

HILLSBORO CITY COUNCIL MEETING

October 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: Mayor Harsha, Safety and Service Director Shawn Adkins, Law Director Hannah Bivens, Clerk Lauren Walker, Auditor Dawson Barreras, Megan Blackburn, and Chief Daniels.

ROLL CALL

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

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

MINUTES

There were no corrections to the September 11, 2025 regular council minutes or the September 17, 2025 special council minutes. They were approved as presented.

MONTHLY REPORTS

The August monthly reports were read by title only: Income Tax Bureau, Police Department, Public Utilities (includes street, water/sewer maintenance), Treasurers, Water Meter Department, Water Office (Water/Sewer Sales), Water Treatment Plant, Wastewater Treatment Plant, Code Enforcement, Auditor and Parks. No questions, no comments.

Mr. Eichinger asked Mr. Barreras if he had anything to cover. Mr. Barreras read, "Tonight, I'm going to give an update focusing on our financial health. Today I want to share with you the story told by our 2023 Basic Financial Statements, compiled earlier this year. These statements reflect a year of resilience, strategic management, and positive growth, positioning us well for the challenges and opportunities ahead.

Let me begin with the overarching view: our net position. As of December 31, 2023, the City's total net position reached \$52,936,263, an increase of \$4,885,307 from the prior year. This growth is a testament to our collective efforts. Governmental activities, which include public safety, administration, streets, and recreation, saw net position rise by \$1,859,409 to \$22,475,654. Our business-type activities—our water, sewer, and storm sewer utilities—increased by \$3,025,898 to \$30,460,609. These figures demonstrate balanced progress across our operations.

Our total assets stood at \$72,345,703, comprising \$17,475,566 in current and other assets like cash and receivables, and \$54,870,137 in net capital assets, including infrastructure and equipment. Liabilities totaled \$22,157,861, with significant long-term items such as \$12,850,035 due beyond one year, \$7,794,380 in net pension liability, and \$305,680 in net OPEB liability. While these pension and OPEB figures, reported under GASB standards, reflect actuarial realities, our funding levels remain solid: OPERS at 75.7% and OP&F at 62.9% as of the measurement date.

Diving into revenues and expenses, total revenues across activities were \$16,978,870. For governmental activities, we generated \$9,191,279, with 70% (\$6,472,954) from general sources like income taxes (\$5,175,770), property taxes (\$442,185 total across purposes),

and unrestricted grants (\$269,287). Program revenues, including charges for services (\$677,033), operating grants (\$601,978), and capital grants (\$1,439,314), accounted for the remaining 30%. Expenses were \$7,331,870, led by security of persons and property at \$3,019,457, reflecting our commitment to safety. After program offsets, net expenses were \$4,613,545, but strong general revenues led to the positive change.

Our business-type activities performed exceptionally, with revenues of \$7,787,591, nearly all from programs: charges for services (\$4,574,270), operating grants (\$10,750), and capital grants (\$3,028,215, primarily for storm sewer enhancements). Expenses totaled \$4,761,693—\$1,936,349 for water, \$2,217,205 for sewer, and \$608,139 for storm sewer—yielding an operating income of \$112,127, bolstered to the \$3 million net increase after nonoperating items.

At the fund level, governmental funds ended with balances of \$7,059,311, up \$3,113,318. The General Fund, our core operations, closed at \$4,178,586, exceeding budget by over \$2 million thanks to higher income taxes (\$5,102,129 actual vs. \$4,300,000 budgeted) and investment earnings (\$394,913). The Street Fund balance rose to \$1,130,355, supported by \$1,116,249 in intergovernmental revenues. Our ARPA Fund was fully utilized for storm sewer projects, closing at zero as planned.

Proprietary funds show strength: Sewer at \$20,778,859 net position, Storm Sewer at \$5,765,429, and Water at \$3,916,321. Cash flows from operations were positive at \$1,188,428, with investing in capital like \$6,131,132 in construction in progress.

