

## **Hartford City Council Meeting – Regular Meeting March 3, 2026**

Council President Travis Kuehl called the meeting to order at 7:00pm with the following city council members present: Cindy Matson, Shaun Boen, Darrell Horacek, and Michelle Schilling. Arden Jones and Keith Carlson were absent with notice. Also present were City Administrator Teresa Sidel, City Finance Officer Karen Wilber, Public Works Superintendent Craig Wagner, City Attorney Tom Frieberg, City Engineer Justin Heim, and 4 people from the public.

### **BUSINESS ITEMS:**

- **Approval of the Agenda:** A motion was made by Boen, second by Matson to approve the agenda as set - all voted yes, motion carried.
- **Approval of the Minutes:** A motion was made by Schilling, second by Horacek to approve the regular meeting minutes from February 17, 2026 – all others voted yes, motion carried.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS:** Frank Guidera was present to request the Council consider allowing backyard chickens in Hartford. Guidera spoke of the benefits of having backyard chickens and feels that with reasonable regulations, allowing them could be a good thing for Hartford.

**VISITORS:** Tyler Torsen of SMGA was present to update the Council on recent activities of SMGA along with an update on regionalization efforts and America's 250<sup>th</sup> celebration.

### **APPLICATIONS, AGREEMENTS, HEARINGS, RESOLUTIONS & ORDINANCES:**

- **Special Event Permit – HACC Block Party:** HACC Director Jill Skots was present to request a special event permit to hold their Hartford Block Party event on July 15<sup>th</sup> from 4:30pm to 8pm. They are requesting the closures of Main Ave between 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> St and to allow the use of alcoholic beverages in this area. A motion was made by Matson, second by Schilling to approve the special event permit for HACC Block Party as applied for – all voted yes, motion carried.
- **Special Event Permit – HACC Fall Festival & Trunk-R-Treat Event:** HACC Director Jill Skots was present to request a special event permit to hold their Fall Festival & Trunk-R-Treat event. Last year they held two separate events for the Fall Festival and Trunk-R-Treat, but this year they are combining the two. The event is planned for Oct 4<sup>th</sup> from 2pm to 6pm. They are requesting the closure of N. Oaks Ave from Hwy 38 to Western Ave and to allow the use of alcoholic beverages in this area. A motion was made by Boen, second by Horacek to approve the special event permit for the HACC Fall Festival & Trunk-R-Treat event as applied for – all voted yes, motion carried.
- **Grant Application for SD Game, Fish, & Park Trail Program:** During the development of the N Oaks Industrial Park by the HADF, there was land given to the City for their open space contribution per the City's subdivision regulations. The intend is to use this land for a future trail to the Swenson Sports Complex. The Park & Recreation Board has been researching grant opportunities for trails and feel that the SD GF&P Recreational Trail Program would be a program the City could utilize to fund this trail. This is an 80/20 grant – 80% of the costs paid by the grant with the City covering the remaining 20%. Based on Engineers estimate of just under 282k, the City's share would be roughly 56k. The application deadline is Apr 10<sup>th</sup>. A motion was made by Matson, second by Boen to approve City staff moving forward with the applying for the SD Game, Fish, & Park's Trail Program grant – all voted yes, motion carried.

### **REPORTS:**

- **Sheriff's Department Report:** Deputy Rechtenbaugh was present to provide his report. For the month of Feb there were 131 calls for service, which is a decrease of 41 calls from the previous month.
- **Engineer Report:** Justin Heim reported the following:
  - Engineers have conducted development reviews for both Turtle Creek Highlands and 38 North Development.
  - The WWTF project is nearly complete. Weekly meetings continue to be held with staff, engineers, and the contractor to ensure all remaining punch list items are being addressed. The biggest item yet to be completed is the commissioning of the sludge press, which is contingent on sludge production. Staff feels there is enough sludge now and is working on getting this scheduled with the company reps.
    - **Review/Approve Pay Request #27:** Pay app #27 from Rice Lake Construction Group for work completed through February 28<sup>th</sup> on the WRRF was presented. A motion was made by Boen, second by Horacek to approve payment of pay app #27 in the amount of \$11,793 to Rice Lake Construction Group – all voted yes, motion carried.
  - A walk through of the Western Ave project was done Feb 24<sup>th</sup> and an updated punchlist was provided to the contractor. Punchlist work is expected to be done early spring and then that project will be closed out
  - The Mickelson Rd shared use path project is in the design phase now. Project design is scheduled to be completed in early spring with plan review by the State to follow. Construction anticipated to start in the fall.

