

Hartford City Council Meeting – Regular Meeting March 4, 2025

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

BUSINESS ITEMS:

- **Approval of Agenda:** A motion was made by Jass, second by Matson to approve the agenda as set - all voted yes, motion carried.
- **Approval of the Minutes:** A motion was made by Matson, second by Kuehl to approve the meeting minutes from February 18, 2025 - all voted yes, motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENTS: None.

VISITORS:

- WC School Superintendent Dr. Eric Knight was present to update the Council on what has been going on with the District and to review the school's tax structure. Dr. Knight explained what makes up the school's tax levy and compared West Central School District's levy with the other schools in Minnehaha County. As presented, West Central has the lowest levy of the 7 schools provided and ranks 10th overall out of 148 schools in SD. Dr. Knight also review the bills being considered in this year's legislative session that will affect the school.

REPORTS:

- **Sheriff's Department Report:** Deputy Rechtenbaugh was present to provide his report. For the month of Feb there were 162 calls for service for the month, which was a decrease of 74 from last month.
- **Engineer Report:** Michael Redenbaugh reported the following:
 - Engineers have received the executed contract from the contractor on the County chip seal project. A construction schedule will be provided when available.
 - This year's slurry seal project was bid on Feb 27th. Hartford's portion of the bid came in at \$199,354.40.
 - The City was awarded a TAP grant for the section of recreation trail along Mickelson Rd from Patrick Ave to Turtle Creek Highlands. Design work is anticipated to start in 2025 with construction in 2026.
 - On the WRRF project, Aeromod pipe install continues as weather allows. The installation of equipment continues as equipment is delivered. Plant startup is being planned for May 2025.
 - **Review/Approve Pay Request #17:** Pay app #17 from Rice Lake Construction Group for work completed through Feb 28th on the WRRF was presented. A motion was made by Matson, second by Boen to approve payment of pay app #17 in the amount of \$1,058,815 to Rice Lake Construction Group – all voted yes, motion carried.
 - The bidding of the Western Ave Expansion project has been changed from Mar 5th to Mar 13th. Engineers are planning to present the bid results at the Mar 18th meeting. The project is still on track to start this spring.
 - A meeting was held with various members of the Council, Planning & Zoning, and Park & Recreation boards to discuss the vision for the City's parks and trail system. A lot of good information was received. Engineers will now be moving forward with Phase 2A & 2B of the project, which is developing the Preliminary Citywide Parks & Trails Masterplan and the Mini Master Plan for Hartford City Park.
- **Public Works Report:** Public Works Superintendent Wagner provided his report.
 - Streets** – Gravel roads are scheduled to be bladed next week. With the rain/snow we received today, staff will be sanding the road in the morning. The Sterling Dump truck is scheduled to go to Sideline Diesel Repair for some brake work next week. ASTECH was the low bidder on this year's slurry seal project.
 - Water** – The 4th quarter report has been submitted. Next reporting is due April 10th.
 - Sewer** – All lift stations are working well. The Jan DMR report has been sent in, as well as the paperwork for 2024. The next report is due Mar 28th. Samples have been taken again to see if another discharge can be done this winter.
 - Parks** – The stumps from trees that were taken down this winter have been ground. There is still some cleanup and dirt work to do from that. The new mower has been ordered.
 - Sports Complex** – Staff is working on installing the partitions and counter in the new concession building this week. The exterior concrete will be finished up in the spring.
 - Training** – Last week Wagner and O'Kane took their Class III wastewater treatment exams and Olson took his Class 1. They should get their results in a few weeks.

