

## CITY COUNCIL MINUTES

City of Hillsdale  
December 19, 2022  
7:00 P.M.

Regular Meeting

### **Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance**

Mayor Pro Tem Morrissey opened the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance.

### **Roll Call**

Mayor Adam Stockford called the meeting to order. Clerk Price took roll call.

Council Members present: Adam Stockford, Mayor

Greg Stuchell, Ward 1  
Anthony Vear, Ward 1  
William Morrissey, Ward 2  
Cynthia Pratt, Ward 2  
Bruce Sharp, Ward 3  
Gary Wolfram, Ward 3  
Robert Socha, Ward 4  
Josh Paladino, Ward 4

Council Members absent: None

Also Present: Attorney John Lovinger, Katy Price (City Clerk), Jason Blake, Scott Hephner (HPD/HFD), Alan Beeker (Zoning Administrator), Kim Thomas (Assessor), Jeff Cooley, Tammie Henderson, Becki Jaeger, Sheri Ingles, Carol Lackey, Stephanie Myers, Carson Cooley, Mary Wolfram, Tracy Fowler, Ted Jansen and Doug Ingles.

### **Approval of Agenda**

Council Member Morrissey asked to add Old Business item A. City Manager Bonus Structure Memo and City Manager Mackie asked to add Communication item D. Mitchell Research Center December Newsletter and Mayor Stockford asked to removed Consent agenda E. Vested Risk Strategies Insurance Agreement and move it to Old Business item B.

Motion by Council Member Socha, seconded by Council Member Morrissey to add Old Business items City Manager Bonus Structure Memo and Vested Risk Strategies Insurance Agreement along with Communication item Mitchell Research Center December Newsletter.

By a voice vote, the motion passed unanimously.

Motion by Council Member Sharp, seconded by Council Member Pratt to approve the agenda as amended.

By a voice vote, the motion passed unanimously.

### **Public Comment**

Ted Jansen, 104 Hillsdale St., commented on his letter in the packet on homelessness and reviewed the example of the City of Boise and asked Council to look at housing as a top priority.

Mary Wolfram, commented on the Mitchell Research Center building and lease. It is a house museum and has historic value and is a service to the City.

Tracy Fowler, Jefferson Township, commented on the Mitchell Research Center, and commented she wasn't pleased with the Mayor's Facebook page on homeless. Spoke about the last Public Safety Committee meeting. She urged Council to work with the community.

**Consent Agenda**

- A. Approval of Bills
  - 1. City and BPU Claims of December 1, 2022: \$243,228.64
  - 2. Payroll of November 10, 2022: \$185,883.64, November 24, 2022: 186,965.99
- B. City Council Minutes of December 5, 2022
- C. Public Safety Committee Minutes of December 13, 2022
- D. 2023 Committee Meeting Dates
- E. Trident Property and Casualty Insurance

Council Member Morrisey asked to review and update the Planning Commission location for the 2023 meeting dates. The Planning Commission meets in Council Chambers not in Conference room as presented.

Council Member Socha commented on the Public Safety Committee Minutes and the process for the homeless taskforce.

Motion by Council Member Morrisey, seconded by Council Member Socha to approve the consent agenda as presented.

By a voice vote, the motion passed unanimously.

**Communications/Petitions**

- A. Keefer House Hotel Construction Update
- B. Prosecuting Attorney Letter regarding Homeless Population
- C. Ted Jansen Letter
- D. Mitchell Research Center December Newsletter

Carol Lackey from the Mitchell Research Center reported on the building and services offered by the volunteers.

All items presented for the purpose of information only.

**Introduction and Adoption of Ordinances/Public Hearings**

**Old Business**

- A. City Manager Memo Bonus Structure

Council Member Morrisey reviewed the criteria that Operations and Governance Committee came up with for the bonus structure.

- 1. Overall job performance, including favorable City audit report and overall sound financial health of the City.
- 2. Council goals achieved.
- 3. Street repair.
- 4. Monies budgeted for grants applied for.

Council Member Wolfram asked about the grant portion and grants obtained.

Further discussion ensued.

Motion by Council Member Vear, seconded by Council Member Socha to approve the City Manager Bonus Evaluation criteria.

Roll call:

Council Member Paladino	Aye
Council Member Pratt	Aye
Council Member Sharp	Aye
Council Member Socha	Aye

Council Member Stuchell	Aye
Council Member Vear	Aye
Council Member Wolfram	Aye
Mayor Stockford	Aye
Council Member Morrissey	Aye

Motion passed 9-0

B. Vested Risk Strategies Insurance Services Agreement

City Manager Mackie reported that Trident Property and Casualty Insurance has taken the broker portion out of the package presented and the City will need to pay the broker directly.

