

**MINUTES OF REGULAR SESSION
HIGHLAND CITY COUNCIL
TUESDAY, JANUARY 17, 2023**

Mayor Hemann called the Regular Session to order at 7:00pm at the Senior Center. Council members Sloan, Frey, Bellm, and Hipskind were present. Others in attendance were City Manager Conrad, Directors Cook, Gillespie, and Presson, Coordinator Mallord, Treasurer Nicholaides, Deputy City Clerks Hediger and VonHatten, City Clerk Bellm, 40 citizens, and 1 member of the news media. City Attorney McGinley was present via phone.

MINUTES

Councilman Frey made a motion to approve the minutes of the January 3, 2023 Regular Session as attached. Motion seconded by Councilwoman Bellm. Roll Call Vote: Councilmembers Sloan, Frey, Bellm and Hipskind voted aye, none nay. Motion carried.

PUBLIC FORUM

Citizens' Requests and Comments:

Mayor Hemann welcomed those in attendance to the city council's home for meetings, for the next six months. He noted we are without microphones, here. Many of you are here to speak about the Sursee Transmission line. Highland initially participated in the meetings with Ameren; it is our goal to provide affordable and reliable power for the citizens of Highland. We understand the issues that go with electrical lines. We are here to listen. Ultimately, the decisions will be made between the ICC, Ameren and the landowners. We realize that it is an emotional issue, since it may go through your land. Please be respectful, and provide your name and address when coming up to speak.

Dan Imming, of Aviston, stated I know a number of people here in Highland. We are here to share some important information about what we consider a very special issue. We are all here in unison to retain the beauty, peacefulness, and business activities that exist south of Highland. One of the proposals would run through my residential property that I purchased from my godfather, and build my dream home. My grandson hopes to live there in future years and raise his family. One proposal would run in the area where deer, fox, and eagles nest. My neighbors raise cattle next to it. Ameren has made it clear that they would tear down the trees, damage the pond, and clear the ground. As a human being, using common sense, if PR people at these meetings told you that you do not have a choice, how would you feel? I am not worried about acting defensive. Why wasn't Aviston not asked to participate? Sursee. It means Switzerland. Aviston would not think about involving Highland in such a thing without talking to Highland first. I understand Aviston is one-fourth the size of Highland. For a city to the north, that we consider neighborly, we would ask that you confer with us. In 1926, Illinois Court ruled in favor of Silver Creek people on a similar issue. I also know that the City of Highland's comprehensive plan put together in 1980s said they were not able look to expand electric into other territories. We are your neighbors and you are going to affect our liveliness and homes. There are people more educated than me; however, I am going to try to use common sense and logic. I would ask you to do that before making a decision.

Tom “Rusty” Venhaus, Supervisor Sugar Creek Township, stated he has been supervisor of the township for twenty-six years. He reported there was a meeting at the Farm Bureau, last week. Lebanon, Breese, and St Rose Townships are here. There are some other meetings going on, tonight, otherwise, there would be more. It is affecting a lot of people’s lives. I do not know the answer. This proposed 138kv line. Where is the power that is going to power it coming from? Would it be from the current line and where does that come from? City Manager Chris Conrad responded our current line comes from the Jarvis Township substation, up by Collinsville. Mr. Venhaus questioned if you own that, why another line. Who is it going to supply that it is needed? City Manager Conrad explained it is moving a single point of failure eleven miles south of town and giving us redundancy. There is no specific client or power industry for it. The power would come in from a substation located near Aviston. It sounds like the intent is to interconnect the 138kV line into Highland over to Aviston to create redundancy for both areas. Mr. Venhaus pointed out REA (Rural Electric) feeds most of the townships of the residents here. So why go all the way to Aviston? We have not had any power issues. City Manager Conrad responded I cannot speak for Ameren. Highland is a retail customer of Ameren through IMEA. Ameren, I think, has a goal to connect the two areas together is to make their grid stronger. Mr. Venhaus asked is there a way all the cities officials and townships officials could have a meeting with Ameren. City Manager Conrad reported he spoke with Mark Litteken regarding the Farm Bureau specifically having a meeting with Ameren. We can talk to Ameren about setting up a city and township trustees meeting.

Dan Imming noted Rusty mentioned there is a big meeting tonight that several others are attending, as Clinton County Board is meeting tonight, as well. We are very unhappy, but we just want communication. You are in a position to make decisions. Mayor Hemann stated I want to reiterate that Ameren came to us, and it is good for Highland. We have to look at what benefit the citizens of Highland, and Ameren brought this to us. It is not our project. It is their project. Ameren and the ICC will make the decisions, not us. Mr. Imming stated he stopped at a local business. Not one of the businesses or people I emailed, that lived in Highland, is even aware of this project. I have heard from pretty good sources that rates will go up, because Ameren will have this big line to pay for it.

