

CITY COUNCIL MINUTES

City of Hillsdale
February 1, 2021
7:00 P.M.

Regular Meeting
Electronic Meeting (COVID-19)

Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance

Mayor Adam Stockford 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
R Greg Stuchell, Ward 1
Anthony Vear, Ward 1
William Morrissey, Ward 2
Cynthia Pratt, Ward 2
Bruce Sharp, Ward 3
William Zeiser, Ward 3
Robert Socha, Ward 4
Raymond Briner, Ward 4

Council Members absent: None

Also Present: David Mackie (City Manager), Attorney Tom Thompson, Katy Price (City Clerk), Scott Hephner (HCPD/HCFD), Jake Hammel (DPS Director), Kristin Bauer (City Engineer), Penny Swan, Sheri Ingles, Doug Ingles, Joseph Hendee, Jon Smith, Lance Lashaway, Jacob Bruns, Christina Bruns, Art Hilgendorf, Georgeann Hilgendorf, Lori Andaloro, Mary Catherine Adams, Andrew Wiegand, Caitlin Wiegand, Callie Shinkle and John Taylor.

Present electronically: Ginger Moore (Airport Manager), Jason Blake (DPS Foreman), Ruth Brown, Eric Moore, Jack McLain, Laura Smith, Dennis Wainscott and Stephanie Myers.

Approval of Agenda

City Manager Mackie requested to add Communication item E. County Commissioner Ingles Verbal Update.

Motion by Mayor Stockford, seconded by Council Member Morrissey to approve the agenda as amended.

Roll call:

Council Member Briner	Aye
Council Member Morrissey	Aye
Council Member Sharp	Aye
Council Member Stuchell	Aye
Council Member Pratt	Aye
Council Member Zeiser	Aye
Mayor Stockford	Aye
Council Member Socha	Aye
Council Member Vear	Aye

Motion passed 9-0.

Public Comment

Penny Swan, Ward 4, commented on the street repair and leaf collection millage. She expressed

concern of taxing residents for leaf collection and combining the two items together. She isn't in favor of special elections as they cost money.

Joseph Hendee, 181 Rea Street, commented on the leadership of the city, as well as the timing with the proposed millage request as the poverty rate is growing.

John Smith, Somerset, commented on Special assessment. Stated the city can special assess any service from the government. Smith mentioned he is against millages.

Laura Smith, Orchard Ridge Parkway, commented on the special assessment district item. Stated she is for the special assessment and believes the millage is a good way to get the streets done but suggested a possible freezing of property taxes for those affected in the special assessment districts. Smith thanked council for their hard work in coming up with solutions for getting the streets repaired.

Consent Agenda

- A. Approval of Bills
 - 1. City and BPU Claims of January 7, 2021: \$518,776.26
 - 2. Payroll of January 7, 2021: \$195,240.87
- B. City Council Minutes of January 18, 2021
- C. Public Services Committee Minutes of January 10, 2021

Motion by Council Member Morrissey, seconded by Council Member Briner to approve the Consent agenda as presented.

Roll call:

Council Member Morrissey	Aye
Council Member Sharp	Aye
Council Member Stuchell	Aye
Council Member Pratt	Aye
Council Member Zeiser	Aye
Mayor Stockford	Aye
Council Member Socha	Aye
Council Member Briner	Aye
Council Member Vear	Aye

Motion passed 9-0.

Communications/Petitions

- A. 2021 Spring Quarterly Newsletter
- B. Press Release: MEDC: Keefer House Hotel Funding
- C. Press Release: CL Real Estate Development, LLC: MSF Approval of Funding for Keefer House Hotel
- D. Moore Special Assessment/Street Millage Email
- E. County Commissioner Doug Ingles Verbal Update

Doug Ingles shared information on grants and other information within the county. AAA traffic safety grant available applications accepted now until March 31, 2021 from Hillsdale County Public Safety Committee. Rural Business Development (RBDG) grant available for projects to benefit small businesses and emerging businesses. Hillsdale Parks Commission is conducting a survey from the five year plan on what is important in the community available on the Hillsdale county website homepage. Commissioner Ingles reviewed the Covid-19 and vaccine report from the health department for the county. Virtual Job Fair available for health workers through Michigan Works on Tuesday, February 23, 2021. The Courthouse building is open to the public, the Annex building will remain locked and Friend of the Court will be locked as has been done previously.

Council Member Socha suggested declaring Hillsdale city a free zone for vaccines which can be administered and free excepted as they choose to but not mandatory for those that choose not to receive the vaccine.

All items presented for the purpose of information only.

Introduction and Adoption of Ordinances/Public Hearings

None

Old Business

None

New Business

A. 2021 Special Assessment Districts for Street Projects

City Manager Mackie reviewed the Special Assessment District information and the specific areas that are being looked at for the district as well as the process that it would take to complete the project.

Council Member Socha asked if there was an option for the district home owners to receive any tax breaks for the special assessment.

Attorney Thompson stated that there wasn't anything available but can look at a neighborhood enterprise zone for those special assessment district areas.

Further discussion ensued on neighborhood enterprise zones and special assessments.

Motion by Councilman Sharp, supported by Councilman Vear, to instruct city engineer to prepare the plans and specs and cost estimates for special assessment district.

By a voice vote, the motion passed unanimously.

B. Street Improvement Millage Ballot Language (Resolution)

City Manager Mackie reviewed the Street Improvement Millage request. The Millage would be for 4.5 mills. 4 mills would be designed and earmarked for road repair, construction and improvement while .5 mills for leaf collection equipment which was the recommendation from the Public Service Committee. The monies would generate approximately \$605,000.00 a year for a 10 year period. \$70,000.00 will go towards leaf collection and \$535,000.00 would go towards road repair and construction each year.

