

**MINUTES OF REGULAR SESSION
HIGHLAND CITY COUNCIL
MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 18, 2023**

City Clerk Bellm called the Regular Session to order at 6:30pm at the Highland Area Senior Center. Council members Sloan, Frey, Bellm, and Napper were present. Mayor Hemann was absent. Others in attendance were City Manager Conrad, City Attorney Michael McGinley, Directors Gillespie and Presson, Fire Chief Straub, Coordinator Hubbard, Treasurer Nicolaides, Deputy City Clerks Hediger and Von Hatten, City Clerk Bellm, and 13 citizens.

ELECTION OF MAYOR PRO TEM

City Clerk Barbara Bellm asked for a motion to elect one councilperson to serve as mayor pro tem during the temporary absence of Mayor Hemann. The mayor pro tem shall perform the duties and possess all the rights and powers of the mayor and shall vote in his/her capacity as councilperson only. Councilwoman Sloan made a motion to elect Councilwoman Peggy Bellm as mayor pro tem during the temporary absence of Mayor Hemann. Motion seconded by Councilman Frey. All aye, none nay. Motion carried.

MINUTES

Councilman Frey made a motion to approve the minutes of the September 5, 2023 Regular Session as attached. Motion seconded by Councilman Napper. Roll Call Vote: Councilmembers Sloan, Frey, Bellm and Napper voted aye, none nay. Motion carried.

PROCLAMATION

Councilwoman Bellm, as Mayor Pro Tem, read a document proclaiming the week of September 17 through 23, 2023 as Constitution Week. The proclamation was accepted by Marilyn McCall, Constitution Week Chairperson for the Silver Creek Chapter of the National Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution.

PUBLIC FORUM

Citizens' Requests and Comments:

Veterans Day Parade – Special Event Application – Kenny Kapp, Representative, along with Lenny Gall, were present representing Moose Lodge #2479. Lenny Gall requested permission for the annual Veterans' Day Parade and ceremony in joint effort with V.F.W. Post #5694 and American Legion Post #439 on Sunday, November 12, 2023. The parade will start at 2:00pm, beginning at the intersection of Olive Street and Main Street, then proceeding west on Main Street to the Square. A brief ceremony will follow the parade at the Square, with all area veterans welcomed. The Moose Lodge sponsors the parade. Councilman Napper made a motion to approve Moose Lodge #2479 request to sponsor the Veterans' Day Parade and use of the Square on Sunday, November 12, 2023 as attached. Motion

seconded by Councilwoman Sloan. Roll Call Vote: Councilmembers Sloan, Frey, Bellm and Napper voted aye, none nay. Motion carried.

St. Paul Catholic School Fall Festival – Special Event Application – City Manager Conrad noted this is the same request as last year. Councilwoman Sloan made a motion to approve St. Paul Catholic School’s request for road closure, on October 20, 2023, 4:30pm-8pm, as requested. Motion seconded by Councilman Frey. Roll Call Vote: Councilmembers Sloan, Frey, Bellm and Napper voted aye, none nay. Motion carried.

Treats on the Streets – Special Event Application – Marshall Rinderer, Representative, requested use of the Square and bathroom facilities, for Friday, October 27, 2023, from 1:00pm – 5:00pm. We are requesting permission for road closure around the Square and Washington from Main to the 9th Street. At the Broadway intersection, we are hoping for some help at crossing Broadway. Marshall stated several businesses were reluctant about the street closure; however, they realize that for the safety factor it is the best option. Councilwoman Sloan expressed I am happy to see that, because it was rather crazy, last year. Chief Presson agreed it was a concern last year, so we are going to work through this with the closures. Mr. Rinderer reported the Chamber has offered their vests and radios for us to use. Councilman Frey made a motion to approve Treats on the Streets, Friday, October 27, 2023, from 1:00pm – 5:00pm as requested. Motion seconded by Councilwoman Sloan. Roll Call Vote: Councilmembers Sloan, Frey, Bellm and Napper voted aye, none nay. Motion carried.

