

City of Hills and Dales
Minutes of the City Commission Meeting
Thursday, May 9, 2024
7:00 p.m.

The Commission met in regular session on Thursday, May 9, 2024, at 7:00 p.m. at the home of Treasurer Joan Taylor, 3300 Mt. Rainier Drive. City officials present were Commissioners Bill Bowman, Roger Owen and Barbara Rogers, Treasurer Joan Taylor and City Clerk Jeanne Keats. Mayor Wokutch and Commissioner Adair were absent. Mayor Pro Tem Owen called the meeting to order.

Minutes

Mayor Pro Tem Owen called for a motion to approve the April 11, 2024 Regular Commission Meeting minutes. Commissioner Bowman so moved, Commissioner Rogers seconded, and the Commission approved by unanimous vote.

Resident Comments

The Commission welcomed resident Jeff Burnett to the meeting. He briefly introduced himself and said he might be interested in becoming a candidate for commissioner. The Commission thanked him for his interest.

Treasurer's Report

Financials

Treasurer Taylor reported total City assets as of April 30, 2024 of \$323,443.99. April's total income was \$786.35 and total expenses were \$5,265.53. Both income and expenses to date are in line with the budget.

After brief discussion, Mayor Pro Tem Owen called for a motion to approve the financials through April 30, 2024, Commissioner Rogers so moved, Mayor Pro Tem Owen seconded, and the Commission approved by unanimous vote.

Changes to City's Insurance

Treasurer Taylor told the Commission she had been informed by our insurance agent, Arthur J. Gallagher Risk Management Services (AJG) that our carrier, Liberty Mutual, is no longer insuring municipalities. She said that she is working with our AJG representative to locate a new carrier, and she is currently waiting on several quotes.

Second Reading – 2024-2025 Property Tax Ordinance

Treasurer Taylor and the Commission reviewed the property tax ordinance for the second time and discussed the City's current property tax rate of 19.5 cents/\$100 of assessed property value in light of the City's current and future financial needs.

City Clerk Keats told the Commission that, if the Commission deemed it necessary, the property tax rate could be increased to 20.0 cents and still be slightly less than 4% thus avoiding any chance of a recall vote.

After discussion, Mayor Pro Tem Owen called for a motion to increase the property tax rate from 19.5 cents to 20.0 cents for the 2024-2025 fiscal year at 20.0 cents, Commissioner Rogers so moved, Mayor Pro Tem Owen seconded and the Commission approved by unanimous vote.

The Commission will pass the new property tax ordinance at the June 13 Commission meeting.

Second Reading – 2024-2025 Budget Ordinance

Treasurer Taylor and the Commission discussed the proposed budget for fiscal year July 1, 2024 through June 30, 2025 for the second time. After discussion, Treasurer Taylor said she would make the adjustments the Commission discussed. The Commission will pass the new budget ordinance at the June 13 Commission meeting.

REGULAR COMMITTEE REPORTS

Municipal Governance and Legal

Commissioner Candidate Filing Deadlines

In the absence of Mayor Wokutch, City Clerk Keats reminded commissioners that a new Commission will be elected at the General Election on November 5, 2024, and that those wishing to run must either submit their candidate paperwork to the Board of Elections by June 4 at 4:00 p.m. or, alternately, file as a write-in candidate by October 25, 2024. The new term for those elected on November 5 will be January 1, 2025 through December 31, 2026.

City Clerk Keats provided the commissioners with written procedures for candidate filings.

Rumpke Renewal

City Clerk Keats provided the Commission with four renewal options provided by Rumpke Waste Management.

After discussion, Mayor Pro Tem Owen called for a motion to accept the option which requires curbside only trash collection beginning July 1, 2024, and direct Rumpke to prepare a new 3-year contract, said contract to be reviewed for final approval at the June 13, 2024 Commission meeting. Commissioner Bowman so moved, Commissioner Rogers seconded and the Commission approved by unanimous vote.

