

REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING

CITY OF HOOPESTON

TUESDAY, JUNE 4, 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 8 alderpersons were present: Eyrich, K. Ferrell, M. Ferrell, Garrett, Lawson, Porth, Scharlach, and Van Hyfte. Mayor Wise, Clerk Hardcastle, and Attorney Miller were also present.
- III. AMENDMENT OR APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA – Alderman Garrett moved to approve the agenda as presented. Alderman M. Ferrell seconded the motion. Motion was carried 8-0.
- IV. AMENDMENT OR APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES FROM THE PRIOR COUNCIL MEETING – Alderman Garrett moved to approve the minutes as presented. Alderwoman Van Hyfte seconded the motion. Motion was carried 8-0.
- V. APPROVAL OF PAYMENT OF THE BILLS – Alderman Eyrich moved to approve the payment of the city’s bills. Alderman Garrett seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken (Ayes: Eyrich, K. Ferrell, M. Ferrell, Garrett, Lawson, Porth, Scharlach, Van Hyfte – Nays: None – Absent: None) and the bills were approved 8-0.
- VI. PRESENTATIONS – None
- VII. PETITIONS TO THE COUNCIL – None
- VIII. PUBLIC COMMENT
 - a. Jeff Fink addressed the council and thanked Mayor Wise for speaking with him. Mr. Fink was concerned about police response time to a call at his residence. The police stated that they were on a domestic call, while someone tried to sexually assault someone on his property. He wants the description of the suspect put out to everyone. Mr. Fink also expressed some concern about homeless people putting up a tent near his house and it took the police department 2 days to get them removed. He is also concerned about people carrying backpacks and pulling wagons full of junk around town. He had a question as to why the police department does not call in mutual aid when calls are holding. He questions if the police department is so hated by other agencies or too proud to ask for help.

- b. Female requested to be anonymous – Thanked Mayor Wise for his comments. On May 23, 2024 a male came into her yard and attacked her. She called 911 and got Vermilion County and it took the police department 25 min to get there. She was alone in her home and was scared. She later found out that the police department were on a simple domestic and, in her opinion, there is no excuse why she had to wait. The suspect is still at large and she has not heard anything from the police. Her clothing was ripped and had his DNA on it, and the police did not take her clothing to get the potential DNA off of her clothing. The suspect was homeless and stunk like alcohol. She finds alcohol bottles all over her neighborhood. A week after the attack a homeless person moved a tent in about 100 ft from her home. It took the police 2 days to have the person removed. There is no ordinance pertaining to tents. There used to be an ordinance but according to Steve Bane it no longer exists. She is requesting something to be done about the homeless subjects. She does not feel safe going outside her home. She demands that the council puts something in the ordinances about tents to protect the residents.

IX. EXECUTIVE SESSION – None

X. REPORT OF OFFICERS

a. Eyrich

- i. IEPA LOAN – The Illinois EPA put out their funding plan for FY2025 loan forgiveness program. Hoopeston’s Market St. water main replacement was approved for funding. The IEPA has the project cost of \$766,600 with loan forgiveness of \$614,080. The total cost to the city would be \$152,520. The IEPA has increased the amount that they are forgiving for this year to 80%.
- ii. CO STORAGE – Alderman Eyrich announced that the State of Illinois approved CO storage under the Mahomet Aquifer, which Hoopeston gets its water from. If that CO leaks out into the aquifer, it would add carbon to the water which eventually forms an acid. He referenced an article in the Wednesday Just the Facts about the issue.

b. K. Ferrell

- i. OUR TOWN HOOPESTON – Alderwoman K. Ferrell commented on the success of Our Town Hoopeston on Friday.
- ii. DOWNTOWN BUILDING DAMAGE - There was a window damaged at a downtown business. The replacement window pane was damaged prior to being installed, but will be replaced shortly.