HHS Homecoming Parade – Special Event Application – Clint Hamilton, HHS Asst. Principal, stated we are requesting road closures on Wednesday, September 20, 2023 for the annual high school homecoming parade. The parade is staged at the elementary school area on Lindenthal Avenue and proceeds to the Square. We are asking to shut down Main Street from Laurel Street to Walnut Street to have as an area to unload the kids off the floats and the parents can pick up the kids from that area. Councilwoman Sloan made motion to the Highland High School’s request to hold HHS Homecoming Parade on September 20, 2023, as per application attached. Motion seconded by Councilman Frey. Roll Call Vote: Councilmembers Sloan, Frey, Bellm and Napper voted aye, none nay. Motion carried.

Jean Mary Korte stated I am here to support ground-mounted solar panels for government entities.

Ground mounted solar presents many benefits: economic savings in electricity costs, greater energy resilience; and, it improves the town’s image by showing support for clean, proven technology, and generating electricity without producing harmful emissions. Embracing ground mounted solar is a vital step towards a sustainable and prosperous future for Highland and its residents. Personally, we have had solar installed on our home for five years and we are very happy with our investment.

In 2020, two of the three solar projects in the Triad school district were ground mounted designs, and the school district is already reaping savings. According to the New York Times, two years later, nearly 10% of K thru 12 public and private schools across the country are using solar energy to create savings for other programs. The number of school districts going solar grows every day. With a projected seven million dollars in savings for our schools, a vote for ground mounted solar is a “no-brainer”. Its seven million dollars that can best be spent educating our kids without a tax increase. I appreciate your service to our City. I hope you will vote in favor of ground mounted solar. If anyone has any questions about solar, I will be happy to answer them if I am able.

Requests of Council:

No requests or comments presented.

Staff Reports:

Safe Roads to School Survey – City Manager Chris Conrad reported we have put out a survey as part of the grant we are applying for through IDOT for a shared use path out to new primary on Poplar Street, and for additional routes by the other schools. We will be having a special session on Thursday, September 22 for the purpose of the council to approve this process. Citizens may access the survey from our website or the Highland Happenings app.

Along with that, we have been talking about a new push for communications with our citizens. We are looking at how we utilize the app and an initiative to activate alerts from the website through a notification process that people can set up utilizing emails. We are also working to developing a 4x6 magnet that will provide the service numbers for the various city services and after-hours numbers. We are still working on the final drawing. Our hope is to pass out at the Christmas parade. We will have additional articles going out so people are aware that we have hired a third-party company that handles those after-hour calls for power outages and other issues. It is a bit of a different process that what residents were used to in the past.

City Manager Conrad provided a quick update on the ordinance issues: Currently, we have 23 active codes violations: 6 grass, 3 zoning issues and 6 building issues. We are coordinating these with the police department. Each officer will be assigned a district to handle the issues within the different areas of town.

The Wick’s Pipe Organ Company made the Madison County Historical Society’s publication. They Madison County Historical Society will be hosting their annual meeting November 5, 2023 at the The Olde Wicks Factory. Councilwoman Bellm stated I have been to some of those events and it usually is a very good event.

City Manager Conrad reported that this Thursday Night’s concert is hosting a Styx cover band. Because of the anticipated size of the crowd, Main Street will be shut down from Washington Street to Laurel Street to allow for safe crossing between the Square and Plaza Park.

NEW BUSINESS

Discussion – Costs Associated with Building Redundancy into HCS’ VTV Product – Angela is on vacation and this came up last week. We get a lot of questions about the VTV service. It is a streaming service that we utilize to provide our platform. It is a lowered-tiered service, but it is highly expensive. We have a single circuit that feeds it. To provide redundancy, it would increase the lowest tier of service to be \$104 per month spread over 750 customers. TV is not a profitable product to in the business of providing. It has become a very complex business. What happened, this last week, was not our line that got cut, but a secondary line owned by Bluebird. When something like that happens on Bluebird’s line, they have to divert internet and phone service over our television line, since that is priority service. We are at the mercy of our service provider that we contract. Councilwoman Bellm stated we need to get that message across that while it is our problem we are relying on our providers. Councilwoman Sloan agreed we need to explain that we do not have control over the services. Councilwoman Bellm inquired the cost of redundancy requires all 700+ customers. City Manager Conrad replied yes. Councilwoman Sloan noted it would take the lowest tier price and double it. Councilwoman Bellm acknowledged TV is on the downturn; however, several people do call every time they are missing their news broadcasts. City Manager Conrad explained there is more of a push towards various streaming services. Digital antennas is what people use for local channels and then streaming for the other channels. We would love to keep people for internet usage. Television service is not profitable and at some point,

we will need to see if we are going to stay in that business. Councilwoman Bellm suggested maybe we can educate people on how to drop VTV and go to streaming options using our internet services. I think that would go a long way with our customers. Councilwoman Sloan noted, right now, they do not see a separation of the internet and the television product.

