

**MINUTES OF REGULAR SESSION  
HIGHLAND CITY COUNCIL  
MONDAY, OCTOBER 7, 2024**

Mayor Kevin Hemann called the Regular Session to order at 6:30pm at the Highland Area Senior Center. Council members Sloan, Frey, Bellm, and Napper were present. Others in attendance were City Manager Conrad, City Attorney Carriger, Directors Cook, Gillespie, Heimbürger, and Rosen, Manager Pinsker, Coordinator Hubbard, Fire Chief Straub, Officers McCoy and Flake, Deputy City Clerk Hediger, City Clerk Bellm, and Highland Chamber of Commerce Director Holzinger, and 6 citizens.

**MINUTES**

Councilman Frey made a motion to approve the minutes of the September 16, 2024 Regular Session as attached. Motion seconded by Councilwoman Bellm. Roll Call Vote: Councilmembers Sloan, Frey, Bellm and Napper voted aye, none nay. Motion carried.

**PUBLIC FORUM**

Citizens' Requests and Comments:

*Annual Lighted Christmas Parade - Special Event Application* – Hillarie Holzinger, Representative, stated we would like to bring Santa to town on Friday, November 29. The parade would begin at 6pm, starting at the grade school and heading down Lindenthal to Washington Street, and up to the Square. Councilwoman Bellm made a motion to approve the special event application for the annual Lighted Christmas Parade on Friday, November 29, 2024 as attached. Motion seconded by Councilman Frey. Mayor Hemann noted there is an additional request in there to have the street sweeper clear the streets on Saturday morning, because of all the candy and other debris. Mrs. Holzinger stated especially around the Square, as we have the Cookie Trail on that Saturday morning. Director Gillespie stated he did not think that would be a problem. We should be able to accommodate that. Councilwoman Sloan inquired what the theme is this year. Mrs. Holzinger responded, "Christmas Around the World". Roll Call Vote: Councilmembers Sloan, Frey, Bellm and Napper voted aye, none nay. Motion carried.

*Proposal of Art Sculpture on City Square – Highland Arts Council* – Lynette Schuepbach stated in honor of our 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary and the support the community has shown we have commissioned a sculpture by Kevin Trobraugh. We plan to have the sculpture shown at Art in the Park and then we are asking for placement of it on the downtown square. Mayor Hemann expressed his concern about having it up at the Square, is that it may be vandalized. My thought was that Glik Park has the garden area with sculptures that lend itself this. Director Rosen stated the area out at Glik Park is the Highland Garden Clubs. While there is always a concern of vandalism, it is a high traffic area. He agreed there is the concern of kids climbing on it. Councilwoman Sloan acknowledged that is a concern. Director Rosen stated with the location selected it will be flanked by the flags that are located there and it is a well-lit area. Pat Imming, Art Council Member, expressed if we are always afraid of something then we will never try anything. Councilman Frey expressed concern about kids climbing it, especially with the height, the ladder effect design of it, and, then the sharp points. There is a lot of concrete in that area. Director Rosen agreed kids like to climb. We have issues with them trying to climb the fountain when it is shutdown. He suggested another option would be to locate it near the corner of Washington and Broadway where the pine tree was taken down. Mayor Hemann suggested everyone look at it this weekend, at the Art in The Park and then we can determine a spot. He expressed we want it, but we need to find the right spot.

Johnny Kapp stated the homecoming parade was so well organized and all these kids following along was great. Dairy Queen, Sam's Pizza and all the downtown area was busy Wednesday night. Then I headed out to the KC Hall for Bingo. All these people out and coming into Highland. Friday night football game was great with 63-0 win. Then I went to Sam's Pizza and I met the coach. Great weekend!

#### Requests of Council:

Mayor Hemann expressed to Fire Chief Straub, that while he did not get to stay too long at the Firemen's Picnic, it was a wonderful event. Job well done!

#### Staff Reports:

City Manager Chris Conrad reminded everyone that Laps for Leaps changed their event date to October 18 and 19. It was postponed due to the inclement weather from Hurricane Helene.

Speaking of Hurricane Helene: We sent two linemen with other IMEA members to assist in the recovery. Barkly Schlafer and Chris Scarbrough went with seven others from other IMEA communities to the Florida panhandle into Georgia area. They will be returning home tonight. We thank them for going.

City Manager Conrad provided an update on various projects: The metal trim that goes over the roof is in and will be installed this week on the Weinheimer Community Center; completing that project. We will be cancelling the roof project for the Public Works Building for now. It will come back as a budgeted project for next year. There was a lot of things about the roof we did not realize, until we got into the bidding process, because of the additions to the building. Several things need to be corrected to do it properly. It will be part of next year's budget. On the 6<sup>th</sup> Street Reconstruction Project, they will begin pouring the street on Wednesday. We are glad to see that project wrapping up.