- iii. DEAD TREE ORDINANCE – Alderwoman K. Ferrell announced that the city was looking at implementing a dead tree ordinance. The city has been taking several complaints from neighbors about trees on adjoining properties that are damaged or dead that are going to fall or have fallen onto their property. These trees would be on private property, not on the city right of way. Mayor Wise stated that this ordinance would govern private property trees. He went on to state that if a resident has an Ash tree, that they would need to be taken down. Alderman Garrett asked if they had a healthy Ash tree, would those need to come down? Mayor Wise answered that they would not need to. Alderman Scharlach asked if this ordinance would include disease/insect infested trees; since if the trees fall, the disease and insects could spread to other, healthy trees; would these trees need to be taken down also? Mayor Wise answered that he was not sure, that there is a state agency that sends information out about trees. Alderman Porth asked if the city had the right to come on to private property and tell a property owner that they have to take the tree down. Attorney Miller stated that if the city was protecting municipal property, they could tell a private property owner they need to take care of the tree. However, if the tree in question is not a danger to municipal property, that is a civil issue between neighbors. Mayor Wise asked what we need to tell citizens when they call in about the trees. Attorney Miller advised to tell them that it is a civil issue between them and the neighbor and the city cannot get involved on private property. It was agreed amongst the council that they will not go forward with the ordinance.
- iv. TENT ORDINANCE – Alderwoman K. Ferrell asked Atty. Miller if the city could implement an ordinance governing tent placement. Atty. Miller said that he has no expertise in this area, but would research what the city would need to do. Atty. Miller did say that if someone placed a tent on private property, and the property owner does not want them there, then that is trespassing. There was a brief discussion about how the State of Illinois views trespassing.

c. M. Ferrell

- i. MOTOR FUEL TAX RESOLUTION – RESOLUTION 2025-2 – Alderman M. Ferrell presented the FY2025 Motor Fuel Tax program. Mayor Wise stated that MFT funds can be used to repair the parking lot at city hall. The city has been accruing money for a couple of years for lot replacement. The city will use the accrued money for the project but would have to supplement MFT funds to be able to complete the project. Alderman Porth stated that the entire lot would need complete replacement, we cannot patch and re-seal. Mayor Wise went on to say that the drop off for bulk garbage would have to be changed so that it would not damage the new lot. Alderwoman Lawson and Alderman M. Ferrell are working on alternative locations. Alderman M. Ferrell moved to approve resolution 2025-2. Alderman Garrett seconded the

motion. A roll call vote was taken (Ayes: Eyrich, K. Ferrell, M. Ferrell, Garrett, Lawson, Porth, Scharlach, Van Hyfte – Nays: Nones – Absent: None) and resolution 2025-2 was approved 8-0.

- ii. SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL – Alderman M. Ferrell announced that the city was not awarded the Safe Routes to School grant from the state for this year. The city will re-apply in the future.

d. Garrett

- i. CEMETERY STORM DAMAGE – Alderman Garrett thanked the residents and city workers who helped clean up the cemetery after the severe storm last week. There is still 1 damaged tree that will need taken care of, staff is evaluating if they can rectify the issue or if they need to call in someone else. There were also a couple of headstones that were damaged but staff was able to repair that damage.
- ii. GOLF CARTS – Alderman Garrett brought up issues with golf carts in town. There are people driving golf carts while holding babies or small children, unlicensed carts, or UTVs travelling at a high rate of speed. Alderman Garrett asked if the city could do a 2 week media blitz to educate the public on the rules regarding the usage of golf carts and UTVs on the city streets. Following that blitz, having stepped up enforcement by the police department of the ordinance. Various other aldermen and officials stated their issues with the golf carts, electric bicycles, and electric wheelchairs using city streets or state highways. Alderwoman K. Ferrell encouraged citizens if they see reckless driving or other violations of the ordinance, to call the non-emergency number and let the police know. She does not want to get a phone call from someone a couple of days later about it.
- iii. 400-BLOCK OF E MCCRACKEN AVE – Alderman Garrett asked when the water department will be done with the drainage project in the 400-block of E. McCracken Ave. Whenever it rains, the water backs up into the area residents crawl spaces and it is causing issues with HVAC systems. Alderman Eyrich answered that the project is on the water department employees list to complete, however, there are other things that come up, like main breaks or helping the cemetery clean up, and they will get to it as soon as they can.

e. Lawson

- i. POLICE COMMITTEE MEETING – Alderwoman Lawson announced that a police committee meeting will be held sometime.