Debt stands at \$13,118,828, with \$753,610 due within one year, but our debt margin is robust at \$14,950,902, allowing flexibility. Capital assets grew, with key additions in infrastructure, though net of \$1,032,866 depreciation.

Looking forward, as noted in our statements, we're committed to growth—new homes, commercial developments, and financial transparency. Recent reports highlight our \$1.9 million carryover into 2024, enabling a budget of nearly \$20 million. We've amended that budget responsibly to meet needs.

In closing, Hillsboro's finances are strong, with increased net position, healthy reserves, and a focus on sustainability. This success stems from your support and our team's dedication.

Furthermore, our robust financial position allows us to invest in our most valuable asset—our employees. Based on the comprehensive wage study conducted by a reputable law firm, we have the fiscal capacity to raise employee wages to align with the recommended standards. This adjustment is not just financially feasible but essential to fairly compensate our dedicated workforce. To oppose this raise is to undervalue the very people who keep our city running.”

PUBLIC REQUESTS

- Kelly Faas

Mr. Eichinger introduced Ms. Faas as the Field Representative for Congressman David Taylor. Ms. Faas introduced herself, and stated that Congressman Taylor has been appointed to the infrastructure and agriculture committee. Ms. Faas explained what they do in her office and shared the locations. Examples of, answer questions regarding federal agencies, assisting in getting tours of White House if planning a trip to D.C., commemorative plaques for outstanding citizen awards, student to military process, and more is what their offices can assist with. Ms. Faas shared that the Highland County Chamber office is one of the best around and looks forward to joining in other events. Ms. Faas shared that when Mr. Taylor is involved in discussions in D.C., whether about job creation or broadband expansion, he is always looking to improve the lives here as well.

COMMUNICATIONS

- Timothy Palmer- Water/Sewer Bill
- 117 Elizabeth Drive – Water Bill

Mr. Eichinger shared that it is being looked into on how to handle these complaints.

CITIZEN'S COMMENTS

Ali Saeidi – 222 John Street is looking for approval to allow him to build houses that only have alley facing access. Mr. Eichinger told Mr. Saeidi that it would be best to attend a planning commission meeting.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE MAYOR

Mayor Harsha introduced Hannah Bivens as the contracted law director for the City of Hillsboro. He stated the Republican Party had no one to fill the position.

REPORT OF THE SAFETY & SERVICE DIRECTOR/HILLSBORO PLANNING COMMISSION

Safety and Service Director Mr. Adkins reported that there were 21 building permits- 13 commercial and 8 residential. Project updates include; Crossroads Park- equipment moving in this week, Beech & Railroad Street - punch list finished up this week, parking lot construction finished paving today and will be striped sometime next week, Harry Sauner Road paving is still scheduled for this month, Rails to Trails will be starting shortly, ODOT bridge repair on 62 N is set to begin October 27th – anticipate traffic delays, Aldi's has an opening next week, Amazon is moving forward fast and has already poured curbs and retaining walls this week, Marriot Hotel is moving forward, GloFiber is moving into homes. Events include, Jeepers Creepers on October 17th, BooFest October 30th. Planning Commission had one denied zoning request, and two approved zoning requests.

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEES:

FINANCE

Stanforth, Chair

Mary

- Wage & Pay Scale review/recommendations for Elected Officials (annual review)

- Wage & Pay Scale review/recommendations for employees (annual review)
 - Meeting 10-9-2025 at 5:00pm
 - Meeting 10-16-2025 at 6:00pm

Ms. Stanforth read the 10-9-2025 meeting minutes as follows; “The Finance Committee met on October 9, 2025 at the City Building at 5 pm. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the wage study and proposed ordinance pertaining to non-union city employees. All members of the Finance Committee were present. Shawn Adkins, Tom Eichinger, Sherry Davis, Gary Lewis, and Dawson Barreras were also in attendance.

I asked Shawn about the points assigned to the supervisory category for the SSD because I couldn’t find that total on the scoring sheet. It was noted and said these were assigned for previous administration. Additional positions were added to the study they were WWTP/WTP Operator III, Equipment Operator and Director of Victims Rights.

