

REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING

CITY OF HOOPESTON

TUESDAY, JANUARY 2, 2024

7:00 PM – CITY HALL

- I. CALL TO ORDER – Mayor Wise called the meeting to order at 7:06 pm following the pledge of allegiance.
- II. ROLL CALL – The following 6 alderpersons were present: Eyrich, K. Ferrell, Highfill, Lawson, Porth, Scharlach. Aldermen M. Ferrell and Garrett were absent. Mayor Wise and Acting Clerk Hardcastle were also present. Brian Lawlyess was in attendance in place of Attorney Miller.
- III. APPOINTMENT OF CITY CLERK – Mayor Wise announced that City Clerk Gail Lane had resigned effective December 31, 2023 and was accepting a motion to appoint Bradley Hardcastle as City Clerk. Alderman Eyrich moved to accept the appointment of Bradley Hardcastle as City Clerk. Alderwoman Lawson seconded. A roll call vote was taken (Ayes: Eyrich, K. Ferrell, Highfill, Lawson, Porth, Scharlach – Nays: None – Absent: M. Ferrell, Garrett) and Bradley Hardcastle was approved as City Clerk. Mayor Wise then administered the oath of office.
- IV. APPROVAL OF AGENDA – Alderman Porth moved to approve the agenda as presented. Alderman Eyrich seconded. Motion carried 6-0.
- V. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM PRIOR MEETING – Alderwoman Lawson moved to approve the minutes from the December 19, 2023, meeting as presented. Alderwoman Highfill seconded the motion. Motion carried 6-0.
- VI. PAYMENT OF BILLS – Alderman Porth moved to approve the payment of the city's bills. Alderman Scharlach seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken (Ayes: Eyrich, K. Ferrell, Highfill, Lawson, Porth, Scharlach – Nays: None – Absent: M. Ferrell, Garrett) and payment of the bills was approved 6-0.
- VII. PRESENTATIONS – None
- VIII. PETITIONS TO THE COUNCIL – None
- IX. PUBLIC COMMENT
 - a. Dr. Gerald Miller of 521 E. Penn St. addressed the council regarding the burned-out property on Fifth St. between Chestnut and Orange. Dr. Miller requested the name of the judge and the case number of the court case regarding this property. Acting Attorney Lawlyess said that he would meet with Attorney Miller and get that information to

Mayor Wise. Mayor Wise stated that in addition to the city's case against the property there is further civil action between the heirs of the property. Mayor Wise said that he would forward the information to Dr. Miller when the information becomes available.

X. EXECUTIVE SESSION – None

XI. REPORT OF OFFICERS

a. EYRICH

- i. Nothing to report.

b. K. FERRELL

- i. THANK YOU: Alderwoman K. Ferrell thanked James and Lisa Thomas for taking on the renovation of 109 E. Main St. to move their candy shop in to. If they would not have taken the project on, then that would have been another building that would eventually have to come down.
- ii. DEMOLITION ACTIVITIES: Alderwoman K. Ferrell went on to state that the city and the land bank have demolished 17 properties throughout the city. The old Hoopeston Food Locker building is down, and they are working on cleaning up the site. 217 E. Main St will be the next place they will work. Crews will open the building up to remove asbestos from the chimney flue.
- iii. DOWNTOWN IDEAS: Suggestions are being sought for vacant land around Main/Market. The city is open to creating green spaces or selling the lots for prospective businesses.

c. HIGHFILL

- i. Alderwoman Highfill invited the public to the Ms. Hoopeston farewell scholarship dinner to be held on Saturday, January 6, 2024, at 5:00 pm at the First Church of God.

d. LAWSON

- i. EMA E350 BID ACCEPTANCE: Alderwoman Lawson moved to approve the highest bid received from Andrew Samet for \$1075 for the old ambulance that EMA was using. Alderwoman K. Ferrell seconded. A roll call vote was taken (Ayes: Eyrich, K. Ferrell, Highfill, Lawson, Porth, Scharlach – Nays: None – Absent: M. Ferrell, Garrett) and Andrew Samet's bid of \$1075 was accepted.

- ii. POLICE PRAISE: Alderwoman Lawson praised the police department and the communications department for their hard work over the holiday season.

e. SCHARLACH

- i. ARROW AMBULANCE CONTRACT: Arrow Ambulance sent over a new contract for review. Alderman Scharlach has sent this contract to Attorney Miller to review and is going to set up a fire committee meeting on Tuesday, January 9, 2024, at 6:00 pm for the committee to review the contract.

f. PORTH

- i. FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING: The finance committee met last week. For the most part, the city budget is looking good. Utilities are running 14-18% over budget, even with this year's increase. A couple of department payrolls are over budget but with the winter months Alderman Porth is hoping that they equal out. Attorney fees are \$30,000 over budget. Acting Attorney Lawlyess thanked the city for their business. Alderman Porth went on to state that there will be a budget amendment coming so that the city is not in violation of the appropriations ordinance.

XII. COMMUNICATIONS TO COUNCIL

- a. Clerk Hardcastle read an invitation to the Community Awards Banquet to be held on Sunday, January 7, 2024, at 4:00pm at the Lorraine Theater.

XIII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- a. None

XIV. NEW BUSINESS

- a. None

XV. COMMENTS BY THE MAYOR

- a. INVENERGY CONTRACT: Attorney Miller has reviewed the contract from Invenergy and it met with his approval. Mayor Wise asked all the alderman to look over the contract and bring any questions they may have to him since this will be brought to a vote at the next meeting.
- b. VERMILION IRON/LITTLE LEAGUE FIELDS RE-PLAT – RESOLUTION 2024-4: Mayor Wise presented this resolution to approve the re-plat of the Vermilion Iron property that was previously approved by the Zoning Commission. Alderwoman K. Ferrell moved to

approve this resolution pending a sign off from the engineer. Alderwoman Lawson seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken (Ayes: Eyrich, K. Ferrell, Highfill, Lawson, Porth, Scharlach – Nays: None – Absent: M. Ferrell, Garrett) and resolution 2024-4 was approved.

- c. 112 N THIRD ST VARIANCE – ORDINANCE 2024-16: The plot of land is a little smaller than what city ordinance states a home can be built on. When the current owner purchased the property, the insurance company flagged the property since a like structure may not be approved to be built there if it was ever destroyed. The Zoning Commission approved a variance at their last meeting. Alderwoman Lawson moved to approve Ordinance 2024-16. Alderman Scharlach seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken (Ayes: Eyrich, K. Ferrell, Highfill, Lawson, Porth, Scharlach – Nays: None – Absent: M. Ferrell, Garrett) and Ordinance 2024-16 was approved.
- d. CITY TREASURER RESIGNATION: Mayor Wise announced that City Treasurer Bookwalter has resigned. He is currently looking to appoint someone to the seat and will hopefully have an appointment soon.
- e. ALLEY REPAIRS: Mayor Wise reminded residents that if they need an alley repaired, to please call city hall and let them know.

XVI. COMMENTS BY THE ATTORNEY

- a. None

XVII. ADJOURNMENT

- a. There being no further action to come before the council, Alderwoman K. Ferrell moved to adjourn the meeting. Alderwoman Lawson seconded. Motion carried 6-0. Meeting adjourned.