Council Member Socha spoke with a few insurance brokers and stated it is comparable for the broker services.

Mayor Stockford specified \$50,000 to the broker is excessive.

Council Member Sharp reported the insurance details were presented to the Finance committee by Vested Risk Strategies.

Further Council discussion ensued.

Motion by Council Member Vear, seconded by Council Member Sharp to approve Vested Risk Strategies Insurance Services Agreement in the amount of \$50,000.

Roll call:

Council Member Pratt	Aye
Council Member Sharp	Aye
Council Member Socha	Aye
Council Member Stuchell	Aye
Council Member Vear	Aye
Council Member Wolfram	Aye
Mayor Stockford	Aye
Council Member Morrissey	Aye
Council Member Paladino	Aye

Motion passed 9-0

**New Business**

A. 2022 Audit Presentation

Gabridge & Company, P.C. performed the annual audit for the last fiscal year ending June 30, 2022. Joe Verlin, Gabridge representative presented the findings and answered council questions. Mr. Verlin stated that the City financial statements present fairly. Clean opinion on financials.

Motion by Council Member Sharp, seconded by Council Member Wolfram to accept the 2022 Audit report.

By a voice vote, the motion passed.

B. Roberta Hill Memorial Pavilion Purchase Approval

Roberta Hill, a well-respected member of our community, passed away in March, 2021. Donations were received by family and friends to build a pavilion at Sandy Beach in her memory. Barry Hill and his sisters researched pavilions and have settled on a pavilion to be purchased through Jim’s Amish Structures in St. Johns, Michigan. The donations received will cover the bulk of the cost. The Hill family is covering the difference as well as installation costs.

Motion by Council Member Sharp, seconded by Council Member Vear to approve the purchase of the pavilion in the amount of \$31,048.64.

Roll call:

Council Member Sharp	Aye
Council Member Socha	Aye
Council Member Stuchell	Aye
Council Member Vear	Aye
Council Member Wolfram	Aye
Mayor Stockford	Aye
Council Member Morrissey	Aye
Council Member Paladino	Aye
Council Member Pratt	Aye

Motion passed 9-0

C. Budget Amendment for Roberta Hill Pavilion Project

The Uniform Budget and Accounting Act of 1968, as amended, requires the City to make amendments to the budget when appropriations exceed the current budget. These amendments must be approved by the City Council.

Roberta Hill, a well-respected member of our community, passed away in March 2021. Donations were received by family and friends to place a pavilion in Mrs. Stock’s Park. The Hill Family has since decided they would like a pavilion by installed at Sandy Beach. The funds need to be transferred from Mrs. Stock’s Park Fund to Recreation Fund.

	Revenues	Expenditures
Recreation Fund (Fund 208)	31,049	31,049
Stock’s Park Fund (Fund 409)		24,175

Motion by Council Member Sharp, seconded by Council Member Vear to approve the budget amendment for the Hill Pavilion. **Resolution #3258.**

Roll call:

Council Member Socha	Aye
Council Member Stuchell	Aye
Council Member Vear	Aye
Council Member Wolfram	Aye
Council Member Morrissey	Aye
Mayor Stockford	Aye
Council Member Paladino	Aye
Council Member Pratt	Aye
Council Member Sharp	Aye

Motion passed 9-0

D. Demolition of 280 Waterworks Avenue

Alan Beeker, Zoning Administrator, reported the City has been pursuing opportunities to raze the old farmhouse located in the middle of Owen Memorial Park, 280 Waterworks, for years. There have been multiple estimates attained, grant applications submitted but in the end, the costs were not deemed worthwhile. Now the house is attracting squatters and the mold and mildew inside is making it a danger to continue to use as storage. The minimal maintenance is becoming costly and it continues to deteriorate. Recently, Code Enforcement reached out to Parrish Excavating for yet another estimate. The estimate included a substantial discount if the work was performed within a designated timeframe. Consulting with DPS and Recreation, it was decided that this was the opportune time to finally remove the structure. Parrish Excavating and the abatement company,

ALAM, Inc. can perform the work during the month of January. Code Enforcement will cover 50% of the demolition, approx. \$16,000 and the Owen Memorial Fund will cover the remaining 50% of the demolition and approx. \$12,000 in misc. expenses to relocate well equipment and install a shed to house it all.

