

Hartford City Council Meeting – Regular Meeting March 18, 2025

Mayor Arden Jones called the meeting to order at 7:00pm with the following city council members present: Cindy Matson, Shaun Boen, Ryan Horn, Travis Kuehl, Lisa Berens, and Jake Jass. Also present were City Administrator Teresa Sidel, City Finance Officer Karen Wilber, City Engineers Michael Redenbaugh & Justin Heim, and 1 person from the public.

BUSINESS ITEMS:

- **Approve Agenda:** A motion was made by Horn, second by Boen to approve the agenda as set - all voted yes, motion carried.
- **Approval of the Minutes:** A motion was made by Jass, second by Berens to approve the meeting minutes from March 4, 2025 – all others voted yes, motion carried.
- **Approval of the Bills:** A motion was made by Matson, second by Horn to approve the bills submitted for payment – all voted yes, motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENTS: None

VISITORS: Tim Even, on behalf of Humboldt Ambulance, was present to provide a yearly update and request their 2025 budget appropriation. Calls were up 10% in 2024 vs 2023 with a total of 321 for the year. The department has hired another medic. They continue to save for a new ambulance. Their current ambulance is 4 years old, and they typically trade every 6 to 7 years. A motion was made by Horn, second by Boen to approve payment of the Humboldt Ambulance's 2025 budget appropriation in the amount of \$23,625 – all voted yes, motion carried

ORDINANCES, RESOLUTIONS, APPLICATIONS, AGREEMENTS AND HEARINGS:

- **Preliminary Plan Amendment – Reduce Buffer Strip along Parcel #99874:** Nielson Construction is developing parcel #99874 in the Western Meadows Addn. When the industrial lots were being developed back in 2014, the preliminary plans that were submitted to the City for approval showed a 60' landscape buffer along the south end of this parcel, separating the industrial area from future residential development. This buffer is not a design standard or a requirement of the City. It was the developer's decision to include this buffer area in their plans. In the past, changes have been made to this buffer just east of this parcel. Nielson is asking to reduce the buffer from 60' to 40'. The Planning & Zoning Board reviewed this request at their Mar 11th meeting and are recommending approving the request to reduce the buffer area on this parcel to 40'. A motion was made by Boen, second by Matson to approve the developer's request to reduce the buffer to 40' on parcel #99874 – all voted yes, motion carried.

REPORTS:

- **Fire Department Report:** HAFR Chief Bryon Schumaker's monthly report was provided. For the month of February there was a total of 31 calls, of which 14 were in Hartford. An update on the various trainings held during the month was also provided.
- **Engineer Report:** Michael Redenbaugh & Justin Heim reported the following:
 - Site plans and plats continue to be reviewed as they are received. Continues the observation of public improvements for private developments as needed.
 - At the WRRF site, Aeromod pipe & equipment installation continues. All major pieces of equipment has been delivered. Plant startup and commissioning is anticipated to begin in early May and expected to take 3-5 months.
 - On Mar 28th Staff & Engineers will meet with the contractor on the Hwy 38 water main extension project to review the remaining punchlist items that need to be completed this spring.
 - Engineers have been in contact with the State on the recently awarded TAP grant for the trail along Mickelson Ave, from the Turtle Creek Highlands development to Patrick Ave. It is anticipated that the design work will be done this summer with construction yet this fall
 - The bid opening for this year's slurry seal project was Feb 27th with Astech being the low bidder. Hartford's portion of the project was just under 200k, which is higher than the budget amount of 195k. With all the activity this summer on Western Ave and in the Western Meadows Addition, it was decided to remove Opal Ln from the slurry seal schedule for this year and do it next year. With this adjustment, the cost would fall within the budgeted amount. After further discussion, it was decided to also remove Trojan Ave and Ruud Trl from the schedule as well, to further help with the congestion in this area. Staff will replace these streets with street that were scheduled for next year, to reach the budget amount of 195k. A motion was made by Matson, second by Jass to approve the slurry seal bid to Astech up to the budgeted amount of 195k – all voted yes, motion carried.