The primary factor in the Commission's final decision was the cost savings of over \$18,000 over the term of a three-year contract if the City changes to curbside only trash collection. City Clerk Keats told the Commission that Rumpke has offered 10-12 hardship exemptions, and they will provide 95-gallon Rumpke trash carts to those who do not already have one. She said that trash will continue to be collected two times per week and there will be no changes to recycling or yard waste services.

Maintenance, Utilities and Beautification

Proposed Removal of Red Bud Tree

Mayor Pro Tem Owen said that an older red bud tree that is in poor condition and hanging over the Allen driveway at 3200 Mt. Rainier Drive needs to be removed, and he will get a quote for the work.

Status – New Entrance Plantings

Mayor Pro Tem Owen told the Commission that he recently planted a new dogwood and three viburnum bushes in the entrance common area. The total cost of \$468.44 was less than the amount approved at the April meeting. He presented receipts to Treasurer Taylor for reimbursement.

Trimming of Junipers in the Cul-de-Sac

Mayor Pro Tem said that GreenUp LLC trimmed the junipers in the cul-de-sac for aesthetic reasons and to give the holly tree ample room to grow. He has not yet received GreenUp's invoice.

Control of Invasive Honeysuckle in Entrance Woods (ARPA funded)

Mayor Pro Tem Owen provided the Commission with information about how invasive honeysuckle can destroy woodlands. He also provided a list of the species of trees that could be lost in our entrance woods if no action is taken to control this invasive pest plant. He asked the Commission to read these materials before the June 13 meeting for further discussion.

Roads, Snow Removal and Signage

Commonwealth Paving Proposal

Commissioner Bowman presented a proposal he received from Commonwealth Paving which indicated that it would cost \$254,200 to pave our City's roads if we were to pave them today. The Commission noted that that amount is twice the cost the City paid when our roads were paved in 2015. The Commission discussed the need to grow the City's assets through incremental tax increases and cost saving measures in order to have sufficient funds to pave the roads in the future.

Technology Services and Community Security

Walking Path in Woods (ARPA funded)

Commissioner Adair was absent, but he sent an email to city officials saying he had spoken with someone in Indian Hills who is doing (or has done) a walking path project similar to the one he has proposed. His contact said it would be prudent to have a survey before embarking on a walking path project. Additionally, it would be more cost effective to use a landscaping company as opposed to a landscape design firm for the project. No action was taken.

Communications and Neighborhood

Summer Neighborhood Outdoor Gathering

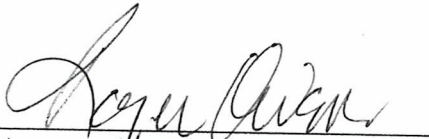
Commissioner Rogers told the Commission that RSVP's are coming in for the community picnic planned for Sunday, June 9 and the event is "a go". A deposit has been made on a tent, tables and chairs. The event will be announced again in a community news flyer that will go out shortly.

Other Business

Commissioner Rogers asked Mayor Pro Tem Owen if the overgrown forsythia between the Spurlock's and Cronin's homes at 3420 and 3412 Mt. Rainier, respectively, could be trimmed. The bushes are in a utility easement, but they grow into the roadway and block motorists' lines of vision. Mayor Pro Tem Owen said he would get a quote for trimming them.

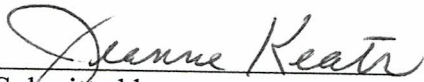
Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the Commission, Mayor Pro Tem Owen called for a motion to adjourn the meeting, Commissioner Rogers so moved, Mayor Pro Tem Owen seconded, and the Commission approved by unanimous vote. The meeting adjourned at 8:00 p.m.



Approved by
Mayor Pro Tem Roger Owen

6/13/24
Date



Submitted by
City Clerk Jeanne Keats

June 13, 2024
Date

***NEXT COMMISSION MEETING
Thursday, June 13, at 7:00 p.m.
At the home of Treasurer, Joan Taylor, 3300 Mt. Rainier Drive***