REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING

CITY OF HOOPESTON

TUESDAY, JULY 16, 2024

7:00 PM – CITY HALL

1. CALL TO ORDER – Mayor Wise called the meeting order at 7:03 pm following the pledge of allegiance.
2. ROLL CALL – The following 6 alderpersons were present: Eyrich, K. Ferrell, M. Ferrell, Garrett, Lawson, and Porth. Alderman Scharlach was absent. Mayor Wise, Clerk Hardcastle, and Attorney Miller were also present.
3. AMENDMENT OR APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA – Mayor Wise said that he would like to add Visit Downtown Hoopeston under presentations. Alderman Garrett moved to approve the amended agenda. Alderwoman K. Ferrell seconded the motion. Motion carried 6-0.
4. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES FROM THE PREVIOUS COUNCIL MEETING – These minutes are from the July 2, 2024 meeting. The minutes from the June 27, 2024 special meeting have not been produced yet. Alderman Eyrich moved to approve the July 2, 2024 minutes. Alderwoman K. Ferrell seconded the motion. Motion carried 6-0.
5. APPROVAL OF PAYMENT OF THE BILLS – Alderwoman Lawson moved to approve the payment of the city’s bills. Alderman Garrett seconded the motion. A roll call vote was held (Ayes: Eyrich, K. Ferrell, M. Ferrell, Garrett, Lawson, Porth – Nays: None – Absent: Scharlach) and the bills were approved for payment 6-0.
6. PRESENTATIONS:   
   1. Emily Brown with Visit Downtown Hoopeston gave a presentation on an Autumn Fest that the group is planning on having downtown on October 12, 2024. The group is looking for approval of closing Main St. between Bank and Market. Emily also requested city picnic tables be brought in to provide patrons with somewhere to sit and eat. Mayor Wise asked the council if anyone had an issue with either request. Seeing no issues, Mayor Wise approved the groups request.
7. PETITIONS TO THE COUNCIL – None
8. PUBLIC COMMENT  
   1. An anonymous female addressed the council regarding her police call for service. It has been 55 days since she was assaulted and called for police. She has received no phone call about her case and has not noticed an increased police presence in her neighborhood. Today alone she witnessed 5 homeless people standing in front of her home and not a police officer in sight. When she calls the police, they do not come in a timely manner. She noticed that when a house caught on fire in her neighborhood recently that the police caught the suspect within 24 hours, but they could not find the suspect in her case. She went on to say that she is not happy with the city since she has had no contact from the police department regarding her complaint. She went on to state that she noticed someone cleared out the homeless encampment along the railroad tracks, but they have all moved to her side of town. She is not discriminating against the homeless, but the crime needs to stop. The homeless subjects were standing in the middle of the street with bicycles and wagons full of junk, possibly stolen goods. She has asked for help from the city, and no one will do anything. She noted that she has lived in Hoopeston since 2008 and her children went to school here, she does not complain about things but thinks the city needs to step up and she feels like she is not being heard.
   2. “Anonymous Male” – He reiterated that it had been 55 days since the previous female had been assaulted and he thinks that is crazy. He sees other ordinances on the agenda for this meeting but none of them were to address the homeless situation. Complaints about bicycles and scooters is a problem but no one addresses homelessness. The US Supreme Court just ruled that cities can ticket homeless people. If people do call the police, it takes them 25 minutes to respond. The police have previously asked him what he would like done about his call, he just stated that he wants the police to do their job. He does not understand what the city is doing and why 55 days later homeless people are still in town and the problem has not been resolved. He also does not understand why it took the police department 25 minutes to respond to the previous females call for service. He went on to ask why the city has not contacted state officials to let them know this is a problem. He then stated that he did this for the city and contacted various state officials. He went on to state that the Vermilion County does not respond to Hoopeston nor does Rossville or Rankin. No one has contacted the county to see why the call was made a priority 3 but a domestic call was made a priority 1. He is asking why someone has not done anything and, in his opinion, it is pathetic. There are business owners and people who work for the state on the council, and something needs done.
