

**MINUTES OF REGULAR SESSION  
HIGHLAND CITY COUNCIL  
MONDAY, APRIL 5, 2021**

City Clerk Bellm called the Regular Session to order at 7:00pm. Council members Sloan, Frey, Bellm and Hipskind were present. Others in attendance were Interim City Manager Conrad, City Attorney Michael McGinley, Directors Cook, Gillespie, Imming, Kim, Korte, Rosen, Slover, and Speraneo, Coordinator Hubbard, Police Chief Becherer, Fire/EMS Chief Wilson, Deputy City Clerks Hediger and Von Hatten, Mayoral Candidate Hemann, and 23 citizens.

**ELECTION OF MAYOR PRO TEM**

City Clerk Barbara Bellm asked for a motion to elect one councilperson to serve as mayor pro tem to conduct the next two items of business on this agenda, due to the passing of Mayor Joseph R. Michaelis. Councilman Frey made a motion to elect Councilwoman Peg Bellm as mayor pro tem. Motion seconded by Councilwoman Sloan. Roll Call Vote: Councilmembers Sloan, Frey, Bellm and Hipskind voted aye, none nay. Motion carried.

Mayor Pro Tem Peg Bellm stated no one likes change. At the last meeting, three weeks ago, Joe and I had a talk. We were invited to an event. She recalled, Mayor Michaelis asking her if she remembered when that building was the Hecht Garage. We both mentioned how we are getting old. However, change is inevitable. Here we are three weeks later. I think it is only fitting that we take time to remember someone that was devoted to this city as a coach, police officer, and mayor. She requested a moment of silence. After a moment of silence, Councilwoman Bellm expressed I don't think Joe would want to carry this on too long, so we will move on.

**MINUTES**

Councilman Frey made a motion to approve the minutes of the March 15, 2021 Regular Session as attached; seconded by Councilwoman Sloan. Roll Call Vote: Councilmembers Sloan, Frey, Bellm and Hipskind voted aye, none nay. Motion carried.

Appointment of Kevin B. Hemann to fill vacancy created by the unfortunate passing of Mayor Michaelis - Councilman Frey made a motion to appoint Kevin Hemann to fill the balance of the unexpired term of Mayor Michaelis according to 65 ILCS 5/5-2-12(g). Motion seconded by Councilwoman Bellm. Roll Call Vote: Councilmembers Sloan, Frey, Bellm and Hipskind voted aye, none nay. Motion carried.

**SWEARING IN**

City Clerk, Barbara Bellm, administered the official oath to recently appointed Mayor Kevin B. Hemann who will serve in this capacity for the remainder of the unexpired term of Mayor Michaelis, which is until May 3, 2021.

Mayor Kevin Hemann stated I was shocked to hear of Joe Michaelis' sudden passing. I had meetings with Joe to prepare for the transition. I would never have dreamed he would not be here with us. I could tell he would miss his time as mayor. He would get very emotional when talking about the

accomplishments of the city as mayor. I hope I will be able to continue that legacy. To the council: Thank you for appointing me. You too have gone through a lot this past year. Having been a council member myself for several years, I know the work that goes into it. To the city staff, former City Manager Mark Latham and now City Manager Chris Conrad, I thank you for making me feel welcome and for preparing me. To my family, my wife and daughters, for all have been very supportive of me over the years and we have been through a lot with all the organizations. To my wife, Louise, especially, I want to thank her in advance for her understanding in this next chapter of our life together.

## **PUBLIC FORUM**

### Citizens' Requests and Comments:

*Make-A-Wish Illinois –2021 Hot Chocolate Walk for Wishes* – Sue Messerli, Local Organizer, stated this will be the second year for this event. Due to COVID, last year, it was done virtually and spread out over several days with baskets of hot chocolate mix at various businesses around the Square. Because of those efforts, we raised \$1,005. I was invited to do a teleconference with the organization, in Chicago, and show them the Square all lit up for Christmas. This is how I envision it for this year, with people walking around the Square while hoping to sell cups of hot chocolate to the walkers. Councilwoman Bellm made a motion to approve use of the Square for 2021 Make-A-Wish Hot Chocolate Walk on December 3, 2021 from 4:00-7:00pm, per request submitted; seconded by Councilman Frey. Roll Call Vote: Councilmembers Sloan, Frey, Bellm and Hipskind voted aye, none nay. Motion carried.