- **Finance Officer Report:** City Finance Officer Wilber provided her report. The items included a summary of revenues received in Feb along with an overview of the city's revenues and expenses through Jan. The current rate of 3.3% on the indexed money market account expired Feb 28th. FIB has approved a new rate of 3.25%, which will be good through April 30th. The Equalization meeting is set for Mar 17th at 6:30pm. All appeals are due by 5pm on Mar 13th. Since Wilber received the new roll book for 2025, she will start the process of reviewing/updating the street maintenance fee roll as time allows. The street maintenance fee resolution will come before the Council later this fall. We continue to advertise for the summer part-time positions. This year's election has been cancelled. Mayor Jones, Councilman Horn, and Councilman Boen submitted petitions for their respective wards and were all unopposed. Michelle Edgcomb-Schilling submitted a petition for the Ward 3 seat. She was unopposed as well. No petitions were received for the Ward 2 one-year term. Mayor Jones will fill this by appointment.
- **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 the Council during Executive Session. The City has been awarded a Transportation Alternative grant for the new section of bike trail along Mickelson Rd. Contracts have been sent to the contractors on the Hwy 151 chip seal project. We are currently advertising for RFPs on the open liquor license. The deadline for RFPs for the operation of the new concession building has been extended to Mar 21st. The Park & Recreation Board has started the discussion of possibly implementing a maintenance fee for those sports organizations that utilize City fields. Sidel informed the Council that the SDML District 3 meeting is Mar 26th in Dell Rapids. If interested in attending, let Sidel or Wilber know. Summit Cabon Solution is holding an open house at The Retreat by Blue Haven from 5:30-7:00pm on Mar 6th. They will be providing information about safety around CO2 pipelines. Anyone is invited to attend. To date, the City has received 6 applications for the Wastewater Specialist position. The deadline to apply is May 2nd. Sophie Johnson with SECOG has been promoted to a new position so the City will be getting a new SECOG representative at some point.

OLD BUSINESS:

- **Updates on Western Ave Improvement Project:** Staff provided the following updates on the Western Ave Improvement Project:
 - **Community Access Grant:** Last year, as a result of an oversight on the State's part, the City's application for this grant was never considered. Sidel has since requested that our application be considered during their next round of funding. Normally, all funding considerations have to be approved before the project starts. The City is asking that this requirement be waived due to the oversight on the State's part. Sidel has been in contact with the State, and they have confirmed that we can resubmit our application and it will be considered the next time they are dispersing funds. They also confirmed we can move forward with the project as scheduled, and this will have no adverse effect on our application. Sidel will move forward with resubmitting the application.
 - **Rural Electric Economic Development (REED) Loan** – 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 that the interest rate of 4% will be locked in for all future refinancing and that there will be no fees associated with the refinance. All that would be required would be some paperwork on the City's end. It is the consensus of the Council to move forward with the loan as presented. A new agreement will be presented at the next meeting.

NEW BUSINESS:

- **Review/Approve County Tax Abatements:** The County has sent us 13 tax abatements. Two are for the disabled veteran exemption, two are for the assessment freeze, and nine are due to corrections made to the County's records. Eight of the corrections are a result of the incorrect land size being recorded when a parcel was split. The other one is a result of not recording a building being razed, so the owner was assessed for a building that is no longer there. These abatement requests need to be approved by the governing board since they will affect the City's property taxes. A motion was made by Jass, second by Kuehl to approve the County tax abatements as presented – all voted yes, motion carried.
- **Discuss Possible City-Wide Marketing Campaign:** Mayor Jones would like to discuss a possible city-wide marketing campaign. His thoughts are to work with WC School, HACC, businesses, developers, Downtown Hartford, Hometown Christmas, and Jamboree days to develop a marketing campaign that would promote Hartford, and in turn help all those involved. He feels the first step should be for a few members of the Council to meet with each group and gauge their interest. The consensus of the Council was to move forward visiting with the different organizations about the concept.

EXECUTIVE SESSION: A motion was made by Kuehl, second by Matson to enter executive session pursuant to SDCL 9-34-19 for economic development and SDCL 1-25-2(1) for personnel at 7:55pm – 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 Jass, second by Matson to exit executive session at 8:31pm – all voted yes, motion carried.

ADJOURNMENT: . A motion was made by Matson, second by Boen to adjourn at 8:32pm – 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