9. EXECUTIVE SESSION – None
10. REPORT OF OFFICERS   
    1. Eyrich  
       1. MARKET ST WATER MAIN BIDDING – Alderman Eyrich originally thought a resolution was needed to allow Donohue Engineering to put the Market St. water main project out for bids, but it is not necessary. The project is estimated to cost $767,600 and the city was approved for IEPA principal forgiveness of $614,080.
       2. THIRD/McCRACKEN DRAINAGE PROJECT – The water department crews have put in an extra storm sewer drainage line and new drain tile in the area. After the large amount of rain that fell last week, one of the area residents noticed that it is draining a lot faster than it used to. Crews are still working on the E. Young Ave. portion. The tile in that area goes from McCracken to Young then to Third St. The crew was jetting the line and found a blockage. Alderman Eyrich praised the water department employees for working on this project.
    2. K. Ferrell   
       1. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT MEETING – Alderwoman K. Ferrell attended the economic development meeting recently. County Treasurer Darren Duncan was present and advised that the county will be bringing the tax sale process in house instead of using a third party. They also learned that a new process for the Land Bank will be solidified by the end of the month.
    3. M. Ferrell  
       1. MOTOR FUEL TAX BID ACCEPTANCE – ASPHALT REPAIRS – Alderman M. Ferrell moved to approve the bid from Midwest Asphalt for this years Motor Fuel Tax repairs to asphalt. Midwest Asphalt had the lowest bid at $126,787.43. Alderman Eyrich seconded the motion. Alderman M. Ferrell presented maps of the areas being repaired. Alderman Porth asked if the city hall parking lot was included, and Mayor Wise answered that it was. Alderman Porth asked if it included concrete work on the parking lot and Mayor Wise answered that it just covers the asphalt. Alderman M. Ferrell also answered that there was not enough MFT money this year to do the concrete work for the parking lot, but it will be put into future MFT project years.
       2. MOTOR FUEL TAX BID ACCEPTANCE – CONCRETE REPAIRS – Alderman M. Ferrell made the motion to approve the $82,415 bid from Mid Illinois Concrete for this year’s Motor Fuel Tax concrete work. Alderman Garrett seconded the motion. Alderwoman K. Ferrell asked if there was a timeline on the work and Alderman M. Ferrell answered that it was all weather dependent.
       3. THANK YOU – Alderman M. Ferrell thanked the Street and Alley Department employees who removed dangerous trees from McFerren Park. The stumps will be removed prior to the Sweetcorn Festival.
    4. Garrett  
       1. Nothing to report.
    5. Lawson  
       1. THANK YOU – Alderwoman Lawson thanked the EMA personnel that worked the storm last night. After the storm they blocked streets until Street and Alley could clear the debris.
       2. ORDINANCE 2025-2 ELECTRIC BICYCLES/SCOOTERS – Alderwoman Lawson moved to approve this ordinance. Alderman Porth seconded the motion. Alderman Garrett asked what the council was adding that the rules of the road do not already cover. He understands that there is a registration element to the ordinance but questions why we really need this if it is already covered by the Illinois Vehicle Code. Alderwoman Lawson answered that it is putting more teeth into our ordinances and an enforcement mechanism for the police department. Clerk Hardcastle noted that this also moves cases from traffic court to city court. Mayor Wise stated that it also allows for the impoundment of the vehicle. Mayor Wise then questioned if the registration portion of the ordinance will be followed. Alderman Porth answered that if golf carts/UTVs have to have a permit, then electric/gas powered bicycles or scooters should also. Mayor Wise also questioned where the owners of the vehicles will place their registration sticker. A roll call vote was taken (Ayes: Eyrich, K. Ferrell, M. Ferrell, Lawson, Porth – Nays: None – Present: Garrett – Absent: Scharlach) and Ordinance 2025-2 was approved 5-0.