*Trekking for CDH 5K Run/Walk for CDH Awareness Request* – Rachel VonHatten, Event Organizer and Amanda Korte, Co-Chairman of Event were present to request permission. Mrs. VonHatten stated we are both proud mothers of CDH survivors. CDH stands for Congenital Diaphragmatic Hernia, which is a rare birth defect where the diaphragm does not form appropriately, causing the lungs to do not develop and displacing the heart. We are requesting to hold our 5<sup>th</sup> annual 5K Run and 1K Fun Run on Saturday, June 26, 2021 at 8:00am to benefit. We will primarily need assistance with traffic safety for the crossings at VFW Road and Poplar and Poplar and Lindenthal. Councilwoman Bellm made a motion to approve the request for CDH 5K Run and 1K Fun Run on Saturday, June 26, 2021; seconded by Councilman Frey. Roll Call Vote: Councilmembers Sloan, Frey, Bellm and Hipskind voted aye, none nay. Motion carried.

*Heartland Community Chorus* – Luanne Murphy, Director, offered condolences on the passing of Mayor Michaelis. He was very supportive of our group and performances. Mrs. Murphy stated we are trying to come back with performances, to raise funds. We are asking to do rehearsals on the Square at the pavilion, three nights in May, Use of bandstand on May 3, 10 and 17, with rain dates of May 4, 11 and 18; and, then do a short concert on May 23, 2021. We would mark off spaces for distancing. Everyone in the chorus has been vaccinated and we will maintain distance from the crowd. Unless safety guidelines change, that would be our plan. Councilman Frey made a motion to approve the request of Heartland Community Chorus for use of the Square for rehearsals and a concert, as attached and requested; seconded by Councilwoman Bellm. Roll Call Vote: Councilmembers Sloan, Frey, Bellm and Hipskind voted aye, none nay. Motion carried.

*Highland Jaycees 2021 Schweizerfest Request* – Mayor Hemann stated we have been notified this is postponed at this time. We hope to have them back later.

*Art in the Park Request* – Lynnette Schuepach, President of Highland Arts Council stated we are trying to get Art in the Park reinstated this year. Last year, we substituted with the Scarecrow Search to keep people somewhat engaged. The year's Art in the Park, we have changed the setup and map so that there is five feet between booths. We have queried our artists and they are ready to get back at it. We are

requesting to hold Art in the Park, October 8-10, 2021. Councilman Frey made a motion to approve the request for Art in the Park to be held October 8-10, 2021 as requested. Motion seconded by Councilwoman Sloan. Roll Call Vote: Councilmembers Sloan, Frey, and Hipskind voted aye, none nay. Councilwoman Bellm abstained as she is hoping to be a vendor at the event. Motion carried. Ms. Schuepbach informed the council that the Highland Arts Council did receive a grant from the National Endowment for The Arts and hopes to coordinate the mural activities with this year's Art in the Park event.

*2021 Highland Speedway Event Schedule Amendment Request* - Sue Zobrist, track manager, stated she is here to request amending special event application previously approved by the council. She stated we will really miss Joe. I have been here the last twenty years asking for permission for the races. Joe came to one of the last races, last year, and we took him around the track in one of the cars. She recalled he was have such a good time. This year, we have been rained out a couple of times, but got things started this past Saturday. I am here to ask for a Test & Tune event, in light of the three events we missed. We are asking to have one tomorrow, 5pm-8pm and then one on May 9. It would be a small number of cars until 8pm, tomorrow night. On May 9<sup>th</sup>, I would like to have the start time at 1pm, because churches are back in session. So the time would be 1pm-6pm. Councilwoman Bellm made a motion to approve the request for Test & Tune events on April 6 and May 9 as requested; seconded by Councilwoman Sloan. Roll Call Vote: Councilmembers Sloan, Frey, Bellm and Hipskind voted aye, none nay. Motion carried.

Jerome "Blackie" Kuhl stated I am the same as those two who are about one percent. I am here to ask that the four-way stop be put back up at Lindenthal and Cypress Street. Lindenthal is becoming a racetrack. It was there for years. Mayor Hemann responded he would have the city manager and public safety look into this. City Manager Chris Conrad stated we have a data collector that we can put up for thirty days to collect information on that area. We have not done it on Lindenthal since prior to COVID. Mr. Kuhl stated we are not all one percent. There are people that pay taxes down there just as much as anyone else is. I do have a dead tree because the city could not give it a shot.

#### Requests of Council:

Councilwoman Sloan expressed thanks to Director Dan Cook and his crew, and all the city workers that worked to clean up the storm debris and restore power, last week.

