

CITY COUNCIL MINUTES

City of Hillsdale

March 6, 2017

7:00 P.M.

Regular Meeting

Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance

Mayor Scott Sessions opened the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Roll Call

Mayor Scott Sessions called the meeting to order.

Council Members present:	Scott M. Sessions, Mayor Adam Stockford, Ward 1 Brian Watkins, Ward 1 Timothy Dixon, Ward 2 William Morrissey, Ward 2 Bruce Sharp, Ward 3 William Zeiser, Ward 3 Patrick Flannery, Ward 4
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Council Members absent:	Matthew Bell, Ward 4
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Also present were: City Manager David Mackie, City Clerk Stephen M. French, City Attorney John Lovinger, City Attorney Tom Thompson, Bonnie Tew (Finance), Kay Freese (HR), Scott Hephner (HCPD/HCFD), Mike Barber (BPU), Chris McArthur (BPU), Jake Hammel (DPS), Corey Murray (Hillsdale Daily News), Nic Rowan (Hillsdale Collegian), Penny Swan, Dennis Wainscott, Ray Briner, and Jack McLain.

Council Member Excused

Mayor Sessions reported Council Member Bell would not be at the meeting due to work obligations.

Council Member Watkins, seconded by Council Member Flannery, moved to excuse the absence of Council Member Bell from the meeting. By a voice vote, the motion passed unanimously.

Approval of Agenda

Council Member Watkins, seconded by Council Member Flannery, moved to approve the March 6, 2017 agenda as submitted. By a voice vote, the motion carried unanimously.

Public Comment

Ms. Penny Swan, 192 South West Street, questioned the appointments to the Local Development Finance Authority (LDFA) and encouraged Council Members to appoint city residents to the boards and commissions when possible. Ms. Swan also questioned the payment of \$4,748.80 to Beckett & Raeder for the Hillsdale Tax Increment Financing Authority (TIFA) Placemaking Study.

Ms. Dennis Wainscott, 34 Garden Street, also questioned the appointment of non-city residents to the LDFA.

Mr. Joseph Hendee, 181 Rea Street, encouraged Council Members to include the committee rules and membership requirements for the boards and commissions in the Council packet when appointments are included in the agenda.

Consent Agenda

- A. Approval of Bills
 - 1. City Claims of February 23, 2017: \$110,141.24
 - 2. BPU Claims of February 23, 2017: \$154,936.98
 - 3. Payroll of: \$151,364.02
- B. City Council Minutes of February 20, 2017
- C. Finance Committee Minutes
 - 1. January 30, 2017
 - 2. February 10, 2017
 - 3. February 27, 2017
- D. Planning Commission Minutes of January 17, 2017
- E. February 2017 Dial-a-Ride Report
- F. February 2017 Code Enforcement Report
- G. February 2017 Hillsdale Policy Group Report

Council Member Watkins, seconded by Council Member Flannery, moved to approve the Consent Agenda as presented.

Roll call:	Council Member Dixon	Aye
	Council Member Flannery	Aye
	Council Member Morrissey	Aye
	Council Member Sharp	Aye
	Council Member Stockford	Aye
	Council Member Watkins	Aye
	Council Member Zeiser	Aye
	Mayor Sessions	Aye

Motion passed 8-0.

Communications/Petitions

- A. Mitchell Research Center Newsletter Winter 2016-2017

Mayor Sessions provided the newsletter for informational purposes only.

Introduction and Adoption of Ordinance/Public Hearing

There were no Ordinances or Public Hearings on the agenda.

Unfinished Business

There was no Unfinished Business on the agenda.

Old Business

There was no Old Business on the agenda.

New Business

- A. Gessner v City of Hillsdale: Settlement Agreement & Release

City Attorney Thompson reviewed the proposed settlement agreement in regards to Gessner v City of Hillsdale, a claim that resulted after Mr. Gessner's dog was sickened following a sewer backup on his property. City Attorney Thompson stated a proposed agreement had been drafted by Mr. Gessner and city administration, in which the city would pay Mr. Gessner \$245.94 to resolve the claim.

Council Member Sharp questioned if the BPU had plans to repair and improve the sanitary sewer service and drain pipes in the area. City Manager Mackie stated the city had included this specific area in recent grant funding applications in hopes of improving the service in this area. City Attorney Thompson also reviewed the city's liability in regards to the drainage creek in the area of Mr. Gessner's home on Rippon Street.