Council discussion ensued.

Motion by Council Member Sharp, seconded by Council Member Pratt to approve the demolition of 280 Waterworks Avenue.

By a voice vote, the motion passed.

#### E. 2023 Guidelines for Poverty Exemption from Property Taxes (Resolution)

Kim Thomas, Assessor stated City Council is required to annually adopt guidelines to be followed by the Board of Review in determining eligibility for exemption from property taxes for reasons of poverty as provided for in Michigan Compiled Laws (MCL), Section 211.7u.

Three (3) taxpayers submitted requests to the board of review for exemption from the 2022 property taxes due to poverty, two (2) of whom were granted.

Significant changes were made to MCL 211.7u by Public Act 253 of 2020. Assessing department staff reviewed the amended statute with the Board of Review members to develop clear guidelines to Council in resolution Version 1.

Version 2 of the resolution has been prepared at the request of a taxpayer. This version includes an optional provision for extension of exemptions granted in 2022 to property owners whose sole source of income is public assistance that is not subject to significant annual increases, such as SSI or SSD. The person requesting the exemption in 2022 must still file an affidavit with the assessor to remain exempt for 2023, and must file an affidavit to rescind the exemption if they are no longer the owner or occupant or if their income or assets change. In addition, the statute requires that if this provision is adopted the City must develop and implement an audit program.

Motion by Council Member Morrissey, seconded by Council Member Sharp to approve the 2023 Guidelines for Poverty Exemption from Property taxes Version one. **Resolution #3259.**

By a voice vote, the motion passed.

#### F. Millage Fund Expenditure Request

Scott Hephner, Fire Chief reported the residents of the City of Hillsdale passed a millage in 2019 for the Fire Department and Public Safety equipment, vehicles and Capital Improvements. A ten year expenditure plan was completed at that time. As part of the plan in 2024 is the purchase of a new Fire Engine for an estimated cost of \$600,000.00 plus. Because of the increased costs of fuel, tires, repairs and maintenance along with wait time for ordering new engine the department feels that purchasing a “mini” pumper on a Ford F550 chassis will better serve our community. The vehicle will be used for medical and inspection runs and can also arrive on a fire scene and initiate all firefighting requirements. Quote is for \$290,000.00 from Advantage Fleet, LLC. There would also be a cost of graphics, radio antenna and installation.

Motion by Council Member Sharp, seconded by Council Member Wolfram to approve the purchase of a mini pumper from Advantage Fleet, LLC.

By a voice vote, the motion passed.

#### G. Mitchell Research Building Lease

The lease prepared between the City and the Friend of the Mitchell Research Center for Mitchell building space. The lease is for one (1) year. The Community Development Committee approves of the lease and presented it to City Council for approval. Over the next year the Committee’s goal is to develop a long term plan for the building.

Motion by Council Member Morrisey, seconded by Council Member Socha to approve the lease for the Mitchell Building for one (1) year starting January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2023.

By a voice vote, the motion passed.

**Miscellaneous Reports**

A. Proclamation – None

B. Reappointments- Board of Review- Kerry Laycock, Becki Jaeger, Dennis Wainscott, Jeff Cooley (alternate)

Motion by Council Member Morrisey, seconded by Council Member Vear to approve the reappointments for the Board of Review as presented

By a voice vote, the motion passed.

C. Other- None

**General Public Comment**

Holly Carpenter, commented on the homelessness, as a McKinney-Vento Representative she gave stats on homeless youth and asked Council to reach out to her and others in the community that can help and come up with a plan for housing and give concrete tools for individuals to get out of poverty.

Tracy Fowler, Jefferson Twp., thanked Holly Carpenter for what she is doing and asked Council to collaborate with people like Holly to get strategies developed to help the homelessness.

**City Manager’s Report**

Merry Christmas!

**Council Comments**

Mayor Stockford stated that there are not for profit organizations working on housing next year in the City of Hillsdale.

Council Member Sharp mentioned that the Public Safety Committee is doing a good job and gives support for what they are doing.

Council Member Stuchell thanked Council Member Sharp for his comments. The Public Safety Committee is trying to collect data right now and where to go from there. Wreaths Across America event on Saturday, a very good event. Merry Christmas.

**Adjournment**

Motion by Council Member Sharp, seconded by Council Member Socha moved to adjourn the meeting.

By a voice vote, the motion passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 9:10 p.m.

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Adam Stockford, Mayor

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Katy Price, City Clerk