

CITY OF HARTFORD
PROPOSED BUSINESS MEETING MINUTES
JANUARY 22, 2024

Commissioners Present: Jane Danger; Frank Dockter; John Miller; Lindsay Morsaw; Nancy Spoula; Charles Weeden; Mayor Richard A. Hall

Commissions Absent:

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 Spoula, supported by Commissioner Miller, to approve the agenda as amended to include Resolution 2024 – 002 accepting the 2022/2023 Fiscal Year Audit.

Motion carried 7 – 0

Motion by Weeden, supported by Danger to nominate Commissioner John Miller as Mayor Pro-Tem for 2024.

Motion carried 7 – 0

Guests:

- Ryan Marschke, Hungerford Nichols CPSs + Advisors, gave a presentation on the City's 2022/2023 Audit. Capital Assets increased due to projects; also increased debt due to those projects. There are about six months' worth of Fund Balance if no additional income were received and within the recommended guidelines. The City was required to do a single audit due to the \$750,000 spent in Federal funds. One material weakness was noted on page 13 and no material weakness noted on the single audit. The City received an unmodified opinion on the audit & the single audit.
- Terry Tibbs, Van Buren Senior Services Board Member - Offering Tax preparation in South Haven for Seniors, Call for an appointment; Rides available for Dr. Appointments must be scheduled in advance; Grants to install Handicap Ramps on a first come, first serve basis. For Handyman services call 269-637-3607; 866-627-8904;

Public Comment:

- John Spoula, 112 Bennett Ave, comments on the cost to dismiss the former City Manager; comments in support of the acquired Humvee.
- Rachel Ballard, Ballard's Bake Goods of Paw Paw, looking to sell her baked goods in Hartford.
- Mike Menick, 38 Marion Ave, comments on the former City Manager costs of dismissal & Council's attendance record.
- Tim Kling, 105 East Street, concerns about demolition of 106 South Center St, DPW did a Great job clearing the roads.
- Joe, Zip Cannabis, 801 Prospect – Update on the Marijuana Ordinance amendments.

Communications:

- Southwest Michigan CAA Weatherization Assistance Program Available
- Hartford Area Chamber of Commerce Annual Banquet February 12, 2024 6pm at El Primo Res
- Public Notice – EGLE – AEP/Indiana Michigan Transmission
- Market Van Buren Communication
- Notice of Public Accuracy Test for Early Voting Site February 1, 2024
- Early Voting begins February 17th thru February 25 for the Presidential Primary at the VBC West Building on CR 681, Hartford, or you can vote on election day at your precinct located at the Vanderlyn Community Center/12 Church Street on February 27, 2024 polls will be open 7am-8pm. Contact the Clerk if you need an absent voter ballot.

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- Van Buren County Voter Information Guide
- Hartford Chamber of Commerce has a new redesigned website.

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

- Van Buren Conservation District December 2023 Program Update.
- A. **Police & Ordinance** – Chief Prince & LT Ivy – Report on file. Working to fill crossing guard position. Radio System will be obsolete at the end of the year, seeking funding to cover the costs. Hiring/Recruiting is a challenge; MCOLES Grant available to cover costs of education program, which begins in April; Working on a training schedule; end of the year reports; Lt Ivy is planning a bike rodeo and safety course in the spring, seeking grant to cover the cost; Commissioner Weeden has some concerns about 24/7 coverage with five officers. Seeking a grant on reducing gun violence programs.
- B. **Fire Department** – Robbie Harting, Fire Chief – Report on File; 501c3 completed & filed which will allow application of federal funding; Met with Mayor & Township Supervisor to go over the new 2024/2025 budget. Pancake Breakfast scheduled in May; Smoke detectors are available for install. Pole Barn has been completed.
- C. **Ambulance** – No report filed, currently living at the fire station, working out well.
- D. **Van Buren County** – Mike Chappel, Commissioner, Public Defender disengaging from Allegan County; Kayak launch on CR 687, construction in 2025; working on County ORV ordinance.
- E. **Public Works** –Dan Staunton, Report on File; Snow Removal, hired a new employee. City has an ordinance regarding parking overnight in City Parking lots during snow events; car could be towed if left over night.
- F. **Wastewater Treatment Plant** – No Report on File –
- G. **Treasurers, Investment & List of Bills** –List of Bills \$396,411.29
- H. **City Manager** –Report on file – communications services permitting cannot have a moratorium, and have to be approved within 45 days; summary judgement was delayed until March 2024 regarding former employee; Police Recruit policy, worked hard to acquire a grant to send them through police academy; employee did not pass water license, working with them for additional training and reevaluate options; council expressed concerns on Humvee options; police union arbitration was dropped. Police Car does not need to be parked out front and directed the police department to park in the back by the garage.

Motion by Commissioner Weeden, to send the Humvee back.

Motion failed for lack of support

Commissioner Dockter went to some business in town and got enough donations to replace the blow-up Frosty in the park. He will be seeking additional donors to purchase blow up strawberries for the park.

Approval of Commission Minutes:

Motion by Commissioner Dockter, supported by Commissioner Spoula, to approve the minutes of the December 11, 2023 business meeting of the Hartford City Commission, as presented and place them on file.