Council Member Dixon, seconded by Council Member Morrissey, moved to approve and authorize the Mayor and City Clerk to sign the settlement agreement and release in regards to Gessner v City of Hillsdale.

Roll call:	Council Member Dixon	Aye
	Council Member Flannery	Aye
	Council Member Morrissey	Aye
	Council Member Sharp	Aye
	Council Member Stockford	Aye
	Council Member Watkins	Aye
	Council Member Zeiser	Aye
	Mayor Sessions	Aye

Motion passed 8-0.

B. 2017 Community Video Program

City Manager Mackie reviewed a staff recommendation to approve a contract with CGI Communications, Inc. to create a series of four professionally produced on-line videos to highlight the City of Hillsdale. City Manager Mackie stated the program was free to the city and would continue to enhance the community's economic development efforts. City Manager Mackie stated the existing videos on the website were viewed over 6,000 times in the month of February 2017.

Council Member Zeiser, seconded by Council Member Watkins, moved to approve and authorize the City Manager to sign the video program agreement with CGI Communications, Inc.

Roll call:	Council Member Dixon	Aye
	Council Member Flannery	Aye
	Council Member Morrissey	Aye
	Council Member Sharp	Aye
	Council Member Stockford	Aye
	Council Member Watkins	Aye
	Council Member Zeiser	Aye
	Mayor Sessions	Aye

Motion passed 8-0.

Miscellaneous

A. Board & Committee Appointments

City Manager Mackie reviewed the applicable state law which regulated the membership of a LDFA district. City Manager Mackie stated the seven-member committee required the appointment of a county commissioner (Mr. Bruce Caswell), a representative from the local community or junior college (Mr. Michael Masters), and businesses representing the taxing jurisdictions of the area.

Council Member Morrissey and Council Member Stockford requested future Council packets include the membership requirements for the boards and commissions when appointments are placed on an agenda.

City Manager Mackie stated there was no value of the LDFA district at this time, as the value of the district was considerably lower than the value of the district when it was created. City Manager Mackie stated that when the taxable value of the LDFA exceeded its original value, then certain tax revenues could be captured and returned to the district for economic development improvements.

Responding to a question from Council Member Zeiser, City Manager Mackie reviewed the responsibilities of the LDFA and the tax revenues that could be captured by the LDFA. City Manager Mackie stated the LDFA did not have the authorization to levy additional taxes.

Council Member Watkins, seconded by Council Member Flannery, moved to approve the following appointments to the Local Development Finance Authority:

1. Dean Affholter
2. Bruce Caswell
3. Matthew Granata
4. Barry Hill
5. Jeremiah Hodshire
6. David Loader
7. Michael Masters

By a voice vote, the motion carried unanimously.

City Manager's Report

City Manager Mackie reported:

1. The BPU Board and the Airport Advisory Committee would each have a vacant position presented to the Council for approval in the near future.
2. The bids for the construction of a new apron at the airport had been received and city staff continued to review the responses.
3. A community meeting involving the "Rising Tide" initiative had been very well attended at the library and the S.W.O.T. (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) results had been provided to Council Members.
4. A meeting about "Placemaking" in the downtown area would be held on Tuesday, March 7, 2017 at the library beginning at 6:30 p.m. The public was invited to attend the meeting to receive additional information at proposed improvements to the downtown area.
5. The annual contract for Domestic Harmony would be presented to Council for approval at the March 20, 2017 Council meeting.
6. The Infrastructure Capacity Enhancement (I.C.E.) grant for the Garden-Vine-Mead and Rippon Street projects would be submitted to the State of Michigan within the next couple of weeks. City Manager Mackie stated some documents and resolutions may require Council approval at the March 20, 2017 meeting.
7. The city had received an initial interest from a party looking to establish a medical marijuana store. City Manager Mackie stated city staff continued to review the state regulations in regards to these businesses.
8. A special Council meeting would be held on Tuesday, March 14, 2017 at 6:00 p.m. to consult with city's legal defense in regards to Townley v City of Hillsdale et al. City Manager Mackie stated the meeting would only consist of a closed session and would not include any action items.

