REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING

CITY OF HOOPESTON

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 21, 2023

7:00PM – CITY HALL

1. CALL TO ORDER – Mayor Wise called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm following the pledge of allegiance.
2. ROLL CALL – The following 8 aldermen were present: Eyrich, K. Ferrell, M. Ferrell, Garrett, Highfill, Lawson, Porth, Scharlach. Mayor Wise and Attorney Miller were also present. Clerk Lane was absent, and Brad Hardcastle was filling in as clerk.
3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA – Alderwoman Lawson moved to approve the agenda as presented. Alderwoman Highfill seconded. Motion was carried 8-0.
4. MINUTES FROM PRIOR COUNCIL MEETING – Acting Clerk Hardcastle noted that the minutes that were in the packet handed out to everyone was missing a page. The correct minutes were sent out in the email on Friday. Alderman Porth moved to approve the minutes. Alderman M. Ferrell seconded. Motion carried.
5. PAYMENT OF BILLS – Alderman Eyrich moved to approve the payment of bills as presented. Alderwoman Lawson seconded. Roll call vote was taken (Ayes: Eyrich, K. Ferrell, M. Ferrell, Garrett, Highfill, Lawson, Porth, Scharlach – Nays: None) and payment of the bills was passed 8-0.
6. PRESENTATIONS – Greg Vasilion from Invenergy gave a presentation on the Musketeer Wind Project that will potentially be placed to the west of Hoopeston. He also presented an agreement for placement of wind turbines within the zoning area of the city of Hoopeston.
7. PETITIONS TO THE COUNCIL – None
8. PUBLIC COMMENT – None
9. EXECUTIVE SESSION – None
10. REPORT OF OFFICERS  
    1. EYRICH:  
       1. FIRST READING – COMMERCIAL DUMPING ORDINANCE. Alderman Eyrich presented the first reading of the Commercial Dumping Ordinance. He advised that he met with the principal parties that this ordinance would pertain to and came to an agreement. The water committee then let and agreed unanimously to the rate and structure as presented in the ordinance. $10 per 1000 gallons discharged and $15 per 1000 gallons discharged if it contains grease. There will also be a 3-year permit fee of $50. The committee added a provision that the companies have to be based in Hoopeston to apply for the permit. The ordinance will be brought to the next council meeting for a final vote. Mayor Wise added that Attorney Miller will be revising the ordinance to conform with proper ordinance procedure. Alderman Garrett asked if reporting would be done on the honor system. Alderman Eyrich replied that the permit holder already has to keep all paperwork regarding the amounts discharged per the state, and that this is what would be presented to the city. Alderman Eyrich also stated that the same dump location that the potential permit holder uses now would still be used.
    2. K. FERRELL:   
       1. LAND BANK DEMOLITIONS: The Land Bank has demolished 706 E. McNeil. Started demolition work on 419 W. Penn St. but they ran into an issue with dumping and will hopefully be resolved on Wednesday. 310 W. Penn St. is the next to be demolished.
       2. DOWNTOWN DEMOLITION: Alderwoman K. Ferrell moved to approve the contract with Ken Lee Farms for the downtown demolitions for approval. Alderman Garrett seconded. Alderwoman K. Ferrell advised that the start date for demolition had to be pushed back to December 4, 2023, due to Ameren not being able to secure the utilities by the original start date. Alderman Garrett asked if the siding issue had been worked out. Mayor Wise replied that this contract only includes the demolition of the buildings, none of the alternate bids with the exception of the demolition of the Lester’s building. Attorney Miller asked about the completion date since the start date had to be pushed back. Alderwoman K. Ferrell read the paragraph pertaining to the substantial completion date. No final date was included in the paragraph, just the definition of what is considered “substantially complete”. Mayor Wise had an email stating March 6, 2024, is the date of substantial completion. Alderwoman K. Ferrell amended her motion to include a date of substantial completion be added to the contract. Alderman Garrett re-seconded the motion. Roll call vote was taken (Ayes: Eyrich, K. Ferrell, M. Ferrell, Garrett, Highfill, Lawson, Porth, Scharlach – Nays: None) and the demolition contract was passed 8-0.
    3. M. FERRELL:   
       1. YIELD SIGN ORDINANCE: Alderman M. Ferrell moved to approve the amended Yield Sign Ordinance. Alderwoman Lawson seconded the motion. Alderman Ferrell advised that the ordinance now states that all yield signs are now marked with what direction they go. Roll call vote was taken (Ayes: Eyrich, K. Ferrell, M. Ferrell, Garrett, Highfill, Lawson, Porth, Scharlach – Nays: None) and Ordinance 2024-11 was passed 8-0.
    4. GARRETT:   
       1. Nothing to report.
    5. HIGHFILL:   
       1. Alderwoman Highfill complemented the new downtown Christmas decorations.
       2. The new water feature at McFerren Park is ready for electrical installation. Also included in the electrical estimates were upgrades to the power at the pool concession stand. 2 bids were received for the job. RC Electric from Milford placed a bid of $2596 and Watters Electric from Rantoul placed a bid of $7980. Don Stebbins made sure to reach out to both bidders to make sure they bid correctly due to the large difference in the prices, and both stood by their bids.
       3. Alderwoman Highfill invited everyone to the Hoopeston Area Woman’s Club Taco Night on Wednesday, November 22, 2023, at the Legion from 4:30 pm – 8:00 pm.
    6. LAWSON:   