Approve Transfer of Ownership of Graves in City Cemetery (Chapman and Peters to Widman) – Councilwoman Sloan made a motion to approve the transfer of ownership of Grave Spaces 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6 in Lot No. 52 of Block No. 17 in the Highland City Cemetery from Earl and Winnie Chapman, and Jean Peters, to Michael Widman as attached. Motion seconded by Councilman Frey. Roll Call Vote: Councilmembers Sloan, Frey, Bellm and Napper voted aye, none nay. Motion carried.

Bill #23-87/ORDINANCE Amending City Code Sections 2-261 and 2-262 Pertaining to the Highland Ambulance Service, the Type of Services to be Rendered, the Area to be Served, and the Charges to be Made for the Highland Ambulance Service – Councilman Frey made a motion to approve Bill #23-87/Ordinance #3290 amending City Code Sections 2-261 and 2-262 pertaining to the Highland Ambulance Service, the type of services to be rendered, the area to be served, and the charges to be made for the Highland Ambulance Service as attached. Motion seconded by Councilwoman Sloan. City Manager Conrad acknowledge that, obviously, some questions from the council. This is staff's recommendation. We currently collect 50% of what we bill Medicare/Medicaid. The previous standard rate was \$650. Standard now is \$1590 per call. Increased fees from those that use the services. We are charging the max that we can. The non-resident rate accounts for less than 2% of our billing. Most of these come from off the interstate. Think of this as the difference of in-network and out-of-network for insurance billing. These rate increases are not a silver bullet. The burden falls to the self-pay and the insured. Unfortunately, the medical system works that way in this country. I do hope it raises eyebrows and sheds light on the crisis. However, we need to do this, rather than having the difficult discussions and decisions that Pocahontas-Old Ripley had. No time pressure to make this decision. Councilman Frey stated I have no questions. It just is unfortunate. Councilman Napper inquired are these not picked up by insurance companies. City Manager Conrad replied often we bill that to third-party payers. Councilman Napper inquired this impact will not be to city residents. City Manager Conrad responded, yes, for the most parts. We also have contractual agreements with neighboring parties. We have been working with legislative officials for some time now on this issue. We had another meeting with Congresswoman Miller on this matter, Friday night. This is a nationwide problem. These issues tend to hit rural areas more before it makes it way to larger cities. We just saw an article on The Villages, in Florida, talking about having to wait 30-45 minute for ambulance service. Roll Call Vote: Councilmembers Sloan, Frey, Bellm and Napper voted aye, none nay. Motion carried.

Bill #23-88/ORDINANCE Amending an Economic Development Agreement with Eagle Inn Highland, LLC, and Approving and Authorizing the City Manager to Execute the Second Amended Economic Development Agreement, Pursuant to 65 ILCS 5/8-1-2.5, and Other Actions Related Thereto – Councilwoman Sloan made a motion to approve Bill #23-88/Ordinance #3291 amending an economic development agreement with Eagle Inn Highland, LLC, and approving and authorizing the city manager to execute the second amended economic development agreement, pursuant to 65 ILCS 5/8-1-2.5, and other actions related thereto as attached. Motion seconded by Councilman Frey. Roll Call Vote: Councilmembers Sloan, Frey, Bellm and Napper voted aye, none nay. Motion carried.

Bill #23-89/ORDINANCE Amending the City Code of Ordinances, Chapter 90 – Zoning, Article III. – Districts and Zoning Map, Section 90-201, Table 3.1.C, and Article IV. – Supplemental Regulations, Section 90-217, Regarding Ground Mounted Solar Energy Systems – Councilman Frey made a motion to approve Bill #23-89/Ordinance #3292 amending the City Code of Ordinances, Chapter 90 – Zoning, Article III. – Districts and Zoning Map, Section 90-201, Table 3.1.C, and Article IV. – Supplemental Regulations, Section 90-217, regarding ground mounted solar energy systems as attached.

