

Hartford City Council Meeting – Regular Meeting February 17, 2026

Mayor Arden Jones called the meeting to order at 7:00pm with the following city council members present: Keith Carlson, Cindy Matson, Shaun Boen, Travis Kuehl, Darrell Horacek, and Michelle Schilling. Also present were City Administrator Teresa Sidel, City Finance Officer Karen Wilber, Public Works Superintendent Craig Wagner, Code Enforcer/Building Inspector Kyle Christensen, and City Engineer Michael Redenbaugh. There was no one from the public in attendance.

BUSINESS ITEMS:

- **Approval of the Agenda:** A motion was made by Boen, second by Carlson to approve the agenda as set - all voted yes, motion carried.
- **Approval of the Minutes:**
 - A motion was made by Kuehl, second by Boen to approve the regular meeting minutes from February 3, 2026 – all voted yes, motion carried.
- **Approval of the Bills:** A motion was made by Matson, second by Carlson to approve the bills submitted for payment – all voted yes, motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENTS: None.

ORDINANCES, RESOLUTIONS, APPLICATIONS, AGREEMENTS AND HEARINGS: None

REPORTS:

- **Fire Department Report:** HAFR Chief Todd Lowe’s monthly report was provided. For the month of January there was a total of 28 calls, of which 19 were within city limits. An update on the various trainings held during the month was also provided. Upcoming events include the department’s pancake feed on Apr 25th and Public Safety Day on Aug 22nd.
- **Code Enforcement/Building Inspection Report:** Code Enforcer/Building Inspector Kyle Christensen was present to provide his reports for the Council and answer any questions. Code enforcement issues being addressed include pet issues, parking on grass, and junk/rubbish issues. Christensen provided an update on two bills that are going through the legislative session that could affect the City in regard to building codes and permits.
- **Engineer Report:** Michael Redenbaugh reported the following:
 - Work on punchlist items continues on the WRRF project. Commissioning of the sludge press system is now planned for April. Staff & Engineers continue monitoring and optimizing the treatment process as needed.
 - Staff & Engineers are planning on doing a walkthrough on the Western Ave project. Any remaining punchlist items will be noted and an updated list will be provided to the contractor.
 - Survey work has begun on the Mickelson Road shared use path. Design work is anticipated to begin this week or next. Construction is anticipated to start this summer.
- **Public Works Report:** Public Works Superintendent Wagner provided his report.
 - Streets – The bid letting for this year’s slurry seal project is scheduled for Feb 19th. With the favorable weather, staff is planning on sweeping streets next week and also working on the gravel road. All equipment is working well at this time. Mike Smith has ordered the trees for this springs planting on boulevards and in the park.
 - Water – The 4th quarter report has been submitted. Next reporting is due April 10th.
 - Sewer – All lift stations are working well. Staff is working on the January DMR, which is due Feb 28th. Discharging at the lagoons is done until spring. Staff continues to monitor the WWTF and work on issues as they arise. The security system has been installed.
 - Parks – The new restroom building is ready for the electricians and plumbers. The new roof on Shelter 5 is complete. Staff is now preparing the other three shelters for new steel.
 - Sports Complex – With the warmer temps, staff was able to finish up the dirt work and seeding around the new concrete.
 - Training – Hanisch and O’Kane have renewed their pesticide licenses. Lupkes passed his pesticide tests. In March, O’Kane and Lupkes will be taking some wastewater classes.
- **Finance Officer Report:** City Finance Officer Wilber provided her report. Items included cash balances, sales tax revenue and DHI committee fund balance as of Jan 31st, a recap of bills submitted for payment, and the Feb/Mar calendar of events. The bank account for customer deposits has been switched to Reliabank. Once the new laser checks arrive for the main checking, the remaining two accounts will also be switched to Reliabank. On Thurs of this week Wilber, Sidel, & Kuchta will have a training session with Reliabank Staff on their Cash Management System. The Equalization meeting is on Mon Mar 16th. The deadline to file an appeal to be heard at this meeting is by 5pm on Thurs Mar 12th. Objections forms will be available at City Hall on Mon Mar 2nd.