An amended ordinance was passed out that added a part-time pay scale based on a 32 hour work week. It also included descriptions for part-time employees and full-time employees serving in part-time positions. Seasonal help will be hired under the State of Ohio’s minimum pay scale. Discussion followed pertaining to pay raises of employees and if the city’s budget could accommodate these increases. Dawson said he would have the budget for us before the October Council meeting. According to the study, there are 13 positions under the baseline of 90% and it would cost the city \$22,279.05 to bring them up to the minimum rate. Adam made a motion to send the amended ordinance to council. I seconded. Adam and myself voted aye and Greg nay. Motion will be sent to council.

I asked if the reason we could not keep a City Treasurer was the salary. It is. The present duties of the Treasurer are to make deposits at the bank. Deposits are made daily and requires a minimum of time. One option I presented was to increase the salary similar to council members and president of council. Some felt that it was too much considering the treasurer’s duties and time involved. No decision was made.

I asked Dawson if he would discuss the proposed budget and the financial state of the city at the October meeting and he agreed.

Adam made a motion to adjourn at 5:49. All were in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Stanforth

Finance Chair.”

No questions, no comments.

PARKS

Don Storer, Chair

No meeting – no questions, no comments

CIVIL SERVICE-EMPLOYEE RELATIONS

Dan Baucher, Chair

- Personal / Vacation Handbook
 - Meeting 9-24-2025 at 6:00pm

Mr. Baucher read the meeting minutes as follows; “The Civil Service/Employee Relations Committee met on Wednesday September 24, 2025 at 6:00pm at the city

building to discuss the proposed changes to the Personnel Policy and Procedures Manual. In attendance were committee members Mary Stanforth, Don Storer, Dan Baucher and SSD Shawn Adkins.

The meeting was called to order at 6:01pm and Shawn Adkins highlighted the proposed changes to the committee. They included probation policy, sick leave policy, personnel time policy, vacation policy and insurance policy.

After discussion Mary made a motion to approve the changes and recommended they go to council for a vote. Don second. All in favor. Meeting was adjourned at 6:23pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Dan Baucher

Civil Service/ Employee Relations Chair.”

These changes will be presented as the first read in November.

No questions, no comments.

STREET AND SAFETY

Adam Wilkin, Chair

- Designated Outdoor Refreshment Area (DORA)
- 3 Hour Parking
 - Meeting 9-23-2025 at 4:00pm

Mr. Wilkin read the meeting minutes as follows; “Street and Safety met to discuss the expansion of the DORA district in Hillsboro. When we discussed this before we agreed that we wanted to expand the DORA district to include The Porch restaurant, Railroad Street, Railroad Street Park, along with Beech Street connecting to Crossroads Park. The delay was because we were waiting for the construction to be completed to make it safer for people to get around. This included new sidewalks and lighting. Now that the construction is finished Street and Safety is ready to move the expansion to full council.

Kathryn made the motion. All were in favor.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:07 PM.

Respectfully submitted, Adam Wilkin, Chair of Street and Safety.”

No questions, no comments

UTILITIES

Greg Maurer, Chair

- Waste Collection
- Water Rates (annual review)
- Ordinance review; 51.076 (G), 51.078, 51.079
- Teresa Covert- Water bill

Mr. Maurer stated he plans to have a meeting before the next council meeting.

No meeting – no questions, no comments

ZONING & ANNEXATION

Jason Brown, Chair

No meeting– no questions, no comments

COMMUNITY ENHANCEMENT COMMITTEE

Kathryn Hapner, Chair

- National Fitness Campaign

No meeting – no questions, no comments

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

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

- **SECOND READING OF ORDINANCES & RESOLUTIONS**

Ordinance 2025-30 An Ordinance amending section 39.35 of the codified ordinances of the City of Hillsboro pertaining to the disposition of human remains

DISCUSSION: No questions, no comments. Ordinance 2025-30 will move to a third reading.

