

Hillsboro, Kansas
January 5, 2021

1. The City Council met in regular session via Zoom, due to the Corona Virus pandemic, on Tuesday, January 5, 2021 at 6:00 p.m. with Mayor Lou Thurston and Council members Renee Gehring, Brent Driggers, Byron McCarty, and David Loewen participating.
2. Others Participating: Jackie Nelson, Hillsboro Free Press; Phyllis Zorn, Hillsboro Star Journal; Josh Boehm, City Attorney; Jonah Gehring, County Commissioner; Chris Glanzer, Glanzer Audio; Matt Stiles, City Administrator; and, Jan Meisinger, City Clerk.
3. **CALL TO ORDER** – Mayor Thurston called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.
4. **OATHS OF OFFICE** – City Clerk Jan Meisinger administered oaths of office to Council members-elect Brent Driggers and Byron McCarty.
5. **PUBLIC COMMENTS** – Mark Horst, King Solar, Yoder Kansas, told Council he had a customer that wanted to install solar power on his home in Hillsboro. He asked Council to develop a policy for solar power, and gave some examples of what other cities are doing.
6. **MINUTES** – Motion was made by Council member Loewen and seconded by Council member Gehring to approve the minutes of the 12/15/2020 regular meeting and the minutes of the 12-29-2020 special meeting as submitted. Motion carried unanimously.
7. **VOUCHERS** – Motion was made by Council member Driggers and seconded by Council member Loewen to approve the vouchers in the amount of \$230,468.82. Motion carried unanimously.
8. **FIREFIGHTER PAY** – The Fire Department has submitted a request for an increase in pay for fire runs and drills to \$15.00 for firefighters, and \$20.00 per run or drills for the chief and assistant chief. Currently, firefighters receive \$12.50 per run or drill, and the fire chief and assistant chief receive \$17.34 per run or drill. The Fire Department is paid twice per year, in June and December. The first payroll is runs and drills from December-May. The second payroll is runs and drills from June-November. City Administrator Stiles gathered information from other departments and the proposed increase is reasonable and in line with what other departments do. Based on typical responses, the rate change would result in an increase of \$3,594.58 for 2020. After further discussion, motion was made by Council member McCarty and seconded by Council member Gehring to approve the proposed firefighter request to increase pay for drills and fire calls to \$15.00 for firefighters and \$20.00 for the chief and assistant chief per drills and fire calls, effective 12-1-2020. Motion carried unanimously.
9. **REIMBURSEMENT REQUEST #29 KDHE – WATER PROJECT** – Motion was made by Council member McCarty and seconded by Council member Driggers to approve Reimbursement Request #29 from KDHE for EBH (Invoice 12921) for design and updating waterline map in the amount of \$4,431.50. Motion carried unanimously.
10. **ELCON INVOICES** – Motion was made by Council member Driggers and seconded by Council member McCarty to approve the following Elcon invoices: #12533 for replacement of electric panel in community room - \$998.16; #12534 for work in council room - \$2,476.72; #12544 – work at airport on fuel master - \$1,021.20; #12558 for work at welding school - \$643.84; and, #12571 – straps picked up by the Electric Department - \$4.73 – total = \$5,144.65. Motion carried unanimously.
11. **BOARD APPOINTMENTS** – none
12. **CITY ADMINISTRATOR’S REPORT** –
 - Grass Fires* – The Fire Department responded to a large, fast spreading grass fire on Wednesday, December 23rd. Dry conditions and high winds created a dangerous situation at the Fish home at 894 190th. The department responded quickly and was joined by firefighters from Goessel and Lehigh. Chief Steketee described it as a Christmas miracle that the Fish home didn’t burn down. The day before, one of our crews responded to a large grass fire east of Marion, and a house fire in Roxbury.
 - Marion County EMS* – Mayor Thurston and City Administrator Stiles sent a letter to the County Commission about building a proposed EMS building near the current police station, where the proposed public safety building would be located. The project has been bouncing around for all of 2020 and has come back up at the County level. EMS has talked about remodeling an existing building in

Hillsboro, but as the Council has discussed, having a shared or adjacent facility, with the upcoming public safety building, would be a better long-term solution. The City Attorney and County Counsel have worked back and forth on a potential lease, but it has become clear that to move forward, there needs to be a formal commitment from both sides. County Commission Chairman Gehring asked us for something in writing to consider, and that is how we arrived at the letter. The basic outline is that the County would lease the property from the City for 40 years at \$1.00 per year. The city would help prep the site, do basic utility tie-ins and do the curb cut for the approach off of Ash Street. These are the basic terms that have been discussed by the Council, only they are formally being offered to the County. This arrangement has many benefits for both the County and City, and we hope they take us up on the offer.

