

**MINUTES OF REGULAR SESSION  
HIGHLAND CITY COUNCIL  
MONDAY, JULY 10, 2023**

Mayor Hemann called the Regular Session to order at 7:00pm at the Highland Area Senior Center. Council members Sloan, Frey, Bellm, and Napper were present. Others in attendance were City Manager Conrad, City Attorney McGinley, Directors Cook, Gillespie, Presson, and Rosen, Natural Resources Manager Hummert, park maintenance employee Colby Rielson, Coordinator Hubbard, Treasurer Nicolaides, Deputy City Clerk Von Hatten, City Clerk Bellm, and 4 citizens.

**MINUTES**

Councilman Frey made a motion to approve the minutes of the June 19, 2023 Regular Session as attached. Motion seconded by Councilwoman Bellm. Roll Call Vote: Councilmembers Sloan, Frey, Bellm and Napper voted aye, none nay. Motion carried.

**PUBLIC FORUM**

Citizens' Requests and Comments:

David Zahn stated we moved to Highland in February; finished construction of our home in May. In trying to get our yard established, I was wondering if the city would look at other options for metering water consumption. In Belleville, you would get a registered meter from the city; then, at a predetermined date in the fall, you could return the meter and then they would credit your bill for water used that did not go into the sewer. I know there was something for pool filling. The meters are rather inexpensive. The meters used in Belleville were about \$17-18. I looked for one around town, but they don't have it at the local Ace Hardware. I am new in town and trying to learn the ways of the town. I am hoping that someone can take this and run with this. Mayor Hemann stated he had not heard of separate metering. City Manager Chris Conrad stated I can check with the water department and report back. Mayor Hemann added we would have to look at how to administer and impact on the department. City Manager Conrad stated with pool filling, we do a read before, then go back out and do another read after it is complete. We are switching to a whole new software platform and it will take about three-years to implement; however, the finance portion, which handles billing will be implement this fall. Mr. Zahn stated I do not believe all citizens would utilize this. I do realize there would be a loss of revenue to the sewer department. I am happy to assist.

Requests of Council:

Councilwoman Sloan expressed the fireworks were great. Councilwoman Bellm agreed. Councilwoman Sloan added the Thursday night concerts have been a lot of fun. Mayor Hemann added I have to agree, with the exception of bathrooms.

Staff Reports:

City Manager Conrad reported, due to the prediction for severe weather in the area on Wednesday, Fox 2 News will be at the Highland Speedway on Wednesday, July 26, which is also the week of the Madison County Fair.

The bell tower set into place today, at the corner of Broadway and Zschokke Street.

The storm recovery, the week before last, was pretty significant. Thursday night started off by sending an electric crew to Marshall, IL to assist with outages up there. They worked fourteen hours before returning to Highland; then promptly went to work in our area on Friday night when we had several trees go down. Between Friday night and Monday morning, city crews put in 568 hours. We were very fortunate. At a swim meet, this past week, a week after the storm, some people in Dupo were still without power, this past Thursday.

Public Works Director Joe Gillespie provided an update on lead and copper testing. We had an exceedence for lead in our system, back in 2020, as a result of random residential samplings done. 15 parts per billion is our limit. The EPA look at it at the 90<sup>th</sup> percentile. We had to register residential addresses with EPA. We filed those with EPA. The sampling is in the hands of the customer. They turn on the tap and put sampling kit under the faucet. We did get a couple of exceedence levels, which gave us additional residences to sample in 2021, 2022, and 2023. We had to test a minimum of 300 passing samples to get to that point, which puts us on a reduced monitoring frequency. We will need to go back to the initial testing sites and submit those. We have to continue to follow up annually.

Director Gillespie reported that PFAS (Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances) are the next substances that we will be working to limit within our system. They are manmade compounds found in stain-, water-, and grease-resistant goods, such as umbrellas, non-stick cookware, makeup, and carpets. They have been finding alot of this PFAS in water sources. USEPA did a sampling here and did not find any detection of it. The federal government is working on establishing a limit. I feel that if we did detect it, we should be able to handle it with the filtration system we have.

