

# Holdingsford City Council Meeting and Truth in Taxation Minutes

## Monday, December 11th, 2023

**Present:** Seth Young, Tim Winter, Nicky Lahr, Jayme Opatz, Andy Higgins, Keith Hommerding, Amy Opatz, Steve Horvath, Dorine Rausch, Lee Paulzine, Amanda Thompson, Linda Zapzalka, Herman Lensing, Ron Hylla, Dave Skwira, Melvin Breth, Paul Tomasek, Mary Tomasek, Gordy Sjaheim, Arlene Warga, Aaron Rudolph, Adam Achmann

At 7:03 p.m. acting Mayor Jayme opened the public hearing for truth in taxation. He stated the Council is recommending no increase for the 2024 levy, and it can remain at \$250,000. No comments or questions were made.

At 7:04 p.m. Jayme closed the public hearing and opened the Council meeting. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Tim made a motion to approve Resolution 23-12-11-2 to adopt the 2024 budget and Levy. Seth seconded the Motion. AIF.

Seth made a motion to approve the consent agenda, including; November 13<sup>th</sup> 2023 Minutes, Financial documents. Tim seconded the motion. AIF.

**Guests:** Dave Skwira with Community Country Church. Seth made a motion to pass permit #26-23-11-30 for a digital sign installation. Andy seconded the motion. AIF. Dorine Rausch requested forgiveness of the sewer portion of her water bill due to a running toilet at their home in November. Jayme made a motion to remove \$448.57 from the bill. Tim seconded the motion. AIF

Seth mentioned any business going forward to do with the school, he will be abstaining from.

Ron Hylla spoke on behalf of the Holdingsford Booster Club. He explained the Booster Club was invited into the Muni when the JC's Club disbanded, apx 25 years ago. He spoke in regards to a termination letter sent out and he is requesting the termination letter rescinded pending further discussion with the group. He would like a committee with Jayme Opatz, Amy Opatz, Paul Brunz, Melissa Hartung, and Tim Winter. Ron stated the funds raised through charitable gambling provides student athletes with programs, and improvements. He also stated the Booster Club contributed to the City with donations to the Fireworks for Holdingsford Daze, the City sign, and continuous contributions to the city. He would like to work out the differences so these can continue.

Jayme responded there was a discussion at the work session, and would like to make a motion to rescind the termination of the Booster lease. The Committee will meet in January to discuss issues and possible solutions. The Committee will present at the February 12<sup>th</sup> City Council meeting. Andy made a motion to rescind the termination of the Booster Club lease. Jayme Seconded the motion. Tim and Seth Abstained. Nicky reminded the Council the vote is not quorum, if Seth didn't vote. Tim stated this was a Booster Club issue, not a school issue, so Seth could vote. Seth voted in favor of rescinding the Booster Club Lease. The Committee will meet on or before January 22<sup>nd</sup> Members shall notify Nicky when the schedule is set.

Keith stated the Fire department does not have anything to do with the Booster termination.

### Department reports:

**Fire Department report:** Keith Hommerding reported the calendar fundraiser is ready to be sent out and is thankful for all of the generosity in the community. He noted the YTD calls including 72 in Holdingsford, 48 in Holding Township, 18 in Brockway, and 8 in Krain. Looking to hire a few more members. No meetings in Nov or Dec, but will begin the first responder refresher. MFTBE has allocated \$204 per fireperson this year to cover expenses. Jayme made a motion to approve the Fire Payroll for the year. Seth seconded the motion. AIF. Jayme made a motion to approve 7 paper checks for the fire dept. Andy seconded the motion. AIF.

**Maintenance report.** Steve Horvath reported the biosolids were land-applied with no complications. Water quality samples were taken for MDH. Steve thanked WM. D. Scepaniak for use of the lift, to hang Christmas decorations on Main Street. They sealed cracks around the building, and bagged leaves. The lift station pump went out, leaving the city with none. The lift station had to be placed in a bypass into the river for 22 hours. He notified the MPCA as required. TriState was able to get the pump fixed and running the next morning. The other pump is still a few months out for replacement. Steve asked for a formal thank you to Larson Excavating for lending the city a pump in the emergency. Seth made a motion to thank Larson Excavating for the pump and services. Tim seconded the motion. AIF. Nicky will draft a letter to Larson Excavating.