Councilwoman Bellm stated she would reinforce what Councilwoman Sloan stated. What was amazing is how all the departments worked together. There was a guy, that used to work for Ameren, who now works for the city; he was amazed at how well they all pulled together.

Councilman Hipskind thanked Chief Brian Wilson and his folks for the Easter Bunny parade yesterday. The kids really enjoyed it.

#### Staff Reports:

City Manager Chris Conrad reported that due to software changes, this month's utility bill will only be for three weeks and five weeks on next month.

Public Works Director Joe Gillespie reported we just got a letter from the EPA where they performed an evaluation of our tanks and system. The last report was October 2018. This was delayed due to COVID. They provide a list of recommendations for us to implement if we wish. No deficiencies. The recommendations we implemented, from their last report, they noted those as well. Mayor Hemann noted it is always good to get a good report from the EPA.

Business & Economic Coordinator Mallord Hubbard provided an update on the recent Business Retention Surveys. He pointed out the surveys are ongoing, but we wanted to provide a report on what we have received to this point. COVID has been difficult on everyone. Staff thought it would be a good idea to get some feedback. At the start of this process, we felt putting out a survey is not just enough; we felt it was good to meet with the businesses. So far, it has been a great effort. We have deployed a business directory on our website as well, which will be very valuable for city staff and citizens. We cannot attract businesses without looking at what our current businesses need. Some topics of discussion include workforce development, COVID, and what attracted them to community. We do receive pretty good remarks with workforce. One drawback is availability of workers, which is not exclusive to Highland; it is a national issue. We are working with Madison County Employment Development in that area. We are pleased to inform you that businesses felt our technical structure is more than adequate to meet their needs. That speaks to HCS. Kudos to HCS and the foresight to implement that, years ago. Quality of life is big thing; support of businesses by city government; and the businesses have a close-knit group that work together with one another. Challenges we heard about are availability of office space to grow or expand. A lot mentioned looking for additional dining options in town, which we have heard from businesses as well as residents. State policies are a concern moving forward. While we do not have a lot of control over those, we do use our influence and voice their concerns to those at the county and state level. The focus is to support our businesses and give them the resources to want to stay in Highland. We hope to continue this on an annual basis. Mayor Hemann asked how many individuals you met with. Coordinator Hubbard reported twelve businesses so far. Mayor Hemann asked did you target the larger businesses. Coordinator Hubbard reported a lot of larger businesses are operating remote. We recognize the important of meeting those as well. Councilwoman Sloan reported Mr. McGinley stated he did appreciate meeting with someone from the city. Mayor Hemann expressed it will be great when people can meet in person. Coordinator Hubbard reported we started this off with Zoom meetings, if businesses are comfortable with meeting in person, we meet in person.

## **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

Bill #21-36/ORDINANCE Amending the Code to Include “Pet Care and Pet Related Sales and Services” as a Special Use within the C-2 Central Business District – Councilwoman Bellm made a motion to approve Bill #21-36/Ordinance #3092 amending the Code to include “Pet Care and Pet Related Sales and Services” as a special use within the C-2 Central Business District as attached; seconded by Councilman Frey. Nikki Alexander explained we are looking to bring a small dog training business to this area. I work for a corporate company now and want to bring that to this community. We would have a maximum of five dogs per day with pick up in the afternoon or evening. All lessons would be private or in-home lessons. No group classes. I know at Zoning, there was a concern about noise. My training is to teach them not to bark. I do plan to put up a privacy fence, as dogs like to go out and to their business. The address is 708 Laurel Street. I would be living upstairs. Kari owns the parking lot. We took pictures and would like to present the pictures to show our plans. I would have one client there at a time, so a maximum of five per week. Drop-off and pick-up would be at the backyard, by entering and exiting through the alley. Between my business and Kari’s, there would be no parking on the street. I am the only employee for my business. This would be normal business hours. I would not be kenneling. None of vehicles would need to be parked on Laurel Street to upset the residents.

Councilman Hipskind asked has anyone spoke with the residents. Mrs. Shuck responded we have listened to their concerns. The neighbors to the right and left have dogs. Councilman Hipskind asked have you gone to speak to any of the neighbors. Ms. Anderson responded there were some neighbors were at the Planning & Zoning meeting. The maximum would be five dogs. I would be doing one-hour sessions with the owners, one time per week. There is no group classes. Councilwoman Bellm expressed I think the business you want to do would be a great addition to Highland. The place you want to do this

at is not zoned for that type of business. The code is there for a very good reason. We have been fortunate to have a nice layout of the community. I am concerned about changing code, because that would affect all the C-2 properties and areas around town. Planning & Zoning has done a lot a research on this. Changing code establishes a precedent. To change it for one business is not a good precedent. Mrs. Shuck stated it is my understanding is that Double J is in a C-2 district. Councilwoman Bellm responded I do not know and cannot speak to that.

