

**MINUTES OF REGULAR SESSION
HIGHLAND CITY COUNCIL
MONDAY, FEBRUARY 2, 2026**

Mayor Hemann called the Regular Session to order at 6:30pm at Highland City Hall. Council members Klaus, Sloan, Bellm, and Napper were present. Others in attendance were City Manager Conrad, City Attorney Michael McGinley, Directors Cook, Gillespie, Hubbard, Kohnemann, and Widman, City Treasurer Nicolaides, Deputy Clerk Chris Flake, City Clerk Bellm, and 8 citizens.

MINUTES

Councilwoman Bellm made a motion to approve the minutes of the January 20, 2026 Regular Session as attached. Motion seconded by Councilman Napper. Roll Call Vote: Councilmembers Klaus, Sloan, Bellm, and Napper voted aye, none nay. Motion carried.

Councilwoman Sloan made a motion to approve the minutes of the January 20, 2026 Executive Session as attached. Motion seconded by Councilman Klaus. Roll Call Vote: Councilmembers Klaus, Sloan, Bellm, and Napper voted aye, none nay. Motion carried.

PUBLIC FORUM

Citizens' Requests and Comments:

Liz Vaughn stated the oldest member of my family is my mother, at 98 years old. The youngest is yet to be born, by my daughter, who lives in Columbia, Missouri, will be born in the Spring. As I worked on the gifts for them, I tried to infuse them with prayers. I try to attend as many city council meetings as I can. I intentionally bring with me well wishes for guidance to those serving our area. The council and other officials sets the tone for those who live here. Our nation is experiencing difficulties. Ms. Vaughn offered a prayer that was given to the United States by a foreign visitor to North America, which was before her mother was born. I hope this prayer reinforces your best wishes. Ms. Vaughn read the prayer.

Yvonne Kaeser stated I have been here before asking for budget billing. These two men have already taken the wind out of my sails. Last year, I had one month of a utility billing that was \$300. I have had two months of \$300, so far, this year; and I am looking at \$400 this next month. Until I pay for rent, medical expenses, and food, there is not enough. I am not the only one. We just want budget billing. Deputy City Clerk Chris Flake reported he is talking to her.

Deputy City Clerk Chris Flake reported we received an email, sent to the zoning department, but directed to the council, from Kathy Brown, on Monday, February 2, 2026, which he read for the record: 'I'm unable to attend the city council meeting this evening. I would like to state my opposition to the proposed data center in our town. Thank you.' Mayor Hemann stated there is nothing on the agenda talking about a data center.

Requests of Council:

Mayor Hemann stated the awards ceremony, this past weekend, was very nice. He expressed appreciation to all who helped organize the evening. It was very well done.

Staff Reports:

City Manager Conrad reported we are getting ready to roll out the final part of our new software, which is the financial software.

Reminder to everyone that the Korte Recreation Center will be celebrating its 25th Anniversary on Friday, February 6. Look for the list of activities and events going on that day, including a food truck 10:30am – 1:45pm.

The new fire truck will be ready for service. We will have it out before the next council meeting for anyone to view.

At the next council meeting, February 16, 2026, Oates Associates will be presenting the Master Trail Plan. This plan has been put together based upon feedback received from the public survey done last year.

City Manager Conrad stated, with regards to data centers, we do not have any proposals. It was part of the justification for HCS, when HCS was formed. What data centers look for now we do not have. They look for more power, with areas that have 230kV lines and more. If one was proposing such, they would have to go before Planning & Zoning first, then request a Special Use Permit for construction and design, before coming to the council. That would be the process. But we do not have any proposed. Councilwoman Sloan noted the comment received was based upon what is stated on the website promoting the City of Highland. City Manager Conrad pointed out power is the main driver of where they want to locate.

NEW BUSINESS

Award Bid # E-18-25, for Construction of a Utility Storage Building – Councilwoman Bellm made a motion to award Bid # E-18-25, for construction of a utility storage building to Bi-State Construction Services, Inc., in the amount of \$94,500.00, as attached. Motion seconded by Councilman Napper. Councilwoman Bellm noted we are running out of room for equipment. City Manager Conrad stated this will help with equipment longevity. Roll Call Vote: Councilmembers Klaus, Sloan, Bellm, and Napper voted aye, none nay. Motion carried.

Bill #26-11/RESOLUTION Approving and Authorizing the Execution of a Joint Funding Agreement with Illinois Department of Transportation for Preliminary Engineering – Councilwoman Sloan made a motion to approve Bill #26-11/RESOLUTION #26-02-3250 approving and authorizing the execution of a joint funding agreement with Illinois Department of Transportation for preliminary engineering as attached. Motion seconded by Councilman Klaus. City Manager Conrad reported is for grant funds received to do the preliminary engineering for improvement of South Poplar. Roll Call Vote: Councilmembers Klaus, Sloan, Bellm, and Napper voted aye, none nay. Motion carried.

Bill #26-12/RESOLUTION Waiving Competitive Bidding Requirement and Approving And Authorizing the Execution of a Purchase Order to McGinley Incorporated of Highland, IL to Purchase a 2026 Dodge Durango Through the State of Illinois Joint Purchasing Program as a Sole Source Purchase – Councilwoman Bellm made a motion to approve Bill #26-12/RESOLUTION #26-02-3251 waiving competitive bidding requirement and approving and authorizing the execution of a purchase order to McGinley Incorporated of Highland, IL to purchase a 2026 Dodge Durango through the State of Illinois Joint Purchasing Program as a Sole Source Purchase, in the amount of \$40,827.00 as attached. Motion seconded by Councilman Napper. Councilwoman Sloan for purpose of everyone else. City Manager Conrad reported they priced three main options for squad car. Director Widman reported the Durango was

\$5,000 cheaper than an Explorer and about \$18,000 less than Tahoe. The unit that we will be taking out of service will either be utilized as the School Resource Officer's car for St. Paul's School or it will go to Code Enforcement for their use. Roll Call Vote: Councilmembers Klaus, Sloan, Bellm, and Napper voted aye, none nay. Motion carried.

REPORTS

Accepting Expenditures Report #1307 for January 17, 2026 through January 30, 2026 - Councilwoman Sloan made a motion to accept Expenditures Report #1307 for January 17, 2026 through January 30, 2026 as attached. Motion seconded by Councilman Klaus. Roll Call Vote: Councilmembers Klaus, Sloan, 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 6:48pm.

Kevin B. Hemann, Mayor

Barbara Bellm, City Clerk