Ordinance 2025-31 An Ordinance to adjust compensation for non-union city employees

DISCUSSION: Mr. Eichinger mentioned this is an amended version of the Ordinance presented at the first reading and the changes are in red. No questions, no comments. Ordinance 2025-30 will move to a third reading.

Ordinance 2025-32 An Ordinance to adjust the salary of the city auditor

DISCUSSION: No questions, no comments. Ordinance 2025-30 will move to a third reading.

- **FIRST READING OF ORDINANCES & RESOLUTIONS**

Ordinance 2025-34 An Ordinance to waive the residency requirements of the Director of Public Service under ORC §735.01

DISCUSSION: Ms. Bivens spoke to the matter and stated first the section will need to be corrected to §737.01. Ms. Bivens stated that when she met with Mayor Harsha and SSD Adkins, there was some concern raised about whether or not residency was a requirement and there may be something in the handbook that states it is not required, however the statute is clear that the SSD needs to be a resident or become a resident within 6 months after his appointment, unless council waives the residency requirement by Ordinance, that is why the legislation is in front of council this evening. No questions, no comments. Ms. Eichinger told council they really had two options; suspend the three-reading rule and act on it tonight or go through three-readings.

MOTION: Mr. Maurer moved to suspend the three-reading rule for Ordinance 2025-34, seconded by Mr. Wilkin. Vote: Mr. Baucher-yes, Mr. Brown-no, Ms. Hapner-no, Mr. Maurer-yes, Ms. Stanforth-yes, Mr. Storer-yes, Mr. Wilkin-yes. Votes were 5/6, therefore the three-reading rule cannot be suspended. Ordinance 2025-34 will move to a second reading.

Ordinance 2025-35 An Ordinance making supplemental appropriations for the City of Hillsboro, Highland County, Ohio

DISCUSSION: Mr. Barreras stated this legislation allows them to appropriate the funds they receive for the SRO back into the police budget.

MOTION: Mr. Maurer moved to approve and adopt Ordinance 2025-35, seconded by Mr. Storer. Vote: Mr. Baucher-yes, Mr. Maurer-yes, Mr. Storer-yes, Mr. Brown-yes, Ms.

Hapner-yes, Ms. Stanforth-yes, Mr. Wilkin-yes. Ordinance 2025-35 is approved and adopted.

Ordinance 2025-36 An Ordinance making supplemental appropriations for the City of Hillsboro, Highland County, Ohio

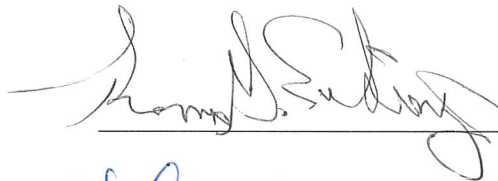
DISCUSSION: Mr. Barreras stated this legislation will allow them to appropriate funds from an insurance claim received from the K-9 unit to put back into the police budget. Mr. Brown asked if it was for a vehicle. Mr. Barreras stated it was for the dog. Mr. Brown asked if we had insurance for a dog and Mr. Barreras replied, "Absolutely, it is a \$15,000 dog."

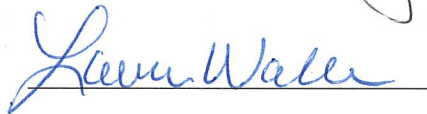
MOTION: Mr. Storer moved to approve and adopt Ordinance 2025-36, seconded by Mr. Maurer. Vote: Ms. Hapner-yes, Mr. Maurer-yes, Ms. Stanforth-yes, Mr. Brown-yes, Mr. Wilkin-yes, Mr. Storer-yes, Mr. Baucher-yes. Ordinance 2025-36 is approved and adopted.

NEW BUSINESS:

ADJOURN

Council adjourned at 7:29pm. The next scheduled meeting of the Hillsboro City Council is Thursday November 13, 2025 at 7:00p.m. at City Hall, 130 N High Street, 2nd floor.

 Tom Eichinger, President

 Lauren Walker, Clerk