Councilwoman Sloan asked City Attorney McGinley, is there a way to deny in the future, if we allowed this. Attorney Mike McGinley advised we would have to change code in order to even permit by Special Use Permit than do a finding of fact. Councilwoman Sloan inquired if someone came in a year, we could choose to deny. Director Speraneo explained, as a special use with C-2, each would submit an application for this in any C-2. Mayor Hemann inquired what Planning & Zonings concern was. Director Speraneo reported the Chairman of Planning & Zoning pointed out that this would be allowed in C-3 or Industrial areas. Councilwoman Sloan inquired why turn down one business when there is another in town doing same thing. Director Speraneo reported I did some deep diving on that matter. Double J started out as a kennel, which is allowed outright in C-2. It has expanded over time and since there was no complaints, it kind of happened over time. Councilwoman Sloan inquired so kenneling is allowed, but training is not. Councilman Frey pointed out the definition of kennel is by state standards. Mayor Hemann stated this is going to be a tough vote for the council. Whatever the outcome of vote, please continue to work with city staff to find resolution. Roll Call Vote: Councilmembers Sloan vote aye, Frey, Bellm and Hipskind voted nay. Councilman Hipskind stated for the record he was voting no, because of the applicants' lack of talking to the neighbors and making it with work with them. Motion failed.

Mayor Hemann pointed out that due to this bill failing, we will not be voting on Items B & C under this section of the agenda.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

Bill #21-39/RESOLUTION Authorizing Allocation of Hotel/Motel Tax Funding for 2021 Art in the Park – Councilman Frey made a motion to approve Bill #21-39/Resolution #21-04-2805 authorizing allocation of Hotel/Motel Tax Funding for 2021 Art in the Park as attached; seconded by Councilwoman Sloan. Roll Call Vote: Councilmembers Sloan, Frey, and Hipskind voted aye, none nay. Councilwoman Bellm abstained, as she hopes to be a vendor at the event. Motion carried.

Bill #21-40/RESOLUTION Authorizing Allocation of Hotel/Motel Tax Funding (ILLINOISouth Tourism) – Councilwoman Bellm made a motion to approve Bill #21-40/Resolution #21-04-2806 authorizing allocation of Hotel/Motel Tax Funding (ILLINOISouth Tourism) as attached; seconded by Councilman Frey. Roll Call Vote: Councilmembers Sloan, Frey, Bellm and Hipskind voted aye, none nay. Motion carried.

Making Tentative Budget for FY 2021-2022 Available for Public Review at City Hall and Setting the Public Hearing Date for 7:00 PM on Monday, April 19, 2021 – Councilman Frey made a motion to approve making tentative budget for FY 2021-2022 available for public review at City Hall and setting the public hearing date for 7:00 PM on Monday, April 19, 2021 as attached; seconded by Councilwoman Bellm. Roll Call Vote: Councilmembers Sloan, Frey, Bellm and Hipskind voted aye, none nay. Motion carried.

Bill #21-41/ORDINANCE Designating Depositories for the Funds and Money of the City –

Councilwoman Bellm made a motion to approve Bill #21-41/Ordinance #3092 designating depositories for the funds and money of the City as attached; seconded by Councilman Frey. Roll Call Vote: Councilmembers Sloan, Frey, Bellm and Hipskind voted aye, none nay. Motion carried.

Bill #21-42/RESOLUTION Waiving Normal & Customary Bidding Procedures and Authorizing Purchase of a New Wheel Loader – Councilman Frey made a motion to approve Bill #21-42/Resolution #21-04-2807 waiving normal & customary bidding procedures and authorizing purchase of a new wheel loader as attached; seconded by Councilwoman Bellm. Councilman Frey expressed this is quite a substantial amount. I know there are different types of loaders. Director Joe Gillespie reported we started looking at rentals and outright purchases. Our machine we have today is a Case and comparable to what other vendors have presented to us. We discovered this price is coming from SourceWell, which is similar to state bid contract. The purpose is to get the best price for this piece of equipment. This is put out on a national level, which gives us the best price. Going out for bid would result in the same. It would delay purchase 4-6 weeks. Councilman Frey stated I did not understand this was part of a bidding process. What will we do with the old unit? Director Gillespie reported declare it surplus and put it out for sale to see if we could get something for it. Roll Call Vote: Councilmembers Sloan, Frey, Bellm and Hipskind voted aye, none nay. Motion carried.