Motion seconded by Councilwoman Sloan. Roll Call Vote: Councilmembers Sloan, Frey, Bellm and Napper voted aye, none nay. Motion carried.

Bill #23-90/RESOLUTION Making Separate Statement of Findings of Fact in Connection with Ordinance Granting Special Use Permit for A Ground Mounted Solar Energy System within the R-1-C Single Family Residential Zone at 2813 State Route 160 PIN# 02-1-18-29-00-000-012 – Councilwoman Sloan made a motion to approve Bill #23-90/Resolution #23-09-3051 making Separate Statement of Findings of Fact in connection with Ordinance granting Special Use Permit for a ground mounted solar energy system within the R-1-C Single Family Residential Zone at 2813 State Route 160 PIN# 02-1-18-29-00-000-012 as attached. Motion seconded by Councilman Napper. Roll Call Vote: Councilmembers Sloan, Frey, Bellm and Napper voted aye, none nay. Motion carried.

Bill #23-91/ORDINANCE Granting a Special Use Permit to Highland Community Unit School District No. 5, to Allow a Ground Mounted Solar Energy System within the R-1-C Single Family Residential Zone at 2813 State Route 160 PIN# 02-1-18-29-00-000-012 – Councilman Frey made a motion to approve Bill #23-91/Ordinance #3293 granting a Special Use Permit to Highland Community Unit School District No. 5, to allow a ground mounted solar energy system within the R-1-C Single Family Residential Zone at 2813 State Route 160 PIN# 02-1-18-29-00-000-012 as attached. Motion seconded by Councilwoman Sloan. City Attorney McGinley explained our code requires a resolution and ordinance and another ordinance for prosperity. Roll Call Vote: Councilmembers Sloan, Frey, Bellm and Napper voted aye, none nay. Motion carried.

Bill #23-92/ORDINANCE Amending Zoning Classification of 100 Faith Drive from “R-1-C” Single Family Residential to “R-3” Multifamily Residential PIN# 01-1-24-08-00-000-002.005 – Councilwoman Sloan made a motion to approve Bill #23-92/Ordinance #3294 amending zoning classification of 100 Faith Drive from “R-1-C” Single Family Residential to “R-3” Multifamily Residential PIN# 01-1-24-08-00-000-002.005 as attached. Motion seconded by Councilman Frey. Roll Call Vote: Councilmembers Sloan, Frey, Bellm and Napper voted aye, none nay. Motion carried.

Bill #23-93/RESOLUTION Making Separate Statement of Findings of Fact in Connection With an Ordinance Granting a Special Use Permit for a Planned Unit Development Within the R-3 Zoning District - Councilman Frey made a motion to approve Bill #23-93/Resolution #23-09-3052 making Separate Statement of Findings of Fact in connection with an Ordinance granting a Special Use Permit for a Planned Unit Development within the R-3 Zoning District as attached. Motion seconded by Councilwoman Sloan. Roll Call Vote: Councilmembers Sloan, Frey, Bellm and Napper voted aye, none nay. Motion carried.

Bill #23-94/ORDINANCE Granting a Special Use Permit for a Planned Unit Development to Well Care Home NFP Inc., for Convalescent Care within an R-3 Zoning District PIN# 01-1-24-08-00-000-002.005 – Councilwoman Sloan made a motion to approve Bill #23-94/Ordinance #3295 granting a Special Use Permit for a Planned Unit Development to Well Care Home NFP Inc., for convalescent care within an R-3 Zoning District PIN# 01-1-24-08-00-000-002.005 as attached. Motion seconded by Councilman Frey. Roll Call Vote: Councilmembers Sloan, Frey, Bellm and Napper voted aye, none nay. Motion carried.

REPORT

Accepting Expenditures Report #1250 for September 2, 2023 through September 15, 2023 – Councilman Frey made a motion to accept Expenditures Report #1250 for September 2, 2023

through September 15, 2023 as attached. Motion seconded by Councilwoman Sloan. Roll Call Vote: Councilmembers Sloan, Frey, Bellm and Napper voted aye, none nay. Motion carried.

Councilman Frey made a motion to adjourn. Motion seconded by Councilwoman Sloan. All aye, none nay. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 7:22pm.

Peggy Bellm, Mayor Pro Tem

Barbara Bellm, City Clerk