       3. ORDINANCE 2025-3 AMENDING ORDINANCE 10.42.040 – GOLF CARTS – Alderwoman Lawson moved to approve this ordinance. Alderman M. Ferrell seconded the motion. Alderwoman Lawson stated that this ordinance states that golf carts/UTVs will be party to the Public Nuisance Tow ordinance. It also states that after 2 violations of not having a permit, your permit will be revoked for the remainder of the permit year. A roll call vote was taken (Ayes: Eyrich, K. Ferrell, M. Ferrell, Garrett, Lawson, Porth – Nays: None – Absent: Scharlach) and Ordinance 2025-3 was approved 6-0.
       4. ORDINANCE 2025-4 AMENDING ORDINANCE 10.20.010 – PUBLIC NUISANCE TOW – Alderwoman Lawson moved to approve this ordinance. Alderwoman K. Ferrell seconded the motion. Alderwoman Lawson stated that this ordinance adds golf carts, UTVs, gas or electric powered bicycles or scooters to the list of vehicles eligible under the public nuisance tow ordinance. A discussion was had about what happens to these added vehicles if the owner does not claim them in the right amount of time. Attorney Miller will investigate the options the city has. A roll call vote was taken (Ayes: Eyrich, K. Ferrell, M. Ferrell, Garrett, Lawson, Porth – Nays: None – Absent: Scharlach) and Ordinance 2025-4 was passed 6-0.
11. COMMUNICATIONS TO THE COUNCIL   
    1. Clerk Hardcastle communicated changes to the meeting packet process. The city will be moving to a paperless meeting packet process. The deadline for anything to be placed on the agenda will be noon on the Friday before the council meeting. All documentation will have to be turned in by that deadline to make it on the agenda. The packets will then be sent out and posted online.
12. UNFINISHED BUSINESS – None
13. NEW BUSINESS – None
14. MAYOR COMMENTS   
    1. PARKS DEPARTMENT UPDATE – Since Nicole Van Hyfte resigned last meeting, Mayor Wise will be watching over the Parks Department until a new alderperson is appointed. The black F150 that the Parks Department has is not working. They are looking to possibly take a Cemetery Department dump truck and the Cemetery Department would then replace that truck. As mentioned before, the tree stumps at McFerren and Union Parks will be ground down prior to the Sweetcorn Festival. Alderman M. Ferrell asked what the trench was dug for that runs on the north side of the pool. Alderman Eyrich answered that it’s a sanitary sewer line that had to be ran to the pool. Previously, at the end of the pool season, the pool was drained into the lagoon. The Illinois EPA no longer allows that, so a sanitary sewer had to be put in to drain the pool. Mayor Wise also stated that he was not sure how the welcome banners for the Sweetcorn Festival would be handled this year. Last year, with the Chamber of Commerce combining with Vermilion Advantage, Vermilion Advantage put out the forms and handled the money for the banners and city employees put them up.
    2. RESOLUTION 2024-8 REZONING 342 N. DIXIE HWY – The Planning and Zoning Commission approved the rezoning of the property at 342 N. Dixie Hwy from I-1 Light Industrial to R-3 Multifamily. The vote was 8-2 to forward it on to the council. Alderman Eyrich moved to approve this resolution. Alderman Garrett seconded the motion. Mayor Wise commented that the owner of this property renovated the building and made the front half a residence and the back half a garage. Alderman Eyrich commented that the owner purchasing the property and improving it is better than an empty building. A roll call vote was taken (Ayes: Eyrich, K. Ferrell, M. Ferrell, Garrett, Lawson, Porth – Nays: None – Absent: Scharlach) and Resolution 2024-8 was passed 6-0.
15. COMMENTS BY THE ATTORNEY   
    1. Attorney Miller gave an update on things he has been working on. Alderman Garrett asked about someone living in a burned-out home in a tent and running a generator. Attorney Miller advised that the occupancy ordinance should cover that issue. Alderman Porth stated that we already have in the ordinances that you must have running water and sewer to live in a home. Attorney Miller advised that he would give this matter some more attention.
16. ADJOURNMENT – There being no further action to come before the council, Alderman Garrett moved to adjourn the meeting. Alderwoman K. Ferrell seconded the motion. Motion carried 6-0 and the council adjourned the meeting.