Paul Strieker stated I live between Aviston and Breese. I am primarily an Ameren customer for over forty-five years. This past December, is the highest bill I have ever received. It is over \$350. My rates are 17.4 cents, which is up 72% for last seven months over the prior seven-month period. I used 8000kw, while using 11,000kw for hot summer months. My point is, my kilowatt usage has gone down, but my rates and bills have gone up 24%. My whole point is, a \$35 million dollar project, is not going to reduce costs. In fact, it will increase the costs. The Illinois population is declining, thus total users are going down, meaning that everyone’s bill is going to go up anyways. You have a significant amount of redundancy within your system already. Mayor Hemann responded we don’t control the rates of Ameren. We negotiate rates through IMEA (Illinois Municipal Electric Agency). Our rates are more affordable than Ameren, right now, because of our contract with IMEA. Mr. Strieker contend you have not thrown up any obstacles to Ameren, so, by default you are increasing everyone’s rates. Mayor Hemann pointed out Ameren has to go before ICC before they can raise rates. We do not control it. We can debate it all night, but we cannot affect it. Mr. Strieker expressed if you are supporting this project, then you are supporting their rate hikes. Mayor Hemann contended we cannot control that.

Dan Dickmann stated I have been to all of Ameren’s public meetings on this. I am in St Jacob Township. This line means a long 1800 acres that will lose its value. As a township, we lose 20% of tax money if this stretch goes through. My son would live in this path and listen to the buzzing sound. I know Ameren is going to purchase a portion of your current line. Does it help with rates? Director Dan Cook stated the money from the sale of the line goes towards maintaining the current system; it does not prevent rates from going up.

Todd Dickmann, resident on Blue Mound Road, and Highland power user. One of the lines proposed would be ninety feet from my bedroom. That is what I will be dealing with. Buzzing power lines. That is from here to the pool table, over there. I just wanted to give you a visual of what I am dealing with. Councilwoman Sloan stated when we attended these meetings with Ameren; we pinpointed on the map any addresses we felt was not good. Everyone else needs to do the same things. Mr. Dickmann stated I have done that. You cannot pick up a farm and move. I wanted to provide a visual of what I am dealing with.

Adam Fuhler stated there are many older people in this room, whom you are affecting by doing this. You want to supply power to your residents, but you are affecting all of us in the country. I just buried my dad, a few months ago, and now you want to put this next to my mother's home. Mayor Hemann expressed we are not doing this. Mr. Fuhler stated I know you are not directly, but you are by supporting this. Mayor Hemann expressed I know this emotional. We are going to close this portion of the meeting and go on with our other items on the agenda. Thank you for coming and allowing us to hear your comments.

Requests of Council:

No comments or requests made by council.

Staff Report:

City Manager Chris Conrad reported EMA has had all final equipment issues resolved with the setup of the new ambulance. The ambulance and cardiac monitors have been approved and have been put into operation.

The way the interior rooms were constructed at City Hall, there is carpet under the walls. When it flooded and then sat for ten days, we needed to wait and see how things within the walls dried out. Korte Construction tried to remediate it as much as they could. However, all had more than 20% moisture in them. Therefore, all the walls will need to come down. We hope to have final numbers by end of the week. Councilwoman Bellm asked how about insurance company. City Manager Conrad reported we were working with the insurance on this remediation, and this was under their guidance. We hope to have estimated costs by the end of February. The one big-ticket item will be for the HVAC system, which will need to be replaced, as all the ductwork was underground, so the current heat pump and ductwork will be replaced.

NEW BUSINESS

Bill #23-05/RESOLUTION of the City Supporting Tax Increment Financing – Councilwoman Bellm made a motion to approve Bill #23-05/Resolution #23-01-3006 of the City Supporting Tax Increment Financing as attached. Motion seconded by Councilman Frey. Roll Call Vote: Councilmembers Sloan, Frey, Bellm and Hipskind voted aye, none nay. Motion carried.

Bill #23-06/RESOLUTION Authorizing the Mayor and/or City Manager to Apply for Park Commission Funds from Madison County, Illinois – Councilman Frey made a motion to approve Bill #23-06/Resolution #23-01-3007 authorizing the Mayor and/or City Manager to apply for park commission funds from Madison County, Illinois as attached. Motion seconded by Councilwoman Bellm. Roll Call Vote: Councilmembers Sloan, Frey, Bellm and Hipskind voted aye, none nay. Motion carried.