The new electric car chargers have been installed. There is one dual charger at the Square and one at the library. The cost is \$0.20 per kilowatt. Councilwoman Sloan inquired, do they pay with credit card. City Manager Conrad replied yes or through an app. Councilman Frey asked, are they quick charge. Director Dan Cook responded they are not fast chargers. They are a Level 2. Councilwoman Sloan asked, will it require leaving the vehicle overnight. Director Cook reported it should take about two to three hours. What we have heard is it is more customary for three-hour charges. We have signs on order to that effect. After a three-hour time limit, they suggest a charge of 4-5 times the charge for occupying the charger for a lengthy period of time. This may discourage them from leaving the vehicle there overnight. Councilman Frey noted there is such a thing as a quick charge. Director Cook responded these are 480-volt, Level 2, which is the latest in technology, but not the Tesla quick charge. Councilman Napper stated I notice a pickup truck parked there all day the other day. City Manager Conrad noted we do not have signs up yet. Councilman Napper asked why not fast chargers. Director Cook explained they are more expensive up front and require a lot of infrastructure. What we have is the standard of the industry. Very commercial and latest version. There are a lot of things we can do with software. It tells us what the usage is; what days and times it is most in use. There is probably over 100 electric cars registered in Highland by zip code.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

Bill #24-95/RESOLUTION Accepting Cigna Healthcare for Medical Insurance, Lincoln for Dental Insurance and VBA for Vision Insurance for 2024-2025 – Councilman Frey made a motion to approve Bill #24-95/Resolution #24-10-3131 accepting Cigna Healthcare for Medical Insurance, Lincoln for Dental Insurance and VBA for Vision Insurance for 2024-2025 as attached. Motion seconded by Councilwoman Bellm. City Manager Conrad expressed we owe a lot of this favorable renewal to our employees and to Jackie and Reanna for working with our brokers. Roll Call Vote: Councilmembers Sloan, Frey, Bellm and Napper voted aye, none nay. Motion carried.

Bill #24-96/ORDINANCE Assigning Development Agreement for 904 Beech Street Development From Fertil-Lawn, Inc. D/B/A Diversified Services to Charles K. Keltner and Tammy M. Keltner – Councilwoman Bellm made a motion to approve Bill #24-96/Ordinance #3350 assigning development agreement for 904 Beech Street Development from Fertil-Lawn, Inc. d/b/a Diversified Services to Charles K. Keltner and Tammy M. Keltner as attached. Motion seconded by Councilman Frey. City Attorney Trent Carriger stated there is no other change than assigning the agreement over from Fertil-Lawn to the Keltners. Roll Call Vote: Councilmembers Sloan, Frey, Bellm and Napper voted aye, none nay. Motion carried.

Bill #24-97/RESOLUTION Authorizing the Sole Source Purchase of a New Roof For The Senior Center from Right on ROR Systems Construction, Inc., and Waiving Customary Bidding Procedures – Councilman Frey made a motion to approve Bill #24-97/Resolution #24-10-3132 authorizing the sole source purchase of a new roof for The Senior Center from Right on Roofing ROR Systems Construction, Inc., and waiving customary bidding procedures as attached. Motion seconded by Councilwoman Bellm. Councilman Napper inquired we are not bidding this out to anyone, or only one bid received. City Manager Conrad explained the building's owner shopped this and then, per the lease, we are paying them. It should be noted as a special assessment under the lease agreement. Roll Call Vote: Councilmembers Sloan, Frey, Bellm and Napper voted aye, none nay. Motion carried.

Bill #24-98/ORDINANCE Authorizing the Execution of a Commercial Real Estate Sales Contract with Chad C. Weiss and Bobbie Weiss for Property Located at PIN: 01-1-24-08-00-000-006.003 – Councilwoman Bellm made a motion to approve Bill #24-98/Ordinance #3351 authorizing the execution of a commercial real estate sales contract with Chad C. Weiss and Bobbie Weiss for property located at PIN: 01-1-24-08-00-000-006.003 as attached. Motion seconded by Councilman Napper. City Manager Conrad reported we are purchasing this as right of way in the event that we ever decide to straighten out Poplar Street, at the south end, and it would allow for connection to Bellm Road. When you have a willing landowner come to you with property that you may want and need in the future, it is a good opportunity to take. Councilman Frey inquired this is the complete parcel. City Manager Conrad replied no, we would need one other parcel in between. Roll Call Vote: Councilmembers Sloan, Frey, Bellm and Napper voted aye, none nay. Motion carried.