Steve presented quotes for 3 new trucks for maintenance. He recommended the Chevy as it is available currently. Seth made a motion to approve the Chevy and the plow if Granite City Motors is not able to get a better deal by the end of the day on December 12<sup>th</sup>. Tim seconded it. AIF. Steve asked if the Council would like an Ice Rink set up this year. It was decided the ice rink would get set up if the weather remained cold enough. Steve asked the council to approve the paydown of Comp hours for Maintenance, at the end of the year, per the union contract. Jayme made a motion to approve the paydown. Seth seconded the motion. AIF. Steve asked Jayme if he found anything out about brush removal. Jayme said he has not yet, but will before the next meeting.

**City Engineer's report:** was read by Jayme. Dave Blommel's report said he is working on looking for locations for test well drilling which will most likely take place in the spring of 2024. He will be at the January meeting to present more information.

**Liquor Store Report** was read by Amy Opatz. Profit for Nov is \$4969.48. She is working on a full overhaul of the POS system. This will make inventory counts off tremendously this year, but will make it better in the future. She received a menu board from a distributor to advertise food. Amy removed the large chest freezer from the back room, as it was not functioning as it should. This creates more shelving space for liquor. It was recommended the floor is repaired in that area before shelving is installed. She requested Council members to help with inventory on January 1<sup>st</sup>. Jayme and Seth agreed, and Nicky will help as well. Inventory will start at 9:00 a.m. on January 1<sup>st</sup>, The Muni will open at noon on January 1<sup>st</sup>.

**Clerk's Report** was read by Nicky Lahr. She stated that the City received the property tax settlement from Stearns County. The second half of the LGA will also be here in the next few weeks. TIF and Tax Abatements were mailed in the amount of \$33185.02. Two Rivers TIF was decertified, and payments will not need to be made to Two Rivers next year. Berkon's Abatement payments started this year. Tri-County Humane Society's annual contract was signed. Nicky attended a training put on by the MRWA, on intro to funding public projects. The rooftop furnace went out again. A new company, Air Maxx, was called out to repair it. The gas pressure needed to be adjusted and the flame sensors cleaned. The City received notice from Schlenner & Wenner, will no longer be able provide the annual audit for the City. Molly will do the Muni inventory, if we are unable to have anyone else lined up by then. KDV is reviewing our information and could be a possibility, at this time they are unsure they will be able to squeeze us in. Nicky will continue to seek out new audit services. The City is transitioning to Paychex payroll company, and the Paycom contract will be terminated. Paycom was not able to provide the services promised. Election training will be coming up for the 2024 elections. Nicky requested the Clerks to get paid their regular wage, instead of the judges' wage when doing job-required election work. Jayme made a motion to approve. Tim seconded the motion. AIF

**New Business:** Leighton Engineering proposed IT services of 8 hours monthly at \$1200 per month to maintain IT at the City, Muni, FD, and maintenance, and address water tower issues, etc. The council would like to see other quotes before deciding. Andy made a motion to approve the transfer of \$22,383 from general checking into the Rural Development account. Tim Seconded the motion. AIF. Jayme made a motion to approve the proposed ESST policy as presented at the work session. Seth Seconded the motion. AIF. Andy made a motion to approve resolution 23-12-11-1 to designate the 2024 polling place. Tim seconded the motion. AIF. Jayme made a motion to approve the 2024 Council meeting schedule. Andy seconded the motion. AIF. The schedule of fees will be addressed at the January meeting.

**Additional agenda items/council member updates** A reminder garbage will be picked up on December 27<sup>th</sup> instead of 26<sup>th</sup> due to the Holiday.

**Looking Forward:** Next Council meeting is on January 8<sup>th</sup>, 2024. City Hall will be closed on December 25<sup>th</sup> and January 1<sup>st</sup> for the holidays.

**Past Due Utility Bills:** Notices were sent to Nathaniel Posch and Greg & Kyna Reiter.

Tim made a motion to adjourn at 8:23 p.m. Andy Seconded the motion.

Signed:

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Nicky Lahr  
City Clerk-Treasurer, Holdingford