

HILLSBORO CITY COUNCIL MEETING

January 16, 2025

At 7:00 p.m. Council President Tom Eichinger called the Hillsboro City Council meeting to order. The following were present for the meeting: Safety and Service Director Brianne Abbott, Mayor Justin Harsha, City Auditor Dawson Barreras, City Law Director Randalyn Worley, Public Works Superintendent Shawn Adkins, Chief Eric Daniels, and Clerk Lauren Walker.

ROLL CALL

Dan Baucher, Jason Brown, Mary Stanforth, Don Storer, and Adam Wilkin were all present. Kathryn Hapner and Greg Maurer were absent.

Mr. Eichinger apologized to council for it being unknown that two council members were going to be absent. Mr. Eichinger stated he would have cancelled the meeting and rescheduled due to several pieces of legislation needing 6 out of 7 to suspend the three-reading rule. Mr. Eichinger was informed back in January that Ms. Hapner would be out of the country, but had only heard from Mr. Maurer forty-five minutes prior to the meeting.

MOTION: Mr. Brown moved to excuse Ms. Hapner's absence, seconded by Mr. Storer. Vote: Mr. Baucher-yes, Mr. Brown-yes, Ms. Stanforth-yes, Mr. Storer-yes, Mr. Wilkin-yes. Ms. Hapner's absence has been excused.

MOTION: Ms. Stanforth moved to excuse Mr. Maurer's absence, seconded by Mr. Brown. Vote: Mr. Baucher-yes, Mr. Brown-yes, Ms. Stanforth-yes, Mr. Storer-yes, Mr. Wilkin-yes. Mr. Maurer's absence has been excused.

Mr. Eichinger led the Council in prayer and Mayor Harsha led Council in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. Eichinger stated that election for Council President Pro-Tem will need to be addressed and asked for any nominations. Jason Brown nominated Adam Wilkin to be Council President Pro-Tem, seconded by Don Storer. No other nominations. Vote: All yeas

MINUTES

There were no corrections to the December 23, 2024 regular council minutes. They were approved as presented.

MONTHLY REPORTS

The November monthly reports were read by title only: Income Tax Bureau, Police Department, Public Utilities (includes street, water/sewer maintenance), Water Meter Department, Water Office (including water/sewer sales), Water Treatment Plant, Wastewater Treatment Plant, and Code Enforcement.

PUBLIC REQUESTS

COMMUNICATIONS

- ATT Tariff

DISCUSSION: Mr. Eichinger addressed council that a letter was received from Mr. Romito from AT&T concerning the PUCO filing. Legislation is on the agenda for this matter but have since pulled their request for tariff. Brianne Abbott explained that the legislation was going to be presented to show the city's support of OML's challenge against AT&T's tariff application to PUCO. The tariff would be a detriment to the city, as far as the right of the ways and financial implications as a result. The city has since been notified that the tariff application has been pulled and it would be up to council on whether or not to act. Mr. Eichinger mentioned the tariff application number is stated on the legislation therefore may be irrelevant. The letter and proposal will be distributed to council members to be informed of the full proposal so if the topic does come back up, then they are well informed. Mr. Adkins spoke briefly on how it would affect the city and Mr. Brown agreed that having the letter and full proposal from AT&T would be beneficial.

CITIZENS' COMMENTS

COMMUNICATION FROM THE MAYOR (Justin Harsha)

Mr. Harsha stated,

"Good evening, as we gather today, I would like to reflect on our city's accomplishments, challenges, and growth, it is my pleasure to share with you the progress we've made over the past year. Together, we have made great strides in improving our infrastructure, enhancing recreational opportunities, and investing in the future of our community. As your Mayor, I am proud of our shared successes and remain committed to ensuring that Hillsboro continues to thrive as a vibrant, inclusive, and forward-thinking place to live, work, and raise a family.

- Economic Development and Infrastructure

This year has been marked by significant investments in our city's infrastructure and economic growth. We have focused on initiatives that foster development, improve services, and position our city as a place where businesses and families can grow and flourish.

- Crossroads Park: Earlier this year we were awarded a \$5.2 million Appalachian Grant for Crossroads Park. Construction on this transformative park will begin later this year, providing a recreational hub for our community and a catalyst for surrounding development.

- Transportation and Parking: As part of our ongoing efforts to enhance accessibility, we launched the Roberts Drive Extension, designed to open up new development opportunities and improve traffic flow in the area. Additionally, we purchased property to expand downtown parking, addressing one of our most pressing community needs.

