

# Holdingsford City Council Meeting Minutes

## Monday, November 13<sup>th</sup>, 2023

**Present:** Seth Young, Eric Berscheid, Tim Winter, Nicky Lahr, Jayme Opatz, Andy Higgins, Keith Hommerding, Amy Opatz, Robb Berscheid, Melvin Breth, Aaron Rudolph, Herman Lensing.

Eric called the City Council meeting to order at 7:02 p.m., and the pledge of allegiance was recited.

Jayme made a motion to accept the consent agenda and financials from October. Tim seconded the motion. AIF

**Guests:** Robb Berscheid stated that he would like more clarification on how the Equivalent Dwelling Units (EDUs) are calculated and would like more consistency with how/when they are calculated in the future. He stated that Everything Signs will be going up from 1 to 1.4 in 2024, and it is mostly based on sprinkler usage. He would like to know what the original document's intent was.

### Department reports:

**Maintenance report** was read by Eric. The lift station #1 pump failed and was sent for repairs. The Plow truck was brought in to have the hydraulics repaired. The dump station retaining wall and ramp are completed. The biosolids are on hold due to wet fields, and a backup plan is in place. A 4-way stop has been installed at Washington and Main Street. Hydrant flushing and winterizing are done. Park bathrooms are closed and sprinklers are closed for the season. Fall maintenance on City Hall HVAC units is complete. The city branch pile is still an issue. Jayme stated he knows someone, who may be interested in doing branch removal and will reach out to them. It was also noted that Maintenance is recommending discontinuing the City Branch drop off (preferred) as it is expensive, non-residents continue to use it, and there is free branch pickup once a month from Borgmann's in the summer. They also found a forestry attachment at the cost of approximately \$21,000 that would chip the wood down into compostable pieces.

**City Engineer's report:** Eric read Dave Blommel's report. He stated that he spent the month preparing for the Capital Investment Committee's visit on November 9<sup>th</sup>. The PowerPoint presentation was shared. The City is seeking 1 million dollars in funding for an approximate 2-million-dollar project. Dave has also been in contact with the USDA to discuss the possibility of a bonding application. The Median household income in the city recently jumped and may make it more difficult to secure funding. He is also continuing the process of locating a test drill area for a new well.

**Fire Department report:** Keith Hommerding reported the fire calls: 135 total this year; 17 in Brockway, 62 in Holdingsford, 47 in Holding, 8 in Krain. There were; 3 structure fires, 3 car fires, 7 grass/wildland fires, 3 misc. fires, 100 medical calls, 11 car accidents, and 10 canceled in route/good intent calls. He also explained to the Council they no longer use the Rescue One rig, and would like to get rid of it to free up space in the garage. Jayme made a motion to permit Keith to do as he sees fit with the rig, by selling or donating it. Andy seconded the motion. AIF. Aaron Rudolph and Keith spoke to the Council regarding using Paycom for payroll and not being able to receive a paper check. He stated that many Firefighters were upset with having to work with a different payroll company and asked if the Clerks could issue the checks. Nicky stated the city is no longer using the software to do payroll, but for an additional cost, Paycom could issue checks. Eric asked Nicky to report the cost of paper checks at the next meeting. Eric stated that the council discussed the Pay increase for the Fire Department. Eric added the Council discussed a pay raise for the fire department at the work session before the meeting, and asked if any Councilmembers would like to make a motion. Jayme made a motion to increase their pay by \$1.00 per hour. Seth seconded the motion. Tim abstained from the vote. Motion passed.

**Liquor Store Report** was read by Amy Opatz. She stated the store profits for the month were \$2,411. A few large expenditures for October included; \$1,000 for building repairs to control basement flooding, a larger than normal beer order as costs will be going up soon, \$749 to advertise in the snowmobile trail maps, and extra payroll for training and investigating to the former Manager. Amy noted that several improvements were made including a liquor riser, all off-sale was remerchandised, a monthly specials calendar was implemented, ordered new signs from distributors to; advertise food, post specials, and events on the exterior of the building. The gambling area was rearranged to give more space to count money and move the larger money boxes directly under the security cameras. Scheduled a carpenter to brace the wooden shelving in the basement used for liquor storage. Tim recommended looking into metal shelving in the future. Amy spoke with the Point of Sales provider and planned a revamp of the entire system during November and December to get inventory tracking more accurate and to increase the ease of use for bartenders. Amy noted she developed a schedule for hours for the remainder of 2023 and 2024. Jayme made a motion to hire a new bartender, Susan Sanchez Mohs, and Tim seconded the motion. AIF. Staffing is now complete.

