

**MINUTES OF REGULAR SESSION
HIGHLAND CITY COUNCIL
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 21, 2023**

Mayor Hemann called the Regular Session to order at 7:00pm at the Senior Center. Council members Sloan, Frey, and Bellm were present. Councilman Hipskind was absent. Others in attendance were City Manager Conrad, Directors Cook, Gillespie, and Presson, EMS Chief Wilson, Fire Chief Straub, Staff: Lucas Pinkser, Treasurer Nicholaides, Deputy City Clerk VonHatten, City Clerk Bellm, 7 citizens, and 1 member of the news media.

MINUTES

Councilman Frey made a motion to approve the minutes of the February 6, 2023 Regular Session as attached. Motion seconded by Councilwoman Bellm. Roll Call Vote: Councilmembers Sloan, Frey, and Bellm voted aye, none nay. Motion carried.

PUBLIC FORUM

Citizens' Requests and Comments:

Easter Egg Hunt – Lisa Sauer State Farm– Special Event Application – Lisa Sauers requested permission to host the annual Easter Egg Hunt on the city square on Saturday, April 1, 2023. Setup to begin at 12:00pm. The event will begin at 2:00pm with cleanup to immediately follow. Councilwoman Bellm made a motion to approve the request of Lisa Sauer's State Farm for use of the downtown square, from 12:00pm – 3:30pm, on Saturday, April 1, 2023, for Easter Egg Hunt as requested. Motion seconded by Councilman Frey. Roll Call Vote: Councilmembers Sloan, Frey, and Bellm voted aye, none nay. Motion carried.

Schlaflly –Schlaflly Highland Square Crawfish Boil– Special Event Application – Christine Young, Representative reported we are planning a crawfish boil and would like to use Plaza Park for the event on Saturday, April 15, 2023, 12:00pm – 4:00pm. Councilwoman Bellm made a motion to approve use of Plaza Park on Saturday, April 15, 2023, 12:00pm – 4:00pm, for Schlaflly Highland Square Crawfish Boil as requested. Motion seconded by Councilman Frey. Roll Call Vote: Councilmembers Sloan, Frey, and Bellm voted aye, none nay. Motion carried.

Highland Parks and Recreation Department –Highland Farmer's Market– Special Event Application – Lucas Pinsker, Representative, stated we are wanting to host a Farmer's Market on Tuesdays, 4:00pm – 8:00pm, May 16 – September 26, 2023. It would be every Tuesday, except July 25, during the Madison County Fair. Councilwoman Bellm asked have you been getting vendors. Lucas responded yes, I have reached out to several. I will be able to get more commitments with the plans in place. Councilwoman Bellm asked will there be a fee. Lucas stated there will be a small fee, possibly \$15-\$25. Councilman Frey made a motion to approve the Special Event Application or the Parks and Recreation Department to host Highland Farmers' Market on the Square every Tuesday, from May 16 through September 26, 2023 as attached. Motion seconded by Councilwoman Bellm. Roll Call Vote: Councilmembers Sloan, Frey, and Bellm voted aye, none nay. Motion carried.

Requests of Council:

Councilwoman Sloan noted we have that awesome Highland Happenings app. Yet, I see a lot of things posted out to Facebook. She suggested maybe we could utilize the app for notifications of water main breaks, power outages, and HCS outages, versus Facebook postings. Councilman Frey added the Highway 40 construction posting would be good on there also. City Manager Chris Conrad stated he would review our policy on postings.

Councilwoman Bellm inquired what our policy on trash disposal of big items is. City Manager Conrad reported Republic is working under the contract we had with Sander's yet. So, if you put it out, they should be picking it up. Sometimes they will have to send a different truck, based on the truck route staffing. Then they send a second truck, if needed just for those large items. If you have a large item or several, it can be a good idea to notify City Hall, so we can contact them specifically. Councilman Frey noted a lot of towns have a citywide cleanup day, which handled a lot of those items. City Manager Conrad stated we can talk to Republic if we can do that for the one week in May. Councilman Frey noted it used to be one day, for citywide cleanup, until Sanders' allowed for pickup of large items on the regular route.

Staff Report:

City Manager Conrad reported the electric crews are working on the main routes to swap out the lights to LED.

Annual Public Safety Report Presentation - Police Chief Carole Presson reported 2022 was my first year as Chief of Police and Public Safety Director. I did not realize how much we have accomplished in this last year. The Police Department has been operating at 25% shortage of what we had in the past, yet we were able to implement the K-9 program and body cameras. Incident levels have returned to pre-COVID levels. We were up 113% in community services. Traffic accidents are at a five-year low, while the department investigated 66% more cases over the year before. Chief Presson noted we will change our reporting system to better report in-depth on the arrest numbers, this next year. The numbers for the School Resource Officer are up, this past year, and we allowed another officer to spend time at the elementary school. We added four new employees in the past few months, so we will be up to full staff again. There are 19 special events and we completed 2726 hour of training, while our staff was down 25%, only because officers were willing to put the time and overtime in.