- **Public Works Report:** Public Works Superintendent Wagner provided his report.
  - Streets – A culvert along Western Ave near St George Church has been damaged by a vehicle that went into the ditch. Wagner is working with engineers on getting that repaired. The 2026 slurry seal project was bid on Feb 19<sup>th</sup> with Astech being the low bidders. Hartford’s portion came in at \$224,421.17, which is higher than the budgeted amount of 200k. Wagner indicated the mobilization and striping were higher than he projected. That, along with Western Ave being added to the project, brought it over budget. Wagner will look at removing other streets to come within the budgeted amount. Some on the Council feel that since the City has no major projects this year, maybe additional funding could be allocated to slurry sealing. Wagner will compile the figures to be presented at the next meeting. Staff plans on sweeping streets next week. Wagner continues to look for a site for the City’s tree grinding operations.
  - Water – The 4<sup>th</sup> quarter report has been submitted. Next reporting is due April 10<sup>th</sup>.
  - Sewer – All lift stations are working well. The January DMR’s have been completed. Once the ice clears off the lagoons, discharging will resume. Staff continues researching what needs to be done to remove the biomass from the aerated cells. Staff and the contractor are meeting with various equipment reps to resolve issues at the WWTF.
  - Parks – The new restroom building is complete and the plumbing and electrical inspections are scheduled for this week. Staff is rebuilding the gazebo at Century Park and also reroofing and siding Shelter 1 at Lyon Park. There are two more shelters to do yet. Staff will be shaping up the aglime that is left on Field A before bringing in some more.
  - Public Buildings: At budget time 70k was budgeted to make some improvements to the basement of the Gate House. Wagner has recently received a quote from Blackburn. Discussion was held on possibly obtaining another quote. Wagner will work on obtaining another quote and present more information at a future meeting.
- **Finance Officer Report:** City Finance Officer Wilber provided her report. Items included a summary of revenues received in Feb along with an overview of the city’s cash balances, revenues and expenses through Jan. The Equalization Board meeting is Mar 16<sup>th</sup> starting at 6:30pm. The deadline to file an appeal to be heard at this meeting is by 5pm on Mar 12<sup>th</sup>. Wilber has received the new roll book for 2026. She will now start the process of updating the street maintenance fee roll with any changes made this past year. The resolution for the street maintenance fee will come before the council later this fall. The Mar calendar of events was provided.
- **City Administrator Report:** City Administrator Sidel provided her report. A meeting with members of the Council and residents along Kelly Ave to discuss possible improvements to Kelly Ave is being planned for some time in April. The Council’s new computers have arrived. They should be ready for use by the next meeting. A Zoom meeting was held on Feb 25<sup>th</sup> with DSU to discuss the findings of the cybersecurity assessment. A written report will follow. 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. Sidel is also working on a cybersecurity response plan. When complete, this too will be presented to the Council for review. Sidel will be submitting paperwork for two smaller grants. One to United Way for an AED machine for City Hall and one to Hartford Community Foundation for a new commercial dishwasher for the Senior Center. The District 3 meeting is Tues Mar 24<sup>th</sup> from 6-8pm in Lennox. Anyone interested in attending let us know and we’ll get you registered.
  - The City has been a board member of Dakota Mainstem since its inception. Being a board member allow the City one vote on any decisions brought before the board. Sidel has been the person who has attended the meetings on behalf of the City. Each year the City must designate this primary voting delegate, as well as an alternate in the event the primary delegate cannot attend. A motion was made by Matson, second by Boen to approve the designation of Teresa Sidel as the primary voting delegate and Mayor Arden Jones as the alternate – all voted yes, motion carried.

**OLD BUSINESS:** None

**NEW BUSINESS:**

- **Review HACC Application of Economic Development Funds:** HACC Direct Jill Skots was present to submit their application for economic development funds. The Chamber is proposing to erect solar lighting along the portion of the City’s bike trail that runs through Turtle Creek Park. This is a highly used portion of the City’s trail system and installing lighting would provide additional time each day for citizens to utilize the trail. The light poles would include banner arms that would support 2 banners per pole. The banners are not part of this proposal but rather a program that the HACC has done in the past which included the purchasing of a banner to display Hartford’s Veterans. Skots indicated that the HACC may extend this program or offer a different kind of banner to purchase. These banner programs allows another revenue stream for the HACC. The consensus of the Council was in support of the application. They would like to see more in-depth specs on the lights along with an updated quote that includes all items being purchased for the total dollar amount requested and discuss again at a future meeting. No action was taken at this time.
- **Review /Approve Preliminary Plans for 38 North Development:** Jans Corporation has submitted preliminary plans for their development located on the north side of Hwy 38 just east of Maple Pass. This development is all residential housing. They have met their open space contribution to the City with land towards the middle of the development designated as a future park. They are planning to develop in 3 phases with the first to start this year, if approved. Engineers have reviewed the plans, and a copy of their comments have been provided. Comment 2 through 6 are general in nature and will just require the developer to make minor revisions to their plans.

Comment 1 will require a more in-depth discussion on detention ponds. The developer is requesting that the City assume ownership of the one detention pond in the development, making all future maintenance of this detention pond the responsibility of the City. Currently the City does not maintain detention ponds in private developments, except for one that the City took over a few years ago. Engineers have provided some detention pond information – the pros and cons of taking them over plus some different option for funding the ongoing maintenance costs. As for this preliminary plan, it has been reviewed by the Planning & Zoning board as well, and both P&Z and the Engineers are recommending approval contingent on the Engineer’s comments being addressed. This will allow the developer to move forward with the development process, and the City can then have further discussions on the handling of detention ponds as well. A motion was made by Matson, second by Kuehl to approve the preliminary plans for the 38 North Development contingent on the engineer’s comments being addressed – all voted yes, motion carried.

- **Review/Approve Abatement for Parcel #90043 and Parcel #23651:** 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 and senior on parcels of land that are located within Hartford city limits. Since these are within Hartford’s municipal boundaries, the requests need to be approved by the governing board. A motion was made by Matson, second by Boen to approve the property tax abatement requests submitted on Parcel #90043 and Parcel #23651 – all voted yes, motion carried.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION:** A motion was made by Boen, second by Matson to enter executive session pursuant to SDCL 1-25-2(1) for personnel and SDCL 9-34-19 for economic development at 8:50pm – 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.

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Karen Wilber, Finance Officer

**EXECUTIVE SESSION:** A motion was made by Matson, second by Horacek to exit executive session at 9:21pm – all voted yes, motion carried.

**ADJOURNMENT:** A motion was made by Boen, second by Matson to adjourn at 9:22pm – 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.

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Teresa Sidel, City Administrator