Motion carried 7 – 0

Motion by Commissioner Dockter, supported by Commissioner Danger, to approve the minutes of the December 13, 2023 business meeting of the Hartford City Commission, as presented and place them on file.

Motion carried 7 – 0

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Motion by Commissioner Spoula, supported by Commissioner Dockter, to approve the minutes of the December 18, 2023 business meeting of the Hartford City Commission, as presented and place them on file.

Motion carried 7 – 0

Motion by Commissioner Dockter, supported by Commissioner Danger, to approve the minutes of the January 3, 2024 business meeting of the Hartford City Commission, as presented and place them on file.

Motion carried 7 – 0

Approval of Reports:

Motion by Commissioner Miller, supported by Commissioner Spoula, to approve the January 22, 2024 list of bills in the amount of \$396,411.29

Motion carried 7 – 0

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

Motion carried 7 – 0

Goals/Objectives:

- Discuss & Consider – Expectations Workshop set for January 29, 2024 at 4:30pm

Old Business:

- Discuss & Consider Spark Grant Update – Results of survey, public meeting & priorities of improvements. Even though it was a priority based on survey results a splash pad is not recommended due to the maintenance costs. The grant is due January 31, 2024. Council is in favor of moving forward with the proposed improvements of parking lot, fencing, upgrades to pavilion, lighting, restrooms, electric, benches & picnic areas, outdoor game tables & pickle ball court.
- Discuss & Consider Voluntary Well Metering -

Discussion: A flat rate customer has requested the City meter his well because it is cost prohibitive to tap into the water system. Council is not in favor of moving forward with an ordinance or policy to meter wells of flat rate customers.

- Discuss & Consider – City Manager Position – A Contract Agreement has been reached

Motion by Commissioner Morsaw supported by Commissioner Miller to authorize the Mayor to enter into a contract agreement, with wording similar to what was presented at this meeting, with Nicole Brown as the next City Manager pending successful background check & drug screen.

Motion carried 6 – 1 (Danger)

New Business:

- Discuss & Consider – Hungerford Nichols Engagement Letter for Single Audit

Motion by Commissioner Miller, supported by Commissioner Dockter to accept the engagement letter for single audit from Hungerford Nichols.

Motion carried 7 – 0

- Discuss & Consider – Freedom of Information Act Procedures & Guidelines & Fee Schedule

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Motion by Commissioner Miller, supported by Commissioner Dockter, to adopt the Freedom of Information Act Procedures & guidelines & fee schedule as presented.

Motion carried 7 – 0

- Discuss & Consider – HPD Recruit Policy

Motion by Commissioner Miller, supported by Commissioner Danger to adopt the Hartford police Department Recruit Policy as presented.

Motion carried 6 – 1 (Weeden)

- Discuss & Consider – MML Training – Invitation received from Bangor City to participate in elected officials training February 21, 2024, 1-4pm.

Discussion: Notify the Clerk if you wish to participate in the training.

Resolutions, Ordinance, Proclamation's:

- Discuss & Consider – Proposed Ordinance 335-2023 Establish Planning Commission

Motion by Commissioner Miller, supported by Commissioner Spoula, to adopt Ordinance 335-2023 Establish Planning Commission. .

Motion carried 7 – 0

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

Motion by Commissioner Miller supported by Commissioner Danger to adopt Ordinance 335-2023 Designate Zoning Board of Appeals.

Motion carried 7 – 0

- Discuss & Consider – Proposed Ordinance Amendment to Zoning 151, 291, 151.309, 151.310, 151.311

Discussion: Council is in favor of sending the proposed zoning ordinance amendments to the Planning Commission for review & recommendation.

- Discuss & Consider – Resolution 2024 – 001 Appoint Members of the City of Hartford Planning Commission

Motion by Commissioner Danger supported by Commissioner Dockter, to adopt Resolution 2024-001 appointment members of the City of Hartford Planning Commission.

Motion carried 7 – 0

Discussion: Council appointed Eric Germinder to the Planning Commission & Fire Board which meets on the same night. Mr. Germinder resigned from the Planning Commission leaving a vacancy on the Planning Commission.

- Discuss & Consider – Resolution 2024 – 003 Fiscal Year 2023/2024 Budget Adjustments no. One.

Motion by Commissioner Miller supported by Commissioner Danger, to adopt Resolution 2024 - 003 accepting the Fiscal Year 2023/2024 Budget Adjustments no. one.

Motion carried 7 – 0

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- Discuss & Consider – Resolution 2024 – 002 accepting Fiscal Year 2022/2023 Audit

Motion by Commissioner Miller supported by Commissioner Danger, to adopt Resolution 2024 – 002 accepting the Fiscal Year 2022/2023 Fiscal Year Audit.

Motion carried 7 – 0

Adjournment:

Motion by Commissioner Dockter, supported by Mayor Hall, to adjourn the meeting at 7:29pm.

Motion carried 7 – 0

Respectfully Submitted,

RoxAnn Rodney-Isbrecht, City Clerk