EMS Chief Brian Wilson stated this report includes call numbers and figures for the city and each district we service. Fire Chief Chris Straub added the call volume for the fire department has gone down. We entered into two mutual aid agreements, with Highland-Pierron Fire Department and St. Jacob Fire District, which means anytime there is a structure fire, we will respond to assist them. We have twelve new volunteers. Since we are a volunteer department, we deal with a lot of time constraints for training. We have added Vector Solutions, which is an online training module and Zoll Software for report writing, which allows us to get those reports done right away, and on the spot.

Mayor Hemann expressed the charts included in the report are great. You do not realize how many interactions and training happens until you see this. Chief Presson expressed we are not in everyone's face all day; however, when something needs to be done, we are ready and there. We have a very impressive set of talent in our unit. Councilwoman Bellm agreed yes, we do not recognize all the PD does. It is not something that always needs to be advertised, but it is very important.

NEW BUSINESS

Bill #23-14/RESOLUTION Authorizing Allocation of Hotel/Motel Tax Funding for Local Dine Around- Highland Chamber of Commerce – Councilman Frey made a motion to approve Bill #23-14/Resolution #23-02-3011 authorizing allocation of \$1,500 hotel/motel tax funding for Local Dine Around - Highland Chamber of Commerce as attached. Motion seconded by Councilwoman Bellm. Mayor Hemann asked Chamber Director Hillarie Holzinger if she would like to talk about this promotion. Mrs. Holzinger explained we wanted to offer something to encourage people to shop and dine around Highland. Visit one of the participating places and receive a passport. If you visit at least 20 of the restaurants, bars, or other participating establishments and make a purchase, you will get the passport stamped, and then will be entered into a drawing. Each of the participating places have provided \$25 gift certificates. We want to get additional funding to get a further reach of advertising to encourage people outside of Highland, as well as those in Highland, to dine around Highland. Councilwoman Sloan asked what the plans are for advertising. Mrs. Holzinger reported Downstate Illinois (formerly Illinois South Tourism) can provide a larger reach with video on social media, and we plan to do something in that aspect, and advertising in The Breese Journal. Councilwoman Bellm inquired are we with Downstate Illinois or Great Rivers, since IllinoisSouth has been realigned and rebranded. Director Holzinger stated we still need to figure out who is going to do the most for us.

Councilwoman Bellm asked what the requirement for hotel/motel tax funding is. Is it events that bring people into Highland and increase overnight stays? City Attorney Mike McGinley advised sometimes I think when we hear “hotel/motel” it needs to generate “heads in bed” overnight stays. Under the statue, the scope is broader than that. It needs to drive tourism and get people into town and spending money. Maybe they come in for the day and decide to stay overnight. Councilman Frey expressed I just want to know how they are going to drive people to Highland. Attorney McGinley agreed since the tax is being generated from hotel stay taxes, I don’t know that is a useless question; however, I don’t think it should be indicative. Councilman Frey recalled the one application we had that we denied funding was because they were seeking to reimburse office expenses. Councilwoman Bellm noted if the amount they are seeking is over \$1500, we asked for the details on overnight stays. She expressed every event is worthy, but we only have so much funds to go around; we need to set some guidelines of how to qualify the funds. Attorney McGinley reported we have a committee that vents these applications prior to coming to the council, with far more information than what the council typically sees. Councilman Frey stated if they want \$1500 to print the passports, it does not fit the guidelines. However, if the funds are going towards advertising costs with Downstate Illinois and Breese Journal, than it would fit in the guidelines. City Manager Conrad reported we have some funds from previous years in reserves that we can provide for this request. Attorney McGinley asked for clarification of the issue. Councilman Frey stated the funding cannot be for printing the passports, because that does not draw people in. It needs to be for advertising costs, which are used to draw people in. Councilwoman Bellm pointed out it varies from city to city on how these funds can be used. City Attorney McGinley agreed, yes, depending upon form of government, and how they choose to distribute.