- **City Administrator Report:** City Administrator Sidel provided her report. DSU conducted a site visit last week as part of their cybersecurity assessment. They also conducted 22 cyber-attacks on the City's system, and our software program caught them all. DSU will be providing a report on their findings. Once Sidel gets this report she will compare it to the assessment done by Homeland Security and present any recommended improvements to the Council at a future meeting. Tyler Tordsen with SMGA is planning to attend the Mar 3rd meeting to discuss regionalization and America's 250th Celebration. The District 3 meeting is Tues Mar 24th from 6-8pm in Lennox. Anyone interested in attending let us know and we'll get you registered. Sidel will be attending the SD City Managers Assoc annual conference on Mar 18th – 20th.

OLD BUSINESS: None

NEW BUSINESS:

- **Review/Approve Abatement for Parcel #68839:** State law allows property tax abatements for qualifying disabled veterans & seniors. The Minnehaha County Auditor has received an abatement request from a qualifying disabled veteran on a parcel of land that is located within Hartford city limits. Since it is within Hartford's municipal boundaries, the request needs to be approved by the governing board. A motion was made by Matson, second by Carlson to approve the property tax abatement request submitted on Parcel #68839 – all voted yes, motion carried.
- **Review Advertisement and Advertising for Economic Development Projects:** During the 2026 budget meeting, 100k of funding was allocated for economic development. An advertising flyer and criteria to utilize when looking at submission requests was presented to the Council last Nov. To proceed with implementation, staff would like to start advertising the program. Brief discussion was held on who would be eligible to apply, how the evaluation process would work, and how to advertise it. A motion was made by Carlson, second by Matson to approve the advertising flyer and selection criteria for the economic development funding and to begin advertising – all voted yes, motion carried.
- **Discuss New Budget Request Process:** In an effort to make the most effective use of time at the budget meeting, the Mayor and staff have been discussing ways to streamline the process. One thought was to meet with all outside entities that would be requesting city funding ahead of time, thus eliminating them having to appear at the budget meeting. The thought was to have the Mayor, a couple Councilmembers, and Sidel meet individually with these groups in July, ahead of the August budget meeting. The information received at these meetings would then be brought back to the full Council for consideration at the budget meeting. Further discussion was held. It was the opinion of some that the full Council should be involved in these discussions. It was suggested to hold a special meeting with the full Council in July just for the purpose of meeting with these groups. The information received at this meeting would then be used for determining funding and be presented at the budget meeting. The consensus of the Council is to proceed with a special meeting in July with these outside entities.

EXECUTIVE SESSION: A motion was made by Matson, second by Kuehl to enter executive session pursuant to SDCL 1-25-2(1) for personnel and SDCL 9-34-19 for economic development at 8:01pm – all voted yes, motion carried.

Minutes recorded by Finance Officer Karen Wilber.

I, the undersigned Karen Wilber, Finance Officer in and for the City of Hartford, South Dakota, do hereby certify that the above and foregoing is a true and correct copy of the minutes which is on file at the Municipal Finance Office.

Karen Wilber, Finance Officer

EXECUTIVE SESSION: A motion was made by Matson, second by Boen to exit executive session at 8:49pm – all voted yes, motion carried.

A motion was made by Boen, second by Schilling, that based on review of regional wage studies, to give Neil Hanish, Jesse O'Kane, Kyle Christensen, Rhonda Kuchta, Terry Hagen, Paul Clarke, and Jenny Stangeland a 5% wage increase, with Eric Lupkes getting a \$.20 wage increase for sprayer certification obtained; to give Craig Wagner and Karen Wilber a 10% wage increase; and to give Teresa Sidel a 20% wage increase, all to be effective on the next pay period - all voted yes, motion carried.

ADJOURNMENT: A motion was made by Boen, second by Carlson to adjourn at 8:51pm – all voted yes, motion carried.

Minutes recorded by City Administrator Teresa Sidel.

I, the undersigned Teresa Sidel, City Administrator in and for the City of Hartford, South Dakota, do hereby certify that the above and foregoing is a true and correct copy of the minutes which is on file at the Municipal Finance Office.

Teresa Sidel, City Administrator