Mayor Hemann asked does the lead come from runoff or pipes. Director Gillespie explained, as they found in Flint, Michigan, phosphates in the water coat the inside of the pipes. When there is no protection, the metals of the pipe leach into the water. He pointed out there was a lot of lead used in the faucets, years ago; and, there still is in trace amounts. Not using those coatings and treatments, leads to the higher levels.

*Benefits of Pollinator Parks Around Municipal Facilities* - Ryan Hummert, Natural Resources Manager, provided a report to the council proposing pollinator parks. We currently have 15-20 acres of natural grasses and native pollinator plants under management within Silver Lake Park as well as the conservation areas north of I-70. These areas were previously farmed or being mowed regularly and were taken out of production in order to limit the amount of staff, equipment and resources dedicated while also providing much needed benefits to our pollinators, such as butterflies, bees, hummingbirds, and other birds. It is also a great source of habitat and thermal cover for our native wildlife. It's estimated that three-fourths of the world's flowering plants and about 35% of the world's food crops depend on animal pollinators to reproduce. That's about one out of every three bites of food we eat that exists because of animal pollinators. As the decline in pollinator populations continue, it is more important than ever that we plant, manage and maintain these native areas in our urban landscape. Native grasses also have a very fibrous root system, which is great for areas of incline or prone to erosion as they aid in building organic matter in the soil and increase water infiltration. We have a great opportunity to introduce more of these native ecosystems into a few of the areas around the city such as the Sewer Treatment Plant, the Water Treatment Plant, Spindler Park, the vacant lot behind Sheffel Boyle, and a few others. Adding these areas would not only benefit the pollinators, but would also decrease the amount of staff, equipment, fuel and resources the city requires for weekly maintenance. This is a natural process, which starts in the late winter and early spring in which the areas are seeded to various grass and flowering pollinator mixes. The area is then only mowed one time per year late winter or prior to the spring bloom season. Mowing

at this time allows the seeds to be naturally deposited into the ground through a frost seeding process, which requires no tillage or chemicals. Buffer mowing will be performed around the edges of the native grasses and along fences in order to allow for routine maintenance and access to more desirable or heavily used areas. These areas are filled with lush native grasses and beautiful flowers, which will provide a great addition to the natural landscape around the city. Again, this is an extremely low maintenance option and once established requires very little resources on the cities behalf while providing the added benefits to our urban and natural environment. These areas would be recognized with signage indicating a natural prairie restoration in progress and some of the lists of plants. We have three separate areas at Silver Lake that we utilizing these plants already. Councilwoman Bellm stated make sure there is some signage there, so people understand what it is and why it is not being mowed. Ryan explained it does take about three years to really get the plants to take hold and reproduce. Mayor Hemann expressed we need to make sure the residents in that area are aware of what we are doing.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

Approve Mayor's Reappointments of Garry Klaus and Joseph Garson and the Appointment of Steve Pfettscher to the Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission – Councilwoman Bellm made a motion to approve the mayor's reappointments of Garry Klaus and Joseph Garson and the appointment of Steve Pfettscher to the Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission, for three-year terms, to expire July 31, 2026 as attached. Motion seconded by Councilman Frey. Roll Call Vote: Councilmembers Sloan, Frey, Bellm and Napper voted aye, none nay. Motion carried.

Approve Notice of Municipal Letting, Bid #E-03-23, for the Purchase of 25 Tripsavers – Councilman Frey made a motion to approve Notice of Municipal Letting, Bid #E-03-23, for the purchase of twenty-five Tripsavers as attached. Motion seconded by Councilwoman Bellm. City Manager Conrad asked Director Cook to come up and explain what these do. Director Cook reported our massive outages have declined; however, we still have outages. There is a fuse at the end of each street and it protects a section of line. If we are lucky, if a squirrel gets into the line, the Tripsaver recognizes a fault, then turns the power off for a few minutes and then starts back up again. Right now, typically, if the power goes out due to a squirrel, we have to walk the line to find the dead squirrel, then reset the line, because it knocks out one of those tap fuses. Mayor Hemann inquired this will not cover all areas of town with the twenty-five. Director Cook replied no. We have purchased some at \$1600-1700 each. With COVID, we budgeted for \$3,000 each. With these, the lights will blink, which people do not like; however, it is better than a total power outage. Roll Call Vote: Councilmembers Sloan, Frey, Bellm and Napper voted aye, none nay. Motion carried.