In response to a question from Council Member Zeiser, City Manager Mackie stated that city staff continued to work with AT&T regarding their request to construct a new cell phone tower within the city.

City Manager Mackie also reviewed the payment of \$4,748.80 to Beckett & Raeder for the TIFA placemaking study. City Manager Mackie stated services rendered by Beckett & Raeder for the Rising Ride Initiative had been covered by a state grant; however, the placemaking study was an approved expense from TIFA. City Manager Mackie stated the payment was not for the hotel feasibility study, as that had been performed by HVS.

Economic Development Director Wolfram explained the Beckett & Raeder payment was for the placemaking plan for the downtown which would be discussed at a public meeting on March 7th. Ms. Wolfram stated the cost for the placemaking plan was paid by TIFA and Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA).

Council Member Watkins questioned if any progress had been made with the installation of fiber-optic Internet service within the city. City Manager Mackie stated city staff continued to work with ECD Net on the implementation of this program.

Council Member Stockford thanked all of the citizens who participated in the S.W.O.T. analysis and stated the report was very valuable to the City Council.

General Public Comment

Ms. Penny Swan objected to the allocation of city funding to Beckett & Raeder for the place-making study that had initially been presented to Council as being a free service to the city and covered by grant funding.

Economic Development Director Wolfram thanked everyone who had attended the community meeting involving the “Rising Tide” initiative and S.W.O.T. analysis. Ms. Wolfram also discussed an opinion editorial authored by Dr. Gary Wolfram that was scheduled to be published in an upcoming edition of the Detroit Free Press. Ms. Wolfram then invited everyone to attend a meeting at the library involving the place-making study on Tuesday, March 7, 2017.

Mr. Joseph Hendee encouraged Council Members to discuss the approval of medical marijuana stores with their constituency prior to voting on the issue.

Mr. Jack McLain questioned if the installation of the AT&T tower could be constructed in a protected wetland. Mr. McLain asked if the members of the city’s advisory boards & commissions received the same non-union pay increase that had been provided to other city employees. Mr. McLain questioned the appropriate contact information for holding a special event on the airport property. Mr. McLain then questioned the accuracy of comments made by Council Member Stockford at the February 6, 2017 Council meeting in regards to the percentage of United States residents living within a fixed distance from the City of Hillsdale. Mr. McLain also encouraged the city to list the members of the committees for public review and asked that draft minutes be made available to residents in a timelier manner. Mr. McLain finalized his comments by speaking to the City of Jonesville’s new regulations on Airbnb businesses.

Mr. Dennis Wainscott thanked City Manager Mackie for the information presented on the LDFA membership and thanked Council Members for their service to the community.

Mr. Kay Freese invited everyone to the F.A.I.R. committee meeting scheduled for Monday, March 13, 2017 at 6:00 p.m.

Council Comments

Council Member Sharp requested a report on the number of deer taken from the authorized bow-hunt during 2016.

Council Member Morrissey discussed the “Rising Tides” and S.W.O.T. analysis and the importance of actions & implementations that resulted from the discussions.

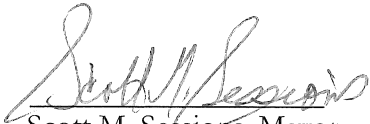
Council Member Zeiser questioned the payment to Beckett & Raeder and the appropriate contact for activities planned at the municipal airport. City Manager Mackie reiterated the Beckett & Raeder payment was for the placemaking study, which was paid for with a 50% match from MSHDA. City Manager Mackie noted the “Rising Tide” initiative also utilized Beckett & Raeder and was covered with 100% grant funding from the State of Michigan. City Manager Mackie also stated the appropriate contact for use of airport grounds should initiate with Patriot Aviation.

Council Member Flannery discussed the dire need for foster parents in the area and encouraged interested persons to contact one of the agencies in Hillsdale County that specialized in those programs.

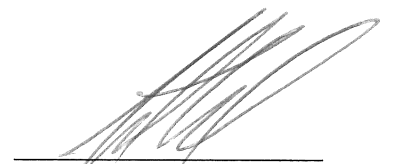
Adjournment

Council Member Watkins, seconded by Council Member Flannery, moved to adjourn the meeting. By a voice vote, the motion passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 7:35 p.m.



Scott M. Sessions, Mayor



Stephen M. French, City Clerk