       1. ANIMAL CONTROL UPDATE: HART has made the same deal as Vermilion County to house animals at $20 per day for up to 4 days. After 4 days the animals become property of HART. Also included in that proposal was $20 for vaccination of the animals. The city is still waiting on Vermilion County about getting an animal control officer stationed in Hoopeston. Mayor Wise stated that it would probably be May until that happens. Vermilion County Animal Control has made a proposal to have a dedicated animal control officer for the northern part of Vermilion County. This officer would be stationed in Hoopeston. They have asked the city for a vehicle and office space for that officer. Mayor Wise advised that the animal control van that Sherry used would be signed over to Vermilion County and that the officer would handle things north of Bismarck. Alderwoman Lawson went on to state that the city has received another application for part time animal control officer. This person would be available for nights and weekends and off hours that Vermilion County would not be in town for.
       2. POLICE DEPARTMENT UPDATE: Alderwoman Lawson complimented the police department on their response times and officer visibility. She also stated that several people approached her and were thrilled to have a school resource officer stationed at the school.
    7. PORTH:   
       1. Alderman Porth reported that he is working on the tax levy and that it will be presented at the next meeting for approval.
       2. TIF REPORT: Alderman Porth will be holding a TIF meeting in the near future with the entities that contribute to the TIF. This is a requirement of the TIF report.
       3. PAID LEAVE ACT: The state of Illinois passed the Paid Leave Act that goes into effect January 1, 2024. Alderman Porth is working with Attorney Miller on how this would affect current city leave policies and what kind of pressure that this would put on the city’s budget. Mayor Wise also stated that minimum wage would be going up January 1 and that would also place pressure on the budget.
       4. BUDGET: Alderwoman K. Ferrell asked when the new budget would have to be approved. Alderman Porth replied that it must be approved by the end of the current fiscal year. Alderman Porth’s goal is to have the budget passed by April 1, 2024.
    8. SCHARLACH:  
       1. Alderman Scharlach advised he spoke with Chief Joel Bird, and everything is going good at the fire department.
11. COMMUNICATIONS TO THE COUNCIL: None
12. UNFINISHED BUSINESS:  
    1. Alderman Garrett asked if the settlement agreement with Paul Kelnhofer was complete. Mayor Wise advised that it would be ready Wednesday morning.
13. NEW BUSINESS: None
14. COMMENTS BY THE MAYOR:   
    1. ALLEY VACATION ORDINANCE: Mayor Wise asked for a motion to approve the alley vacation ordinance that was presented. Over a year ago the council approved vacating the alley that runs adjacent to Paul Kelnhofer’s impound lot but it was never put into an ordinance. Attorney Miller wrote the ordinance and included an easement for utility access. Cost to Kelnhofer would be $750 for the alley and $500 for attorney fees for a total of $1250. Alderman Garrett made the motion to approve the ordinance. Alderwoman K. Ferrell seconded. Alderman Eyrich advised that there is a sanitary sewer line that runs under the middle of the alley that also goes under Teasdale Foods. There is no water line. Roll call vote was taken (Ayes: Eyrich, K. Ferrell, M. Ferrell, Garrett, Highfill, Lawson, Porth, Scharlach – Nays: None) and Ordinance 2024-12 was passed 8-0
    2. SOLAR REPRESENTATION AGREEMENT: Mayor Wise presented an agreement with Heyl, Royster, Voelker, & Allen to write a solar ordinance for the city. Alderman Eyrich moved to approve the agreement. Alderman M. Ferrell seconded the motion. Roll call vote was taken (Ayes: Eyrich, K. Ferrell, M. Ferrell, Garrett, Highfill, Lawson, Porth, Scharlach – Nays: None) and the agreement was passed 8-0
    3. DOWTOWN DECORATIONS: Mayor Wise also complemented the new downtown Christmas decorations.
    4. HOTEL DEVELOPMENT UPDATE: Mayor Wise, Alderpersons K. Ferrell and Porth met with the Vermilion County Board Finance Committee regarding the hotel development and the committee agreed to give $600,000 out of the county’s ARPA money to go towards the hotel development. Mayor Wise advised that the city has already set aside $250,000 for water and sewer work and around $300,000 is still needed. It will still be a couple of months before a development contract is ready. Mayor Wise said that he greatly appreciated the committee for giving the money. Alderman Porth reported that he was surprised by it.
15. COMMENTS BY THE ATTORNEY:   
    1. 511 W. MAIN UPDATE: Attorney Miller has a verbal commitment from the owners of that property that they would tender ownership of the property over to the city in exchange for the city not bothering them anymore. Alderman Garrett asked if the city could board the property up since kids are getting into the structure. Attorney Miller did not think that would be a problem.
    2. BZZZ BAR: The deed to this property has been recorded.
    3. 210 E PENN: The deed to this property has been recorded.
    4. TAXES: Attorney Miller has written to county officials about the taxes on 306 E. Main and 210 E Penn asking for the taxes to be voided. County Treasurer Duncan advised Attorney Miller that it should not be a problem.
    5. MEETING WITH THE MAYOR: Attorney Miller met with Mayor Wise last Wednesday and will continue to meet regularly with the mayor to keep things moving. Mayor Wise asked the aldermen to make sure and use the shared spreadsheet that he created to make sure things keep moving forward.
16. ADJORNMENT:  
    1. There being no further action to come before the council, Alderwoman K. Ferrell moved to adjourn the meeting. Alderwoman Highfill seconded. Motion carried 8-0. Meeting adjourned.