; set out trash cans and changed water service lines; understaffed as one employee out due to injury.
- H. **Wastewater Treatment Plant** –Report on file.
- I. **Treasurers, Investment & List of Bills** – 2nd Quarter Investment Report & April 20, 2025 List of Bills \$ – \$425,628.05
- J. **City Manager** –Report on file – Spark Grant, Ely Park Improvements; Budget; Drinking Water Asset Management (DWAM) Update; Hartford Township Water Main Extension (PFAS); 60th Ave Sidewalk Extension Shared Streets & Spaces Project Update; Drinking Water Sewer Revolving Fund Project (Lead Service Line Replacement & Water System Improvement Update. Requested Council’s input on pictures or decorating the Council Chambers. Council wants the past history pictures in the Chamber and, mayors and queen’s pictures in the lobby for the public to view.

Approval of Commission Minutes:

Motion by Commissioner Danger, supported by Commissioner Aranda, to approve the minutes of the March 24, 2025 business meeting of the Hartford City Commission, as presented and place them on file.
Motion carried 6 – 0

Motion by Commissioner Aranda, supported by Commissioner Spoula, to approve the minutes of the March 25, 2025 special business meeting of the Hartford City Commission, as presented and place them on file.
Motion carried 6 – 0

Motion by Commissioner Danger, supported by Commissioner Miller, to approve the minutes of the April 14, 2025 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 Miller, supported by Commissioner Aranda, to approve the April 30, 2025 list of bills in the amount of \$425,628.05.
Motion carried 6 – 0

Motion by Commissioner Spoula, supported by Commissioner Danger to accept the March 2025 reports of Officers, Boards & Committees and place them on file.
Motion carried 6 – 0

Goals/Objectives:

- 2025/2026 Budget
- Mayor Hall attended the Municipal Summit at Southwest Michigan Collage, hosted by Market Van Buren.

Old Business: None Discussed

New Business:

- Discuss & Consider – 2025 Van Buren County Resource Recovery & Recycling Program Contract

CITY OF HARTFORD
PROPOSED BUSINESS MEETING MINUTES
APRIL 30, 2025

Motion by Commissioner Miller, supported by Commissioner Aranda to approve the partnership with Van Buren County Resource Recover & Recycling Program in the amount of \$250.00 as recommended by the City Manager.

Motion carried 6 – 0

- Discuss & Consider – Hartford Chamber of Commerce – Strawberry Festival Partnership Request

Motion by Commissioner Miller, supported by Commissioner Spoula, to approve the partnership with Hartford Chamber of Commerce to provide entertainment for the Strawberry Festival held in Ely Park in the amount of \$500.00 as recommended by the City Manager.

Motion carried 6 – 0

- Discuss & Consider – Hartford Lions Club 2025 Concerts in the Park Partnership Request

Motion by Commissioner Spoula, supported by Commissioner Miller, to partner with the Hartford Lions Club to provide entertainment for the 2025 Concerts in Ely Park in the amount of \$1,000.00

Motion carried 6 – 0

- Discuss & Consider – Accounting Services Proposal
Discussion: Lauderbeck has already started working on the deficiencies received at the conclusion of the 2024/2025 Audit.
- Discuss & Consider – Assessing Services Agreement
Discussion: Angela & Brian Story have served the City for a number of years & it is recommended they continue providing the City's Assessing Services. The Contract is for three years with \$600.00 increases per/year.
- Discuss & Consider – Accounting & Consultant Proposal
Discussion: Hungerford has stated they will not continue as the City's auditor, the firm has proposed their accounting & consulting services to help prepare the City for future audits.
- Discuss & Consider – HPD Firearm Purchase
Discussion: HPD's duty weapons are outdated and need to be replaced, this could potentially save the department some money in the future on training and ammunition.
- Discuss & Consider – Proposed 2025/20026 Budget
Discussion: City Manager presented the draft budget, still waiting on some information. Council had too many questions to address at this meeting. Council set a special meeting to discuss and review the budget on May 8, 2025 at 3:30pm. This will include discussion on City Manager compensation, Staff Compensation, Police Department staffing & retirement plan, capital improvement projects, equipment purchases & fee schedule.
- Discuss & Consider – Proposed 2025 Fee Schedule
Discussion: Recommend increasing fees related to zoning as some of the requests have to be sent out for contracted services to make sure applications meet the City's ordinances.
- Discuss & Consider – Procurement Policy Amendment
Discussion: City Manager is recommending an increase to the spending limit from \$2,000 to \$5,000 without prior Council approval.