Chamber Director Hillarie Holzinger presented a spreadsheet of what we spend with IllinoisSouth, Pioneer Newspaper, and Breese Journal, which is at a base of \$1700 for the year. Councilman Frey amend this request to provide hotel/motel tax funding for advertising on Facebook and in the Pioneer and Breese Journal, and with IllinoisSouth. Motion seconded by Councilwoman Sloan. Roll Call Vote: Councilmembers Sloan, Frey, and Bellm voted aye, none nay, to amend the motion. Motion carried. On the Roll Call Vote to vote on the amended motion to approve \$1500 of hotel/motel tax funding for the Highland Chamber of Commerce to advertise on Facebook, in the Pioneer Newspaper and Breese Journal, and with IllinoisSouth Councilmembers Sloan, Frey, and Bellm voted aye, none nay. Motion carried.

Approve Reappointment of Clifton Couch to the Cemetery Board of Managers – Councilwoman Bellm made a motion to approve reappointment of Clifton Couch to the Cemetery Board of Managers, for an additional two-year term, to expire March 1, 2025 as attached. Motion seconded by Councilman Frey. Roll Call Vote: Councilmembers Sloan, Frey, and Bellm voted aye, none nay. Motion carried.

Approve Reappointment of Randy Ammann, Gary Pugh, and Donald Rommerskirchen to the Silver Lake Commission – Councilman Frey made a motion to approve the reappointment of Randy Ammann, Gary Pugh, and Donald Rommerskirchen to the Silver Lake Commission, for additional three-year terms to expire March 2026 as attached. Motion seconded by Councilwoman Bellm. Roll Call Vote: Councilmembers Sloan, Frey, and Bellm voted aye, none nay. Motion carried.

Award Bid #E-09-22-R, for 138KV Line Clearance Trimming – Councilwoman Bellm made a motion to award Bid #E-09-22-R, for 138KV Line Clearance Trimming to Endrizzi Contracting, Inc, in the amount of \$100,000 as attached. Motion seconded by Councilman Frey. Roll Call Vote: Councilmembers Sloan, Frey, and Bellm voted aye, none nay. Motion carried.

Approve Notice of Municipal Letting, Bid #PR-01-23 for Electric Panel at Glik Park – Councilman Frey made a motion to approve Notice of Municipal Letting, Bid #PR-01-23 for Electric Panel at Glik Park as attached. Motion seconded by Councilwoman Bellm. City Manager Conrad stated this was pointed out as a need during budget discussion. After some further review, it turned out to be an immediate need. Roll Call Vote: Councilmembers Sloan, Frey, and Bellm voted aye, none nay. Motion carried.

Bill #23-15/RESOLUTION Appropriating Funds for Motor Fuel Tax Maintenance Materials (MFT Section 24-00000-00-GM) – Councilwoman Bellm made a motion to approve Bill #23-15/Resolution #23-02-3012 appropriating funds for Motor Fuel Tax Maintenance Materials (MFT Section 24-00000-00-GM) as attached. Motion seconded by Councilman Frey. Roll Call Vote: Councilmembers Sloan, Frey, and Bellm voted aye, none nay. Motion carried.

REPORT

Accepting Expenditures Report #1236 for February 4, 2023 through February 17, 2023 – Councilman Frey made a motion to accept Expenditures Report #1236 for February 4, 2023 through February 17, 2023 as attached. Motion seconded by Councilwoman Bellm. Roll Call Vote: Councilmembers Sloan, Frey, and Bellm voted aye, none nay. Motion carried.

Councilwoman Bellm made a motion to temporarily adjourn this regular session to enter into executive session under the Illinois Open Meetings Act under the following exemption: 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(1) to discuss the performance of a specific employee. Motion seconded by Councilman Frey. Roll Call Vote: Councilmembers Sloan, Frey, and Bellm voted aye, none nay. Motion carried. Open Meeting temporarily adjourned at 7:43pm.

Mayor Hemann reconvened the Regular Session at 8:24pm. Council members Sloan, Frey, Bellm were present. Councilman Hipskind was absent. Others in attendance were City Manager Conrad, City Attorney McGinley, Director Presson, Deputy City Clerk VonHatten, City Clerk Bellm and 1 member of the media.

NEW BUSINESS (Continued)

Bill #23-16/RESOLUTION Authorizing the Amendment of the City Manager's Contract – Councilman Frey made a motion to approve Bill #23-16/Resolution #23-02-3013 authorizing the amendment of the City Manager's Contract as attached. Motion seconded by Councilwoman Bellm. Roll Call Vote: Councilmembers Sloan, Frey, and Bellm voted aye, none nay. Motion carried.

Councilwoman Bellm made a motion to adjourn. Motion seconded by Councilman Frey. Roll Call Vote: Councilmembers Sloan, Frey, and Bellm voted aye, none nay. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 8:27pm.

Kevin B. Hemann, Mayor

Barbara Bellm, City Clerk