- City Building Renovations: The second floor of the City Building has undergone a complete renovation, including an upgraded Council Chambers and new office spaces. This marks a significant investment in improving our municipal offices and creating a more functional environment for city operations.

- Parks and Recreation

Our parks and recreational offerings continue to grow, with exciting new developments that encourage health, fitness, and community engagement.

- Railroad Street Park: We have installed pickleball courts and a ninja course at Railroad Street Park. These new features are already drawing residents of all ages and contributing to a more active community.

- Shaffer Park: In a major move towards better management of our parks, we have officially assumed control of Shaffer Park under the newly established dedicated parks department. This department is tasked with ensuring that our parks are well-maintained and offer diverse amenities for residents.

- Liberty Park: We have also completed a new playground and archery range at Liberty Park, enhancing the recreational offerings for families and outdoor enthusiasts.

- Donations: I would like to thank Darrell and Jane Tissot for the donation of the ninja course at Railroad St. Park and Tim Schlater and John Kidder for donating the archery range at Liberty Park.

- Public Health and Safety

Keeping our community safe and healthy remains a top priority. This year, we continued to address critical public health issues and focused on creating a safer, more secure city for all residents.

- Lead Service Line Remediation: Our commitment to ensuring safe drinking water for all residents was demonstrated by the completion of the lead service line remediation project on High Street, making significant strides toward eliminating potential health risks for our citizens.

- Code Enforcement: To further strengthen our city's standards and improve the quality of life for residents, we hired a full-time Code Enforcement Officer. This addition will ensure more consistent enforcement of building codes and property standards throughout the city.

- Environmental and Water Management

As a city, we are not only focused on growth but also on sustainability and resilience in the face of challenges like drought and water shortages.

- Drought Management: Over the past year, we faced a series of challenges due to drought conditions, which placed a strain on our water supply. Through coordinated efforts, we managed this crisis by prioritizing water conservation and implementing a water emergency plan to ensure that all residents had access to this vital resource.

- Community Engagement and Events

Our community is the heartbeat of this city, and it is essential that we continue to foster connections among our residents, businesses, and local organizations.

- Community Events: We have hosted numerous community events throughout the year, including the Farmers Market, Burgers in the Boro, Jeeps Creepers, Christmas parade and tree lighting, a Christmas market and volunteer opportunities. These events have allowed us to

bring residents together to contribute to our city's ongoing success.

One of the cornerstones of our administration has been maintaining fiscal responsibility while still delivering the essential services and infrastructure improvements that our community deserves. As we move into the next year, I am pleased to share with you the financial outlook for the city.

For 2025, the total city budget is set at just over \$20,000,000, with a projected carry over of \$1,150,000, which will provide a solid foundation for next year's initiatives and allow us to tackle emerging needs without sacrificing fiscal discipline.

This careful management of city funds has allowed us to continue investing in critical infrastructure, public services, and community programs without increasing the burden on taxpayers. As we look ahead, we will continue to prioritize projects that deliver long-term value for our residents while ensuring that we remain responsive to future challenges.

Our approach to budgeting reflects our shared vision of a sustainable, fiscally responsible city. We will continue to explore innovative solutions to fund our projects, seek out grants and partnerships, and manage resources effectively to ensure the prosperity of Hillsboro.

Looking ahead, we are committed to continued growth and improvement across all facets of our city. We will keep investing in infrastructure, community development, and services that make Hillsboro a place where people want to live, work, and raise a family.

It has been an incredibly productive year for our city. From the installation of new recreational facilities to securing vital grants for large-scale projects, we are building a strong foundation for the future. We could not have achieved this success without the ongoing support of residents, city staff, and community partners.

As we move forward, I encourage all of you to continue engaging with our local government, attend public meetings, and stay informed about the developments in our city. Together, we can ensure that Hillsboro remains a place of opportunity, safety, and unity for everyone.

Thank you for your trust, your dedication, and your commitment to making Hillsboro a better place for all."

REPORT OF THE SAFETY & SERVICE DIRECTOR/HILLSBORO PLANNING COMMISSION

Brianne Abbott shared,

"Thank you, Mr. President. Good evening, City Council.

For the month of December there were 6 commercial and 10 residential building permits. The projected opening of the Roberts extension project is Spring of 2025. Electrical work and striping are underway.

The current focus for the Crossroads Park Amphitheatre is design meetings and CMAR selection.