Award Bid #PW-14-17-R, for Re-Bid of Old Reservoir Dam Spillway – Councilwoman Bellm made a motion to award Bid #PW-14-17-R, for re-bid of Old Reservoir Dam Spillway to TEK Construction, LLC, in Bartleso, IL, in the amount of \$361,100.00 as attached. Motion seconded by Councilman Frey. Roll Call Vote: Councilmembers Sloan, Frey, Bellm and Napper voted aye, none nay. Motion carried.

Bill #23-70/ORDINANCE Approving and Authorizing the City Manager to Execute an Economic Development Agreement Pursuant to 65 ILCS 5/8-1-2.5, with Maiden Gall, LLC, for 923 Main Street and other Actions Related Thereto – Councilman Frey made a motion to approve Bill #23-70/Ordinance #3279 approving and authorizing the city manager to execute an economic development agreement pursuant to 65 ILCS 5/8-1-2.5, with Maiden Gall, LLC, for 923 Main Street and other actions related thereto as attached. Motion seconded by Councilwoman Bellm. Mayor Hemann introduced the new ownership of The Giving Tree building. They stated the Just Teazen' Salon & Boutique will move over and we will turn the upstairs into an Airbnb. We close on the building today. We will be repurposing the name, "The Giving Tree" for

the loft upstairs. Roll Call Vote: Councilmembers Sloan, Frey, and Bellm voted aye, none nay. Councilman Napper abstained. Motion carried.

Bill #23-71/ORDINANCE Approving A First Amended Intergovernmental Agreement Between the City of Highland, and Highland Community School District No. 5 for a School Resource Office – Councilwoman Bellm made a motion to approve Bill #23-71/Ordinance #3280 approving a First Amended Intergovernmental Agreement between the City of Highland, and Highland Community School District No. 5 for a School Resource Office as attached. Motion seconded by Councilman Napper. Carole Presson explained this is allowing us to add a second SRO. We have been in discussion on this due to the sheer amount of work being in the schools. It will be a fifty-fifty split for the first school year. After that, we will go to normal 75/25 split. One will be at elementary and primary; and, one at middle school and high school. Chris Clewis will be elementary and primary, while Officer Biggs stays at high school and middle school. Roll Call Vote: Councilmembers Sloan, Frey, Bellm and Napper voted aye, none nay. Motion carried.

## **REPORT**

Accepting Expenditures Report #1245 for June 17, 2023 through July 7, 2023 – Councilman Frey made a motion to accept Expenditures Report #1245 for June 17, 2023 through July 7, 2023 as attached. Motion seconded by Councilwoman Bellm. Roll Call Vote: Councilmembers Sloan, Frey, Bellm and Napper 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)(11) to discuss litigation and 2(c)5 to discuss the purchase of real property. Motion seconded by Councilwoman Sloan. Roll Call Vote: Councilmembers Sloan, Frey, Bellm and Napper voted aye, none nay. Motion carried. Open Meeting temporarily adjourned at 7:34pm.

Mayor Hemann reconvened the Regular Session at 8:32pm. Council members Sloan, Frey, Bellm, and Napper were present. Others in attendance were City Manager Conrad, City Attorney McGinley, Deputy City Clerk Von Hatten, and City Clerk Bellm.

Mayor Hemann stated there will be no action taken on anything that was discussed in the Executive Session.

Councilwoman Bellm made a motion to adjourn. Motion seconded by Councilwoman Sloan. All aye, none nay. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 8:32pm.

Kevin B. Hemann, Mayor

Barbara Bellm, City Clerk