

REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING

CITY OF HOOPESTON

TUESDAY, MARCH 19, 2024

7:00 PM – CITY HALL

- I. CALL TO ORDER – Mayor Wise called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm following the pledge of allegiance.
- II. ROLL CALL – The following 7 alderpersons were present: Eyrich, K. Ferrell, M. Ferrell, Garrett, Highfill, Lawson, Porth. Alderman Scharlach was absent. Mayor Wise, Clerk Hardcastle, and Attorney Miller were also present.
- III. AMENDMENT OR APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA – Alderwoman K. Ferrell indicated that she was going to table the two discussion items under her. Alderman Garrett moved to approve the agenda. Alderman Eyrich seconded the motion. Motion carried 7-0.
- IV. AMENDMENT OR APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES FROM THE PRIOR COUNCIL MEETING – Alderman M. Ferrell moved to approve the minutes from the previous council meeting. Alderwoman K. Ferrell seconded the motion. Motion carried 7-0.
- V. PAYMENT OF THE BILLS – Alderman Porth moved to approve payment of the city’s bills. Alderman Eyrich seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken (Ayes: Eyrich, K. Ferrell, M. Ferrell, Garrett, Highfill, Lawson, Porth – Nays: None – Absent: Scharlach) and payment of the bills was passed 7-0.
- VI. PRESENTATIONS – None
- VII. PETITIONS TO THE COUNCIL – None
- VIII. PUBLIC COMMENT –
 - a. Mark Eighner, representing the Hoopeston Area School District, said that he was in favor of the wind turbine project. This project would add additional revenue to the school district.
 - b. Greg Vasilion, representing Invenergy, reviewed the Musketeer Wind Project. He indicated that Invenergy needs the city’s approval of the siting agreement for the project to move forward before it goes to the county for approval. Vasilion went on to describe the ways Invenergy has been engaging the community and surrounding villages.

- c. Stan Steiner, of E. McNeil St, asked what kind of contract the city has with Metro Communications, who are installing fiber optic cables throughout the city. Mayor Wise answered that the city has no contracts or any part of the fiber installation. This came down from the state government and if Mr. Steiner had an issue, he needed to contact the state. The city does have a list of damage that the contractors have caused.

IX. EXECUTIVE SESSION – None

X. REPORT OF OFFICERS

a. EYRICH

- i. Storm Water Feasibility Study – Alderman Eyrich presented a contract for a feasibility study to look into the storm water drainage along the Thompson/McCracken/Young/Front street area. This study would cost \$9000 and the funds have already been budgeted for in this year’s budget. Alderman Eyrich moved for approval of the project. Alderwoman K. Ferrell seconded the motion. Alderman Garrett asked if this was related to the sewer lining project that was completed a couple of years ago. Alderman Eyrich answered that this was a separate project. A roll call vote was taken (Ayes: Eyrich, K. Ferrell, M. Ferrell, Garrett, Highfill, Lawson, Porth – Nays: None – Absent: Scharlach) and the feasibility study was approved 7-0.

b. K. FERRELL

- i. Alderwoman Ferrell tabled the hen ordinance and the corresponding ordinance changing the current city ordinance. The compliance officer and some citizens requested some changes to the hen ordinance. She will investigate those changes and present the ordinance at a future meeting.

c. M. FERRELL

- i. ENGINE BRAKING SIGNS – Alderman M. Ferrell announced that the engine braking prohibited signs have been posted in town.
- ii. ALLEY CLEAN UP – Announced that alley cleanup will begin on April 8, 2024.

d. GARRETT

- i. SEASONAL HELP – Alderman Garrett announced that seasonal workers will be starting on Monday, March 25, 2024 and will begin working on getting the cemetery cleaned up for Memorial Day weekend.

e. HIGHFILL

- i. SEASONAL HELP – Alderwoman Highfill announced that the parks department seasonal help will also begin on March 25, 2024.
- ii. SWIM TEAM – Announced that the swim team is back and looking for team members.

f. LAWSON

- i. BUSY – Alderwoman Lawson advised that her departments have been busy, busy, busy, but she had nothing else to report.

g. PORTH

- i. BUDGET – Alderman Porth announced that he distributed budget sheets to the alderpersons to set their department's budgets. He would like to meet with each alderperson in the next week to go over their requests.

h. SCHARLACH

- i. Absent.

XI. COMMUNICATIONS TO THE COUNCIL

- a. THANK YOU NOTE – Clerk Hardcastle distributed a thank you note from Roger Uden for the retirement reception and gift.

XII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS – None

XIII. NEW BUSINESS – None

XIV. MAYOR COMMENTS

- a. MUSKETEER WIND SITING AGREEMENT – Mayor Wise presented the siting agreement for the Musketeer Wind project. He stated that he has spoken with many individuals and businesses about this project and it is about 80/20 for it. Alderwoman K. Ferrell moved to approve the agreement. Alderwoman Lawson seconded the motion. Alderman Garrett indicated the feedback that he has received is about 50/50 for or against. He relayed his concerns about recycling the turbines and the infrastructure once they get taken out of service. A roll call vote was taken (Ayes: Eyrich, K. Ferrell, M. Ferrell, Highfill, Lawson, Porth – Nays: Garrett – Absent: Scharlach) and the siting agreement was passed 6-1.

- b. SOLAR ORDINANCE – Mayor Wise presented the solar ordinance. This would govern placement of solar panels on residential and commercial properties. Since the city just received this ordinance from the attorney, he is just presenting this at this meeting and will present it for a vote at the next meeting. Alderman M. Ferrell said that this ordinance is better than most of the ones that he has reviewed.
- c. IT CONSULTANT – Mayor Wise and Alderman Porth met with a new IT consultant, Mike Siemers, to cover city IT services. He gave the city a couple of different proposals for his services. One was a flat \$50 per hour for work. Second proposal was \$3000 per month for a whole managed solution. Mr. Siemers also presented a solution to our backup options and to fix the system we currently have. This solution would cost \$3000. Mayor Wise is looking for approval for the \$50 per hour flat rate for work and the \$3000 backup project. Alderwoman Lawson moved to approve that contract. Alderman Eyrich seconded the motion. Alderman M. Ferrell asked what kind of backup system he would implement. Mayor Wise reviewed our current backup system and potential new systems.
- d. DOWNTOWN DEMOLITION STATUS – Reviewed the work done on the downtown building demolitions. The east wall of the old Chronicle building would be left and would become the new exterior wall for Gail Lane’s building. The city would then grant a deed to Lane for the 2 ft of the new wall. The city is still waiting for the structural engineer’s final report on the wall.

XV. ATTORNEY COMMENTS

- a. 209-211 E MAIN ST – Attorney Miller stated that the acquisition of these properties is nearly complete.
- b. 819 S. FIFTH ST – His office has been in contact with the owners of the property and are making progress on the situation.
- c. HOTEL TAX – Work is continuing on the hotel tax ordinance and are waiting on some instructions on how the city wants to proceed.
- d. DEVELOPMENT AGREEMENT – Agreement for the hotel development is still in the formative stages but they are making some progress.

XVI. ADJOURNMENT – There being no further action to come before the council, Alderwoman K. Ferrell moved to adjourn the meeting. Alderman M. Ferrell seconded the motion. Motion carried 7-0.