- The Western Ave Expansion project was bid in conjunction with the State's bridge project on Mar 12th.
 - Review/Approve Low Bid: The low bidder for both the State project and the City's project was D&G Concrete Construction, Inc., with the City's portion of the bid being just under 3.2M, well below the Engineer's estimate of 5.6M. A motion was made by Jass, second by Berens to approve the low bid from D&G Concrete Construction, Inc. in the amount of \$3,173,407.69 on the Western Ave Expansion project – all voted yes, motion carried.
 - Review/Approve Construction Admin/Observation/Survey/Staking Contract: Engineers presented a contract for engineering services for the Western Ave Expansion project. The contract is based on time & materials estimated at \$346,237.50. A motion was made by Horn, second by Matson to approve the contract from ISG for engineering services on the Western Ave Expansion project as presented – all voted yes, motion carried.
- Work continues on the Parks Master Plan. Engineers are focusing on developing a vision for the future of the parks & trail system. A draft of a concept plan for Lyons Park was provided for review.
- **Public Works Report:** Public Works Superintendent Wagner was not present. His report was provided.
 - Streets – Staff has started to work on the gravel road and alleyways. The Sterling Dump truck brake repairs are now done.
 - Water – The 1st quarter report has been submitted. Next reporting is due July 10th.
 - Sewer – All lift stations are working well. The Feb DMR report has been sent in. The next report is due Apr 28th. Samples have been taken to see if another discharge can be done this spring.
 - Parks – Staff has started picking up the parks, getting them ready for warmer weather. The new Hustler mower is in and the replacement motor has been installed on the 104" Hustler.
 - Sports Complex – At the new concession building, staff is working on installing the bathroom partitions. A1 will be finishing up the remainder of their work this month. The hope is to have it ready to open by early April.
 - Training – Congratulations to Jesse O'Kane for becoming a Class III wastewater operator! There is just over 100 Class III or higher operators in the State.
- **Finance Officer Report:** City Finance Officer Wilber provided her report. A recap of bills submitted for payment was provided as well as the Mar/Apr calendar of events. The Equalization meeting was held Mar 17th with the Board hearing seven appeals.
- **City Administrator Report:** City Administrator Sidel provided her report. Interviews with the candidates for the Chamber Director position were held on Feb 20th. This position will be discussed further by members of the Chamber and Council. The contract for the County's chip seal project on Hwy 151 have been finalized. A schedule will be provided once we receive. Sam Assam with Turtle Creek Highland is still planning a TIF. The City is reviewing a plat for the TIF area. Once approved, Assam will move forward with presenting the TIF to the City. Sidel held interviews this week for the Dump Site Monitor, Pool Manager, and Park Rec Program Director. The City continues to advertise for all other summer positions. SECOG has applied for a planning grant from the US Dept of Transportation that would aid in developing a Safety Action Plan. Last April the Council approved the City participating in this study, which would be beneficial in applying for future funding opportunities for sidewalks, lighting, signage, etc. SECOG was informed last week that President Trump signed an executive order that allows for further review of all federal grants, which has put this grant application on hold. Unfortunately, no timeline was given. Sidel will keep the Council informed as more information is received. Deputy Rechtenbaugh will be on leave for 4 weeks. The City will continue to have coverage during Rechtenbaugh's absence. During this time, Deputies can be reached by calling the non-emergency number.

OLD BUSINESS:

- **Updates on Western Ave Improvement Project:** Staff provided the following updates on the Western Ave Improvement Project:
 - Discuss Financing Scenario: Last year the Council approved a funding scenario for the project which included a Community Access Grant of 480k, a REED loan of 300k, reserve funds from the water, sewer, and general fund totaling approx. 1.845M, and a sales tax bond for 3M for a total of 5.625M, which was the engineers estimate at that time. Now that the project has bid we have a better idea of the total cost, which is substantially lower than previously estimated. An updated funding scenario was presented. This scenario still includes the Community Access Grant of 480k and a REED loan of 300k. However, the use of reserve funds was lower to \$778,380 as well as the sales tax bond being lowered to 2.25M for a total of \$3,808,380. Discussion was held on possibly not using any reserve funds and instead using more of the sales tax bond. Staff will compile interest/payment information for the different sales tax bond amounts and present that at the next meeting.
 - Review/Approve Rural Electric Economic Development (REED) Loan Amendment – In August 2024 the City entered into a loan commitment agreement with REED for a 20-year 300k loan at an interest rate of 4%. Since this time, the City was notified by REED that they can only issue municipalities a 5-year secured loan. REED is proposing to keep the payment the same as previously established for a 20-year loan, which would require a balloon payment at the end of the 5-year term. This balloon would then have

to be refinanced for another 5 years with another balloon payment, and so on. REED is guaranteeing the interest rate of 4% for all future refinancing and that there will be no fees associated with the refinances. An updated loan agreement with these changes was presented. A motion was made by Kuehl, second by Boen to approve the updated REED loan agreement as presented – all voted yes, motion carried.

CORRESPONDENCE:

- **Secretary Award for Drinking Water Excellence:** Congratulations to the City’s Public Works staff Craig Wagner, Neil Hanisch and Jesse O’Kane! These three, who are all certified Operations Specialists, have demonstrated excellence in water system management and maintenance. Because of their hard work the City, for the 20th consecutive year, has met the requirements of the Safe Drinking Water Act and has received this award in recognition.

EXECUTIVE SESSION: A motion was made by Horn, second by Matson to enter executive session pursuant to SDCL 1-25-2(1) for personnel at 8:09pm – 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 Horn, second by Matson to exit executive session at 8:35pm – all voted yes, motion carried.

A motion was made by Jass, second by Boen to give Jesse O’Kane a \$2.00 per hour raise, effective with the next city pay period, for receiving his Class 3 certification – all voted yes, motion carried.

ADJOURNMENT: A motion was made by Horn, second by Matson to adjourn at 8:36pm – 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