Preliminary drawings for the rails to trails project are complete and project will begin in 2026

The National Fitness Campaign initiative is currently in committee with a presentation by the Highland County Health Department scheduled for next month's council meeting.

The downtown pedestrian safety project will take place this year.

The Beech and Railroad Street Road construction is currently underway.

For private developments, we are continuing regular meetings with both the Marriott Hotel developers and GLOfiber representatives. Both projects expect to break ground this year.

Planning for the 2025 city events is currently in full force. Including Farmers Market, Community Cookout, Movies Under the Stars, Jeepers Creepers, Holiday events and more.

There is no report of the planning commission this evening.

And lastly, as a results of our recent snow fall there have been inquiries in regard to snow removal of sidewalks, curbs and gutters. City ordinance 96.03 (and I'm paraphrasing) the property owner adjacent to the sidewalk, curb or gutter is responsible to remove all snow or sleet from the city's pavements and the gutters in front of them. The current timeline associated with the removal is 2 hours per ordinance.

STANDING COMMITTEE REPORTS

FINANCE COMMITTEE (Mary Stanforth, Chair)

- Wage & Pay Scale review/recommendations for Elected Officials
- Wage & Pay Scale review/recommendations for employees
 - Meeting held January 13, 2025 at 6:00pm.

Mary Stanforth read minutes. No questions, no comments.

PARKS (Don Storer Chair)

No meeting. No questions, no comments

CIVIL SERVICE AND EMPLOYEE RELATIONS COMMITTEE (Dan Baucher, Chair)

No meeting. No questions, no comments

STREET AND SAFETY COMMITTEE (Adam Wilkin, Chair)

- Designated Outdoor Refreshment Area (DORA)
- 2 Hour Parking

No meeting. Mr. Wilkin stated he will plan to meet prior to the February meeting.

UTILITIES COMMITTEE (Greg Maurer, Chair)

- Waste Collection
- Water Rates

No meeting. No questions, no comments

ZONING AND ANNEXATION COMMITTEE (Jason Brown, Chair)

No meeting. No questions, no comments

COMMUNITY ENHANCEMENT (Jo Sanborn, Chair)

- National Fitness Campaign

No meeting. No questions, no comments

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- **PASSAGE OF ORDINANCES & RESOLUTIONS (THIRD READING)**
- **SECOND READING OF ORDINANCES & RESOLUTIONS**
- **FIRST READING OF ORDINANCES & RESOLUTIONS**

Resolution 25-01 A Resolution authorizing participation in the ODOT road salt contracts awarded in 2025

DISCUSSION: Mr. Eichinger stated this was requested with suspension of three-reading rule. Due to lack of quorum this will move to February council meeting or we may have a special meeting if needed, but will be requested as an emergency at the next meeting to meet the deadline to submit the application.

Resolution 25-02 A Resolution supporting the Ohio Municipal League's challenge of AT&T's Tariff Application at the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio and declaring an emergency

DISCUSSION: Mr. Eichinger stated since the tariff number is on the legislation, and the application has been pulled there is nothing to act on. Details will be emailed out to council members.

Ordinance 2025-01 An Ordinance to authorize and direct the Safety and Service Director to enter into an agreement with the Highland County Commissioners to provide for indigent defendant counsel in the courts and declaring an emergency

DISCUSSION: Mr. Eichinger stated it may need to be acted on this month to meet annual requirement and will need to have a special meeting. Ms. Abbott stated she will reach out to the county to see if we can wait until February.

Ordinance 2025-02 An Ordinance making supplemental appropriations for the City of Hillsboro, Highland County, Ohio


DISCUSSION: Mr. Barreras explained this legislation allows the city to appropriate the funds from the county to be utilized for the Beech Street project. It will allow us to complete the water and sewer infrastructure.

MOTION: Mr. Storer moved to approve and adopt Ordinance 2025-02, seconded by Mr. Brown. Vote: Mr. Baucher-yes, Mr. Brown-yes, Ms. Stanforth-yes, Mr. Storer-yes, Mr. Wilkin-yes. Ordinance 2025-02 approved and adopted.

NEW BUSINESS:

ADJOURN: Mr. Eichinger adjourned council at 7:23 p.m. The next scheduled meeting of the Hillsboro City Council is Thursday February 13, 2025 at 7:00 p.m. at City Hall, 130 North High Street.

 Tom Eichinger, President

 Lauren Walker, Clerk