**Clerk's Report** was read by Nicky Lahr. She said; dog tag renewal letters were sent out with the October utility bills, VOIP phones are now installed, Verizon and Allstream have been cancelled, The server has been set up and is active, and nearly all data from 2023 has been entered into Banyon accounting software, the sealed bid items all sold, except the light poles, preparations made for the Senate Capital Investment tour, preparing for large bond payments and TIF payments in December, and will receive the second ½ of

property taxes and LGA in December. Nicky will be at a government project funding training on November 28<sup>th</sup>. Tim made a motion to approve the closure of City Hall on November 24<sup>th</sup> (the day after Thanksgiving). Seth seconded the motion. AIF. Nicky mentioned the non-union employee's COLA had not yet been determined. Seth made a motion for a 4% increase for non-union employees in 2024 to match the union COLA. Andy seconded the motion. AIF. Nicky also asked the council to approve a dental plan upgrade with the employee paying the cost difference. Jayme made a motion to move to the comprehensive dental plan with the employee paying the difference between the comprehensive dental plan and the preventative dental plan. Seth seconded the motion. AIF.

**New Business:** A citizen's request was made for parking stripes to be placed along Main Street. The Council members did not make a motion on this, but did discuss it. It was determined that it would not solve the issues, and would create more upkeep for the maintenance workers. They also stated it may create a liability for putting in appropriate handicapped spaces. A gambling permit request was made by the Knights of Columbus for a raffle. Andy made a motion to approve resolution 23-11-13-2 for the permit. Tim seconded it. AIF. Another gambling permit request was made by the Holdingford Post Prom Committee for a raffle. Jayme made a motion to approve Resolution 23-11-13-3 for the permit. Andy seconded it. AIF. On November 30, all utility bills that are more than 60 days overdue will be assessed to property taxes. Jayme made a motion to approve Resolution 23-11-13-1 allowing the County to assess the residents noted on Exhibit "A". Andy seconded the motion. AIF. Arlie Lawrenz asked for approximately \$600 on behalf of the Holdingford Lions, to put caps on the blockwork at the City welcome sign, near the school. Robb Berscheid stated he didn't feel putting caps on the blocks would look presentable, as the blocks were not even. Eric asked for more details on the project before issuing the funds. No action was taken.

Robb Berscheid mentioned he had a discussion with the Clerks and Maintenance team about developing a form that would be filled out by an organization, whenever a project or improvement are proposed on City Property. This would help identify projects that may add extra upkeep time, who will be responsible for the upkeep, as well as ensure all projects are done to completion, and within code. Nicky is in the process of preparing these forms.

**Additional agenda items/council member updates:** Andy stated a citizen wanted to make a recommendation for a dog park within the City. Eric stated the individual can present a location and cost to move forward with a project. He reminded everyone the Council Members are not paid employees, so someone else would need to take on projects like this. He also mentioned this would add more workload to city workers to maintain, cleaning the area, weed whipping the fence line. He was, however, not opposed to the idea. Eric also asked the Clerk to draft a letter to Leighton Engineering asking for quotes before IT projects are implemented. Nicky stated they planned to send a service agreement contract to the Council for consideration.

Eric stated that the Council had a discussion during their work session involving the charitable gambling at the HMLS. Jayme made a motion to change the charitable gambling to one and have it be the Relief Fire Association. Andy seconded the motion. In discussion, Eric stated that he would like the Clerk to send a 30-day notice to the Holdingford Booster Club notifying them the Muni is terminating the gambling contract, and have the end date fall at least one day past the next council meeting to give the Booster club the opportunity to discuss. All members were in favor, with Tim abstaining. Tim indicated having one charity instead of two, would help eliminate errors and confusion, and reduce the number of people having access behind the bar. The Fire Relief Association said they would be willing to provide e-tabs and a pull tab dispenser machine, along with one or two pull tab boxes behind the bar and agreed to do a meat raffle, or other events that would help bring customers into the bar.

#### **Looking Forward:**

Next Council Meeting Monday, December 11<sup>th</sup>, 2023

City Hall Closed November 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup>, 2023

Santa Night, December 1st

**Adjourn:** Jayme made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:21 p.m. Andy seconded the motion. AIF

Signed:

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Nicky Lahr  
City Clerk-Treasurer, Holdingford