- ii. ANIMAL CONTROL – Alderwoman Lawson stated that she has been trying to get with Vermilion County Animal Control regarding service to Hoopeston. Vermilion County Animal Control will not answer their phone. Mayor Wise stated that the director of Animal Control finally emailed him back earlier that day and he would fill Alderwoman Lawson in.

f. Porth

- i. AUDIT – Alderman Porth made a motion to accept Russell Leigh & Associates proposal for this year’s audit. Other than last year, the agency has done a good job with the audit. Alderman Garrett asked why we went with them. Alderman Porth answered that since they are local, they are easier to work with. Mayor Wise stated that next year we may try and go with a different agency. Alderman Eyrich seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken (Ayes: Eyrich, K. Ferrell, M. Ferrell, Garrett, Lawson, Porth, Scharlach, Van Hyfte – Nays: None – Absent: None) and the motion was carried 8-0.
- ii. RAILROAD PAYMENT – Alderman Porth asked if the city ever received the check for the abandonment of the Lincoln St. railroad crossing. Mayor Wise was not sure but would look into it.

g. Scharlach

- i. Nothing to report.

h. Van Hyfte

- i. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT – Alderwoman Van Hyfte wanted to acknowledge the victim that spoke during public comment and that she was brave for coming forward. She said that the city needs to do better.
- ii. OUR TOWN HOOPESTON – Alderwoman Van Hyfte thanked everyone who helped make the Our Town Hoopeston event a success.
- iii. CIVIC CENTER AIR CONDITIONER – The city received 2 estimates for a new AC unit at the civic center. She will be going over them with Don Stebbins and a decision will be made soon.
- iv. PERSONNEL – The vacant full time position at the Parks Department will be filled by a part time employee transferring from the cemetery.
- v. SPLASH PAD – Mayor Wise announced that the splash pad had changed their hours from the usual 8:00am – 12:00pm to 8:00am – 10:30am. This

changed happened to accommodate swimming lessons and instructors being able to use the splash pad as a reward for the prospective swimmers. Also, the prospective swimmers would not be distracted by people at the splash pad. A day care group made a complaint that by the time they can get their group together, the time to use the splash pad was almost over. Once swimming lessons and swim team practices are complete, the splash pad would return to its normal hours. The opinion of the council was to defer to pool manager Kristi Hudson's judgement on this issue.

i. COMMUNICATIONS TO THE COUNCIL – None

j. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- i. GOLF CARTS – Alderman Eyrich had one more comment about the golf cart issue. There are several people who drive lawn mowers around town that either have a suspended or no driver's license. The mowers do not have city permit stickers or slow moving vehicle signs. Alderwoman Lawson stated that she would add that to the police committee's agenda.

k. NEW BUSINESS – None

l. MAYOR COMMENTS

- i. 511 W MAIN ST – Demolition bid announcements have been sent out. Bids are due back to city hall by June 28, 2024.
- ii. PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION – Mayor Wise spoke with Cody More, chair of the planning and zoning commission. There are several issues with the city's zoning map and they are trying to work through the issues. The issue right now is that Grant Township made a change but did not inform the city.
- iii. SOLAR ORDINANCE – This will be brought up at the next meeting.
- iv. SKATE JAM – Mayor Wise announced that this year's skate jam will be held on October 19, 2024 from 12:00pm – 5:00pm.
- v. MISSION STATEMENT – The city is in need of a mission statement. There are many grants that require a mission statement. Mayor Wise will send information out to aldermen about this.
- vi. COFFEE CUP BUILDING – This building is finally down. Alderman Garrett asked if there was any update on the Essex Building. Mayor Wise announced

there was no update.

- vii. OUR TOWN HOOPESTON – Mayor Wise thanked everyone who helped out with the event.
- viii. WINE TRAIL LIQUOR LICENSE FEE WAIVER – Visit Downtown Hoopeton is planning a wine trail event where patrons will go to each downtown business and sample different wines. The city currently has a wine tasting license and it has a \$25 fee. Mayor Wise requested the city waive the \$25 fee for the businesses to get the license. They would still have to fill out the applications and paperwork and get their state license. Alderman Eyrich moved to approve the fee waiver. Alderwoman Van Hyfte seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken (Ayes: Eyrich, K. Ferrell, M. Ferrell, Garrett, Lawson, Porth, Scharlach, Van Hyfte – Nays: None – Absent: None) and the waiver was approved 8-0.

m. COMMENTS BY THE ATTORNEY

- i. ACTON PROPERTIES – The Coffee Cup building has been demolished but there is still debris that needs to be cleaned up. Mr. Acton has ran out of time to remediate the Henning’s building. There are lien holders that have time to act.
- ii. 819 S. FIFTH ST – There is a new heir that the city did not know about that has to sign off on the agreement. There is also the issue of the \$2000 state of Illinois liens on the property.

- XI. ADJOURNMENT – There being no further action to come before the council, Alderwoman K. Ferrell move to adjourn the meeting. Alderman M. Ferrell seconded the motion. Motion carried 8-0 and the council adjourned the meeting.