CITY OF HARTFORD
PROPOSED BUSINESS MEETING MINUTES
APRIL 30, 2025

- Discuss & Consider – Amend Water & Sewer Rates

Discussion: As recommended by Benzinski

Motion by Commissioner Miller, supported by Commissioner Weeden, to accept the water rate increase as recommended by the City Manager & Benzinski Financial Advisors.

Motion carried 5 – 1 (Danger)

Motion by Commissioner Miller, supported by Commissioner Weeden, to accept the recommended sewer rate increase as recommended by the City Manager & Benzinski Financial advisors.

Motion carried 6 - 0

- Discuss & Consider – Special Assessment for Public Safety
Discussion: If Council considers full 24-hour coverage for the police department additional revenue will need to be generated. Council asked for a comparison between millage request & special assessment to be brought back to them for discussion.
- Discuss & Consider – Proposed 2025/2026 Fire Department Budget
Discussion: City Manager did not have enough information to make a recommendation on their proposed budget.
- Discuss & Consider – Results of City Manager Review on March 25, 2025
Discussion: City Manager Self scored 86% very close to what Council scored. Mayor stated he is overall pleased and job well done. Compensation and/or contract will be discussed at a future meeting.

Resolutions, Ordinance, Proclamation's:

- Discuss & Consider – Resolution 2025 – 026 Routine Bill Policy

Motion by Commissioner Miller, supported by Commissioner Danger, to adopt Resolution 2025 – 026 approving accounts payable routine bill policy.

Motion carried 6 – 0

- Discuss & Consider – Resolution 2025 – 027 2025 Flower Planting

Motion by Commissioner Miller, supported by Mayor Hall, to adopt Resolution 2025 – 027 awarding the 2025 Flower Planting to Paulette's Potting Shed in the amount of \$5,275.00.

Motion carried 5 – 1 (Danger)

- Discuss & Consider – Resolution 2025 – 028 Award Accounting Consulting Services

Motion by Commissioner Miller, supported by Commissioner Weeden, to adopt Resolution 2025 – 028 awarding accounting consulting services provided by Hungerford not to exceed \$25,000 per/year.

Motion carried 4 – 2 (Danger, Spoula)

- Discuss & Consider – Resolution 2025 – 029 Amending the City of Hartford Procurement Policy.

Motion by Commissioner Miller, supported by Mayor Hall to adopt Resolution 2025-029 amending the City of Hartford Procurement Policy.

Motion carried 4 – 2 (Danger, Spoula)

CITY OF HARTFORD
PROPOSED BUSINESS MEETING MINUTES
APRIL 30, 2025

- Discuss & Consider – Resolution 2025 – 030 Assessing Services Agreement

Motion by Commissioner Miller, supported by Commissioner Aranda, to adopt Resolution 2025 – 030 to award assessing services agreement with Angela Story.

Motion carried 5 – 1 (Danger)

- Discuss & Consider – Resolution 2025 – 031 Authoring Duty Weapons Purchase

Motion by Commissioner Miller, supported by Commissioner Weeden, to adopt Resolution 2025 – 031 authorizing the purchase of six duty weapons in the amount of \$4,249.87.

Motion carried 6 – 0

- Discuss & Consider – Resolution 2025 – 032 Accounting Service Proposal from Lauterback & Amen.

Motion by Commissioner Aranda, supported by Commissioner Spoula, to adopt Resolution 2025 – 032 approving the proposal for account services from Lauterback & Amen in the amount of \$3,000.

Motion carried 5 – 1 (Spoula)

Adjournment:

Motion by Commissioner Aranda, supported by Commissioner Danger, to adjourn the meeting at 8:01pm.

Motion carried 5 – 1 (Miller)

Respectfully Submitted,

RoxAnn Rodney-Isbrecht, City Clerk