Mackie stated there will be a special election on May 4, 2021 for the Hillsdale community school district. The city has been working on road construction and repair for over five years and has been coming up with solutions to make it happen.

Council Member Sharp thanked the Public Services Committee for their hard work coming up with solutions and thinks this item should go to the residents to vote on. Sharp stated that 4.5 mills in total will be assessed this is not over the 3 mills that was previously assessed.

Council Member Socha stated that he isn't in favor of the increase while some of his constituents can't afford the additional cost.

Council Member Morrissey commented that you get what you pay for. If you are willing to pay for it you will get it but if you aren't willing then you won't, as what has happened in the past within the city.

Mayor Stockford stated that he isn't in favor of raising taxes, and in his opinion thought that all millages should go on a November ballot as there is more of a turnout.

Further Council discussion ensued on the millage and special election.

Motion by Councilman Morrisey, supported by Councilman Vear to approve ballot language for street improvement millage as presented. **Resolution 3438.**

Roll Call:

Council Member Morrisey	Aye
Council Member Sharp	Aye
Council Member Stuchell	Aye
Council Member Pratt	Aye
Council Member Zeiser	Aye
Mayor Stockford	No
Council Member Socha	No
Council Member Briner	No
Council Member Vear	Aye

Motion passed 6-3.

C. Airport Taxiway C Extension and Connector

City Manager Mackie discussed the project and contract with council. After the engineer's review he requested the contract be awarded to the low bidder Mead Bros. Excavating in the amount of \$1,151,916.63 subject to legal review and procurement of funding.

Motion by Council Member Briner, seconded by Council Member Socha to approve the contract to Mead Bros. Excavating in the amount of \$1,151,916.63.

Roll Call:

Council Member Stuchell	Aye
Council Member Pratt	Aye
Council Member Zeiser	Aye
Mayor Stockford	Aye
Council Member Socha	Aye
Council Member Briner	Aye
Council Member Sharp	Aye
Council Member Morrisey	Aye
Council Member Vear	Aye

Motion passed 9-0.

Miscellaneous Reports

- A. Proclamation – None
- B. Appointments—None
- C. Other – None

General Public Comment

John Smith, Somerset, commented on the millage and maxing out on the millage cap and the poverty rate in the city and asked council to continue to think of ways to fund projects in the community.

Joseph Hendee, 181 Rea Street, stated there has been mismanagement in the city. He believes the NEZ districts should be spread out within the city. Hendee commented on the Hallett street project that was completed in the past and thought that it should not have been done before other area streets, like the special assessment district areas that had been discussed at the meeting.

Penny Swan, Ward 4, thanked Council members Socha, Briner and Mayor Stockford on the no vote for the street millage ballot language. She also thanked Socha for his comments on Covid-19 and the state mandates.

Dennis Wainscott, 134 Garden Street, commented on the proposed special assessment district area and in his opinion thinks that the city should fund some of the street repair due to poor maintenance from prior years.

Austin Hall, Ward 1, thanked Council member Morrisey on his comment about you get what you pay for. Hall asked if council had a long term plan for the street repair that includes the 4.5 mills and suggested getting the plan advertised for the residents to see. He also recommended looking at other avenues to review before raising taxes.

City Manager's Report

City Manager Mackie stated that the city recently received notice that the Hallett street rail bridge project was pulled so it will not be happening this year due to the MDOT bidding process.

Last week the EDP of Hillsdale County received \$203,000.00 in grant monies and has reviewed applications and awarded grants to businesses and restaurants who have been impacted by the shutdowns.

The Fire Department is working on a joint FEMA grant with Jonesville and Litchfield for new equipment, air bottles and harnesses etc.

City Manager Mackie stated that the TSA guidelines stated that masks must be worn at the Hillsdale Airport.

Wrapping up, City Manager Mackie stated if the millage is passed the special assessment district will also be assessed the millage.

Council Comments

Councilman Briner asked City Manager Mackie if the City would be fined if someone doesn't wear a mask at the airport as he isn't in favor of the mandate. Manager Mackie stated that the employees enforce directives as it's in the best interest and liability of the City. Airport Manager Moore reviewed the directive with council.

Councilman Socha agreed with Councilman Briner on the airport mask wearing mandate, as he isn't in favor of mandating masks at the airport.

Councilman Socha addressed Mr. Hendee comment on Hallett Street and stated it was one of the worst streets in the city and was repaved as the city received a grant to have it done.

Councilman Briner spoke on the millage and state he doesn't like the leaf collection millage portion as he thinks the city should come up with other ways of having it funded.

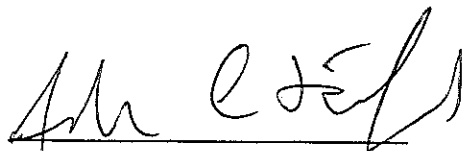
Councilwoman Pratt asked how this city chooses which streets to do first. Mayor Stockford responded that there is a 10 year plan and streets are rated on a Pacer rating scale and reviewed.

Adjournment

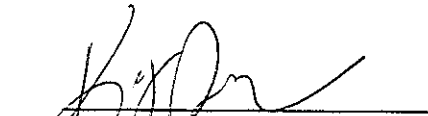
Council Member Vear, seconded by Council Member Pratt, moved to adjourn the meeting.

By a voice vote, the motion passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 8:43 p.m.



Adam L. Stockford, Mayor



Katy Price, City Clerk