Bill #24-99/ORDINANCE Approving Real Estate Rezoning for 12448 Sportsman Road, Highland, Illinois, From "I" Industrial District to "C-3" Highway Business District – Councilman Frey made a motion to approve Bill #24-99/Ordinance #3352 approving real estate rezoning for 12448 Sportsman Road, Highland, Illinois, from "I" Industrial District to "C-3" Highway Business District as attached. Motion seconded by Councilwoman Bellm. Mayor Hemann reported the Combined Planning & Zoning Board unanimously approved. City Manager Conrad reported the petitioners are talking about a daycare and a soap manufacturing company to locate to this property. Councilwoman Sloan stated this lady already has a successful business going out of her garage making these soaps. So, it will be a good thing. Mayor Hemann noted daycare centers are always needed. Roll Call Vote: Councilmembers Sloan, Frey, Bellm and Napper voted aye, none nay. Motion carried.

Bill #24-100/ORDINANCE Authorizing Sale or Disposal of Surplus Personal Property of the City Of Highland, Specifically, Water Reclamation Facility Pumps and Associated Parts – Councilwoman Bellm made a motion to approve Bill #24-100/Ordinance #3353 authorizing sale or disposal of surplus personal property of the City of Highland, specifically, Water Reclamation Facility Pumps and Associated Parts as attached. Motion seconded by Councilman Frey. Mayor Hemann asked if anyone wants these. Director Joe Gillespie responded they are mostly purchased just for scrap. Roll Call Vote: Councilmembers Sloan, Frey, Bellm and Napper voted aye, none nay. Motion carried.

Discussion – Grocery Tax Elimination Implications – City Manager Chris Conrad reviewed, we had some discussion on this already, as we discussed it at both meetings in August and then at the first

meeting in September. Since then, the Illinois Department of Revenue released their posting. Some of the personal property funds have been diverted, which will be a negative \$130,000 result for Highland. It highlights the issue of tax revenue we are losing out. We look at losing nearly \$500,000 in tax revenue over 18 months. We have until October 2025 to file with the Illinois Department of Revenue for there to be no changes or break in tax. Mayor Hemann pointed out the ordinance we would create would take the place of what is in place already. Councilman Frey stated he had several people asking him about it. Once explained they understand they will lose more in services than what they would save. Mayor Hemann reported City Manager Conrad is hearing at city manager forums and I hear at mayor meetings that most cities are going to put this up for a vote of their councils and boards. I do not know of a community that is not going to bring it up. There has been very few objections to it in those communities where it has already passed. Councilwoman Bellm asked if there is anything that would replace this revenue. City Manager Conrad stated the only thing would be if they increased the local disbursement fund, which IML has been asking for since cut during COVID. However, the grocery tax generates \$5M across the state; however, it does not affect everyone the same. Some communities are more of a shopping hub for their area than other communities are. The ILDF is an equal amount to all communities; therefore, it cannot make every community whole. So, I don't anticipate anything making it up dollar for dollar. It is an election year, so that may account for why we are hearing anything out there. Councilwoman Bellm asked do we do this now or do we wait. City Manager Conrad reported some communities have gone ahead and acted on it. Some are having discussions like we are. Others are kicking the can down the road, to after elections next year. From a business standpoint, we need to continue to look at the impact, whatever the council decides. Councilman Napper expressed I have had thirty emails against it, personally. It is going to impact the services that residents receive from the city. Mayor Hemann stated I question those emails. City Manager Conrad explained, there was a form email that was a link within articles put out there, that went thru the Illinois Policy Institute. Councilwoman Sloan, Councilman Frey, and Councilwoman Bellm stated they are ready to bring it forward for a vote.

Mayor Hemann suggested waiting until we get back in council chambers. City Manager Conrad reported the carpet is going in this week. Then minor installations; the council desks will be built on site after that; then, some staff training on use of the equipment. We hope to have the first meeting in there at the first meeting in December.

## **REPORTS**

Accepting Expenditures Report #1275 for Sept. 14, 2024 through Oct. 4, 2024 – Councilman Frey made a motion to accepting Expenditures Report #1275 for September 14, 2024 through October 4, 2024 as attached. Motion seconded by Councilwoman Bellm. Roll Call Vote: Councilmembers Sloan, Frey, Bellm and Napper voted aye, none nay. Motion carried.

Councilwoman Bellm made a motion to adjourn. Motion seconded by Councilman Napper. All aye, none nay. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 7:22pm.

Kevin B. Hemann, Mayor

Barbara Bellm, City Clerk