

CITY OF HIGHLAND, KANSAS
REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING
CITY HALL
September 11, 2024
5:00 P.M.

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT: Terry Gibson, Robert Ellerman, Keith Edmonds via phone, and Tana Snyder

COUNCIL MEMBERS ABSENT: Marty Allen

CITY EMPLOYEES PRESENT: City Attorney Andy Parker, Deputy City Clerk Debbie Keebler, and City Water and Sewer Superintendent Trevor Saunders, and Police Chief Dustin Winters

GUESTS PRESENT: None

PRESIDING: Mayor Charles Batchelder

Mayor Batchelder opened the meeting with the first of three public hearings. The purpose of the first hearing was to hear and answer public comments of taxpayers relating to the proposed use of funds, amount of ad valorem tax and exceeding the calculated Revenue Neutral Rate of 43.956 mills. The public had no comments. Terry Gibson moved and Tana Snyder seconded a motion to close public comments. Motion carried 4-0 Following opportunity of public comments, Terry Gibson moved and Tana Snyder seconded a motion to adopt Resolution 2024-05, a resolution to levy a property tax exceeding the Revenue Neutral Rate of 43.956. Motion carried 4-0 Roll call vote: Gibson-yes; Snyder-yes; Ellerman-yes, Edmonds-yes Tana Snyder moved and Keith Edmonds seconded a motion to adjourn the Revenue Neutral Rate Hearing at 5:03 p.m. Motion carried 4-0

Mayor Batchelder asked for public comments regarding the proposed 2025 budget. The purpose of holding this public hearing is to hear any public comments on adoption of the 2025 budget. The public had no comments. Tana Snyder moved and Terry Gibson seconded a motion to close public hearing for the adoption of 2025 budget. Motion carried 4-0 Tana Snyder moved and Keith Edmonds seconded a motion to adopt the 2025 budget as published. Motion carried 4-0 Tana Snyder moved and Keith Edmonds seconded a motion to adjourn the budget hearing at 5:05 p.m. Motion carried 4-0

Mayor Batchelder asked for public comments regarding vacation petition of the West 132 feet of the Alley on Block #108 in the city. Wayne P. and Marjorie Joy Meyer are requesting the alley be closed as they own the property on both side of the West 132 feet. Following a short review with no public comments, Tana Snyder moved and Terry Gibson seconded a motion to close the public hearing portion of the meeting at 5:09 p.m. Motion carried 4-0

Tana Snyder moved and Keith Edmonds seconded a motion approving Ordinance No. 605, relating to vacating a portion, West 132 feet, of the East-West Alley in Block 108. By roll call vote: Gibson-yes, Ellerman-yes, Edmonds-yes and Snyder-yes. Motion carried 4-0

Following the public hearings and signing of budgets, Mayor Batchelder opened the regular city council meeting at 5:12 p.m.

Terry Gibson moved and Tana Snyder seconded a motion to approve the regular city council meeting minutes of August 14, 2024 and the special city council meeting minutes of September 6, 2024. Motion carried 4-0

Tana Snyder moved and Robert Ellerman seconded a motion to approve the bills as presented. Motion carried 4-0

COMMUNICATIONS AND REPORTS:

Mayor Batchelder – Nothing at this time

Attorney Parker – City Attorney Parker reported he is working with council person Terry Gibson on confirming the ownership of the former Tom Dorrell property which is currently being managed by SouthLaw PC who may be conducting a lawsuit. Attorney Parker is awaiting confirmation from the college as to annexation of college property adjacent to city limits property. Once confirmed, the process begins with getting the needed title searches and surveys completed.

Deputy Clerk Keebler – Nothing at this time.

Police Chief – Reported on First Responder’s Day at DWHS which went very well with good attendance. Reported 31 traffic stops last month with 16 traffic citations issued. Inquired about obtaining a mobile hotspot to use in the vehicle to allow him to maximize time he is on patrol. Supt. Saunders offered to allow Chief to try the Maintenance hot spot. Tabled until later. Asked about purchasing another less lethal shot gun to complete the outfitting of both law enforcement vehicles. Eric Tracy, The Gun Vault, White Cloud, has one for \$109.95. After discussion, Tana Snyder moved and Keith Edmonds seconded a motion to allow Chief Winters to purchase the less lethal shot gun from The Gun Vault for \$109.95. Motion failed 2-3 with Mayor voting no. The Bendena/Denton Fire Department has a need for a vehicle light bar. Chief indicated the city has one available from the previous wrecked Durango which could be donated. Robert Ellerman moved and Terry Gibson seconded the motion to donate the light bar to the Bendena/Denton Fire Department. Motion carried 4-0 Chief proposed sending of Reserve Officer Wyatt Denton to the Police Academy to become qualified (approx. \$1,824 for wages and travel, other expenses paid by the state) in order to allow the City to utilize the STEP program to fund his utilization on a part-time basis for specific events. Matter was tabled.