Bill #23-07/RESOLUTION Waiving Normal & Customary Bidding Procedures and Authorizing the Execution of a Purchase Agreement to Purchase the Palo Alto Firewall Security Appliance through the State of Illinois Joint Purchasing Program – Councilwoman Bellm made a motion to approve Bill #23-07/

Resolution #23-01-3008 waiving Normal & Customary Bidding Procedures and authorizing the execution of a purchase agreement to purchase the Palo Alto Firewall Security Appliance through the State of Illinois Joint Purchasing Program as attached. Motion seconded by Councilman Frey. City Manager Conrad noted this is our annual licensing that we purchase through the state's program. Roll Call Vote: Councilmembers Sloan, Frey, Bellm and Hipskind voted aye, none nay. Motion carried.

Bill #23-08/RESOLUTION Authorizing the Mayor and/or City Manager to Execute any Documents Necessary to use \$172,412.00 of Motor Fuel Tax Funds, Including Rebuild Illinois Grant Funds, to Pay for Preliminary and Construction Engineering Services for Matter Drive and Executive Drive Reconstruction – PW-05-21 – Councilman Frey made a motion to approve Bill #23-08/Resolution #23-01-3009 authorizing the mayor and/or city manager to execute any documents necessary to use \$172,412.00 of Motor Fuel Tax Funds, including Rebuild Illinois Grant Funds, to pay for preliminary and construction engineering services for Matter Drive and Executive Drive Reconstruction – PW-05-21 as attached. Motion seconded by Councilwoman Bellm. Roll Call Vote: Councilmembers Sloan, Frey, Bellm and Hipskind voted aye, none nay. Motion carried.

Bill #23-09/RESOLUTION Authorizing Sole Source Purchase of Services from Tantalus Systems, Inc. for Annual Maintenance and Technical Support – Councilwoman Bellm made a motion to approve Bill #23-09/Resolution #23-01-3010 authorizing sole source purchase of services from Tantalus Systems, Inc. for annual maintenance and technical support as attached. Motion seconded by Councilman Frey. Roll Call Vote: Councilmembers Sloan, Frey, Bellm and Hipskind voted aye, none nay. Motion carried.

Award Bid #PD-11-22, for Purchase of Two Police SUV's – Councilman Frey made a motion to award Bid #PD-11-22, to Morrow Brothers, of Greenfield, Illinois, for purchase of two police SUV's in the total amount of \$82,000 as attached. Motion seconded by Councilwoman Bellm. Roll Call Vote: Councilmembers Sloan, Frey, Bellm and Hipskind voted aye, none nay. Motion carried.

Approve Notice of Municipal Letting, Bid #E-09-22-R for 138kV Line Clearance Trimming – Councilwoman Bellm made a motion to approve Notice of Municipal Letting, Bid #E-09-22-R for 138kV Line Clearance Trimming as attached. Motion seconded by Councilman Frey. Mayor Hemann stated this is going with what we talked about at the last meeting in streamlining the project. Director Cook explained we trim the line every five years. We will not turn over the 138kV line until 2025, so we need to maintain it until then. We had budgeted \$100,000 for this trimming. We are restructuring the bid and saying, here is \$100,000, start at substation and see how far you can go with it. We feel they can get through the bulk of what our crew cannot get through. That is what we hope to accomplish. Roll Call Vote: Councilmembers Sloan, Frey, Bellm and Hipskind voted aye, none nay. Motion carried.

Approve Notice of Municipal Letting, Bid #PW-10-22 for Veterans Honor Parkway Pavement Restoration - Broadway to Michael Road – Councilman Frey made a motion to approve Notice of Municipal Letting, Bid #PW-10-22 for Veterans Honor Parkway Pavement Restoration - Broadway to Michael Road as attached. Motion seconded by Councilwoman Bellm. City Manager Conrad explained, if you can remember what happened with Troxler Avenue, in front of the high school that is what we have here. The pavement is eight-inches thick without reinforcement. Once traffic started going over it, the surfaced moved. It needs rebar between the panels. Councilwoman Bellm asked do we have to specify that in the bids in the future. Public Works Director Joe Gillespie responded we must and we do. Mayor Hemann noted it was constructed to industry standard at that time. Director Gillespie concurred it was. He added, the developer, using a well-known contractor, put in this section of roadway. Once the rebar is put in, they will run it with a grout and grind it down, for a smooth surface. Roll Call Vote: Councilmembers Sloan, Frey, Bellm and Hipskind voted aye, none nay. Motion carried.

REPORT

Accepting Expenditures Report #1234 for December 31, 2022 through January 13, 2023 –

Councilwoman Bellm made a motion to accept Expenditures Report #1234 for December 31, 2022 through January 13, 2023 as attached. Motion seconded by Councilman Frey. Roll Call Vote: Councilmembers Sloan, Frey, Bellm and Hipskind voted aye, none nay. Motion carried.

Councilwoman Bellm made a motion to adjourn. Motion seconded by Councilman Frey. Roll Call Vote: Councilmembers Sloan, Frey, Bellm and Hipskind voted aye, none nay. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 7:53pm.

Kevin B. Hemann, Mayor

Barbara Bellm, City Clerk