Bill #21-43/RESOLUTION Waiving Normal & Customary Bidding Procedures and Authorizing Purchase of New Furniture for the Public Safety Building – Councilwoman Bellm made a motion to approve Bill #21-43/Resolution #21-04-2808 waiving normal & customary bidding procedures and authorizing purchase of new furniture for the Public Safety Building as attached; seconded by Councilman Frey. Roll Call Vote: Councilmembers Sloan, Frey, Bellm and Hipskind voted aye, none nay. Motion carried.

Bill #21-44/RESOLUTION Approving Contract with LEICA Geosystems, Inc. to Install an Antenna on the Weinheimer Community Center – Councilman Frey made a motion to approve Bill #21-44/Resolution #21-04-2809 approving contract with LEICA Geosystems, Inc. to install an antenna on the Weinheimer Community Center as attached; seconded by Councilwoman Bellm. Councilwoman Bellm inquired they want to stick something on the building and pay us for it. Director Mark Rosen responded yes, they are expanding their service territory. City Attorney McGinley pointed out this contract does have a sixty-day out clause, if we do not like it. Mayor Hemann stated we probably will not notice. Roll Call Vote: Councilmembers Sloan, Frey, Bellm and Hipskind voted aye, none nay. Motion carried.

Discussion – Christmas Lights – Director Dan Cook stated I know it was seventy-nine degrees today, but we have to prepare for Christmas. A little over year ago. We inherited these Christmas decorations. Every year the Chamber put up money to replace some strings or the bulbs within a string. There is a couple of thousand dollars of lights put up on the Square each year. A couple years ago, several strands were replaced when destroyed by vandalism. Along with that, comes with all the lighting of the buildings around the Square. Some businesses have update their façade. So, do we want to provide the lights for those businesses? Do we want them uniformed? If we do, what do we want? Warm yellow or LED? Councilwoman Bellm asked is the city providing lights for on the businesses' buildings around the Square. Director Cook reported the Chamber purchased them. Councilwoman Bellm recalled, years ago, each business paid for and installed their own lights. Councilwoman Sloan noted they do all look the same. City Clerk Lana Hediger reported the city organized the purchase of the lights and electric department installed. Director Cook acknowledged city staff installed the original strings and the Chamber of Commerce would provide the replacement bulbs needed each year. Voegele's Studio has said, if we were careful and not impact their roof, the city could put them back up. Kloss Furniture has approached about what the policy is. Councilwoman Bellm recalled, years ago, we all had the same kind of lights, and we promoted it as more than a million Christmas Lights. Director Cook reported with the stuff that we have, in the budget we allocated \$2,000 for general lights and some money for lights and

garland on the Square. We are looking at \$500 for replacement bulbs. If we buy strings of lights, then that increases the budget considerably. Councilwoman Sloan suggested a program where if a business would like lights, we provide a price, and the city will install. Councilwoman Bellm asked does this include any businesses in Northtown. Director Cook stated I was only looking to do downtown. We normally only do lights down Walnut Street to Route 143. Mayor Hemann pointed out this sounds like possibly something tourism dollars could be used for. As Peg has suggested, let's put together a budget and as part of that look at LED. Director Cook stated LED has reduced costs tremendously. All the fixtures on the street poles down Broadway will be LED. We will get costs and samples to see the difference of the type of lights to determine the look we want to get. Mayor Hemann suggested we get a decision before Christmas. Councilman Frey stated we need to look at numbers for downtown as well as Walnut. How far out into Northtown do we go? Mayor Hemann asked Director Cook to give us some options. City Manager Conrad stated we could be on to something. If you look at what Carlyle Park has done the past few years, and Worldwide Technologies Raceway, there is some tourism aspects there. Councilwoman Bellm pointed out we just voted to give ILLINOISSouth funds, they should promote this.

### **REPORT**

Approve Warrant #1192 – Councilwoman Bellm made a motion to approve Warrant #1192 as attached; seconded Councilman Frey. Roll Call Vote: Councilmembers Sloan, Frey, Bellm and Hipskind voted aye, none nay. Motion carried.

Councilwoman Bellm made a motion to adjourn; seconded by Councilman Frey. Roll Call Vote: Councilmembers Sloan, Frey, Bellm and Hipskind voted aye, none nay. Motion carried and meeting adjourned at 8:22pm.

Kevin B. Hemann, Mayor

Barbara Bellm, City Clerk