FrontDesk – gWorks, the City's accounting software, has added a new integrated product called FrontDesk, which we have agreed to add to our system. The system adds functionality to allow customers to log in to an internet based portal and pay their utility bills, fees for things like permits, and some court ticket electronically. These are things we've been struggling to make happen for a while. Payments are directly sent into the customer's account eliminating a lot of manual entry that we currently do. It also eliminates the need for third party providers that some residents are using to pay their bills. FrontDesk also allows for text and e-mails to be sent to users in the system, much like our Code Red system. FrontDesk replaces three modules that we currently use, allowing that cost to be applied to the FrontDesk cost. After discussing it internally, we also feel that we could drop the Code Red services that we subscribe to. Code Red has had few Hillsboro users sign-up and has had mixed results when it has been used. Code Red hasn't lived up to the billing. The FrontDesk notification features are similar to Code Red, but FrontDesk does not do automated weather calls or call landline phones. In talking with a handful of users, the Code Red weather calls do not consistently work. If we eliminate Code Red and the other modules that FrontDesk replaces, the City would realize a savings of \$1,200 per year and have improved service for users.

Staffing Plans – City Administrator Stiles is working on a reorganizational plan to accommodate our upcoming retirements. Barring any changes, we have three department heads that have indicated that they will be retiring in 2021. Additionally, we have several other employees who are eligible to retire, although they have not announced that they will be retiring in the near future. We are also down a position in the Street Department that we were unable to hire for in the fall. He believes that there are some areas we can find efficiencies in and other areas where we are short on staffing. He hopes to have recommendations finalized for the first meeting in February. He has also been working on updating the employee handbook and the policies that are found in the handbook. He believes there are a few minor changes that could make the City a more attractive employer for new employees coming in. Those changes will be presented to the Council for consideration after the staffing plans are completed.

COVID-19 Testing – We never received any further information on the public COVID testing proposed by KDHE. Originally, that was to happen before the end of 2020. Meanwhile, we have been regularly screening the Water Department and city employees for COVID. We have not had any positive test with the Water Department, but we have had 3 of the 5 non-Water Department employees test positive for COVID. Currently, we have 1 employee on quarantine for a positive test. All of our results are reported directly to KDHE.

Council Room – The council room modifications are complete. In testing the system, City Administrator Stiles thinks everyone will be happy with the results. One issue to be aware of is that internet speed creates quality issues with video and audio. The new gigabyte fiber is to the building, but the service has not started. Once it is active, Glanzer will likely need to recalibrate settings, but the speed boost should correct any quality issues.

Recycling Schedule Changes – The Sanitation Department has revised the recycling routes starting in January 2021. Notifications, calendars and maps have been sent out to customers in the last billing. Recycling routes have been consolidated into two routes and pick-ups will be every other Thursday. The new schedule should be easier for residents to remember compared to the current rotation of days and routes. Trash routes are not affected by this change. Bulky item pick-up will still be on the last Friday of each month. The recycling route changes allow for more preventative maintenance and other projects to happen on Fridays when we are not running routes.

Sales Tax – The City collected a total of \$708,459.05 in sales tax in 2020, an improvement of 10% from 2019. Comparing 2020 to the average 2017-2019, receipts were 11% higher in 2020.

The January 19, 2021 meeting will be at 6:00 p.m.

13. ADJOURNMENT – Council meeting adjourned at 6:47 p.m.

LOUIS THURSTON, MAYOR

ATTEST:

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JANICE K. MEISINGER, CITY CLERK

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