City Superintendent Saunders – Reported storm pipe damage in the 100 block of E Virginia on the south side (Lentz property). Supt. Saunders stated there was at least 15 feet of damaged pipe but believes 40’ needs replaced and could recommend replacement up to 120 feet. Robert Ellerman moved and Terry Gibson seconded a motion to approve 40 feet of replacement of the storm pipe in the 100 block of E Virginia following further investigation of the area. Motion carried 4-0 Jerry Twombly, Two Timbers, requested a drop box be placed above the proposed storm pipe repairs. Supt. Saunders will work with Mr. Twombly in finding a solution for the area. The skid steer cylinder was repaired but still having other issues. The maintenance F-250 truck fuel pump is out and Gary Shear can repair it for under \$1,000. Terry Gibson moved and Keith Edmonds seconded a motion for Shear Auto Repair to repair the maintenance F-250 truck in an amount up to \$1,000. Motion carried 4-0 Supt. Saunders discussed his list of tasks accomplished and still needing to be completed. Supt. Saunders suggested the need to hire a third person. Councilperson Ellerman asked Chief Winters to provide Supt. Saunders with information on vehicles available on the surplus website. The Chief agreed to do that.

Attorney Parker – Reviewed the Kansas Historical Society letter and the Agreement for Usage and Maintenance of Highland Community Ballpark. Council consensus was for Attorney Parker to communicate with the college and USD 111 regarding the 2019 agreement in order for more maintenance and repair support from USD 111.

COMMITTEE UPDATES:

Finance Committee – Marty Allen & Keith Edmonds – Nothing at this time.

Law Enforcement Committee – Tana Snyder & Marty Allen – Tana Snyder inquired into the Chief’s support of the Rosecran’s airshow and asked if it could be reimbursed by the county. Chief Winters commented it may be to late to get that approved but would ask.

Parks and Rec. Committee — Terry Gibson & Tana Snyder –Nothing at this time.

Street and Alley/Bldg & Grounds Committee – Robert Ellerman & Terry Gibson – Tana Snyder inquired about the work being done at 305 N Kirkwood with dirt work possibly being done in the city’s right of way. Discussion was had concerning non-compliance of the zoning ordinances and enforcement. Attorney Parker stated the city needed to develop a process to ensure the Chief/Enforcement Officer are informed of any approved permits. Attorney Parker received an email from April Heim concerning the water run-off from the college/west side of the city that flows through Vermont Street and she offered to allow the city to develop a retaining pond on her property. Following discussion, the council decided to have Councilperson Allen visit with her.

Water and Sewer Committee – Terry Gibson & Robert Ellerman – Nothing at this time.

Planning & Zoning – Keith Edmonds & Marty Allen – Nothing at this time.

Personnel Committee – Tana Snyder & Robert Ellerman – Nothing at this time.

OLD BUSINESS:

Superintendent Trevor Saunders mentioned his concerns about rusting on the inside of the WTP building. Councilperson Ellerman inquired about a punch list and Supt. Saunders told what was submitted. Attorney Parker believed the final payment had not yet been approved. When asked about the security cameras, Supt. Saunders indicated some of the upgraded equipment had arrived.

Attorney Parker provided an update on the Final Payment Request and approval for the Street Project.

The property at 104 W Ohio has remained unchanged as an unsafe structure. Officer Winters had communication with someone that would be available soon and take on the project for \$6,000. Council members asked how the city would be reimbursed. Attorney Parker explained the special assessment tax process and pointed out it would take time and asked if the city wanted to expend \$6,000 of the current budget. Consensus was to have Chief Winters contact Ms. Scholz and if no movement in 30 days, Attorney Parker would write a letter about the city taking action to remove the unsafe structure.

Councilman Ellerman requested the sports complex topic be removed from the agenda until something to report on.

NEW BUSINESS:

Following review, Tana Snyder moved and Keith Edmonds seconded a motion authorizing the mayor to sign the 2024 audit engagement letter from Gordon CPA in the amount of \$8,240. Motion carried 4-0

Tana Snyder moved and Robert Ellerman seconded a motion to transfer \$67,413.00 (Series 2023-A - \$41,230 and Series 2023-B - \$26,183) from the Water Fund to Debt Service Fund for the water treatment plant GO Bonds payment. Motion carried 4-0

Tana Snyder moved and Terry Gibson seconded a motion to continue the ad in the Doniphan West High School yearbook, costing \$100. Motion carried 4-0

Discussion was had concerning a request from HCAT to close main street from Kansas to Kirkwood on September 28th from 1 pm to 2:30 pm for a bicycle parade. Tana Snyder moved and Keith Edmonds seconded the motion to close the street. Motion carried 4-0.

Superintendent Trevor Saunders reported that the college had asked about painting the dugouts and press box at the baseball field. The college baseball players will paint if the city will provide the paint. Discussion ensued about the need to do much needed repairs to the facility before any painting is done. Donation pledges have been received from individuals and/or organizations to help with the project. No action was taken at this time.

Chief Winters added the City Shop doors needs to be fixed as well prior to painting.

Terry Gibson moved and Tana Snyder seconded a motion to adjourn at 6:36 p.m. Motion carried 4-0

Mayor

City Clerk