

CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF HILLSBORO, ILLINOIS
HILLSBORO CITY HALL
Minutes of the Regular Meeting – Tuesday, February 17, 2026

1. The meeting was called to order by Mayor Don Downs at 7:00 p.m.
2. Roll Call was taken:

Present: Mayor Don Downs
Commissioners Fred Butler, Tommy Justison, Patrick Ward and Kendra Wright

Absent: None.

Also Present: City Clerk David Jenkins
City Attorney Chris Sherer
Econ. Dev. & Community Planner Melissa Smith
Street Dept. Supervisor Justin Chappellear
City Engineer Jeremy Connor

3. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.
4. **Public Comment:** None.
5. Minutes of the February 3rd, 2026 regular meeting and February 6th, 2026 Special Meeting were approved as presented.
6. **Mayor and Commissioners' Departmental Reports:**

Written reports for the Streets and Public Properties Departments were submitted. Commissioner Butler reported he will be working on his departments' budgets this week.

Commissioner Justison reported the police vehicle that was being worked on is back in service. He stated they will also look at a potential lease rotation for squads. He reported the Fire Department has responded to four calls so far this month.

Commissioner Wright reported the water and sewer department remains understaffed. She stated the water quality remains good, and bids were opened today for the next phase of the lead service line replacement project.

Commissioner Ward reported budgets are being worked on.

Mayor Downs stated downtown still needs to be addressed regarding snow accumulation for future weather events. He said rock salt is still being used in some areas, and it is starting to deteriorate the sidewalks.

7. Economic Development & Community Planner Report:

A written report from the Economic Development and Community Planner was submitted. Smith reported she submitted a plan for celebrating the nation's 250th anniversary. She also reported she has begun some social media projects. She stated she applied for a humanities grant thanks to a collaboration with Imagine Hillsboro, and she will update the council when she has more information.

8. City Engineer Report:

Connor reported Broad Street has been approved by IDOT, and the City just needs to finalize the funding for it. He also reported the Seward Street project is scheduled for a June letting.

9. Discussion / Action – Fun Run/Walk on Saturday, March 7th at the Central Park/Challacombe Trail for Stamp Out Cancer Team Hillsboro-ish: Motion by Butler and second by Justison to approve the Fun Run/Walk on Saturday, March 7th at the Central Park/Challacombe Trail for Stamp Out Cancer Team Hillsboro-ish. Motion carried with a 5-0 vote in favor.

10. Discussion / Action – 5K Fun Run/Walk Fundraiser on Saturday, March 28, Starting and Finishing at the Hillsboro Free Methodist Church: The City received a request to hold a 5K fun run/walk fundraiser on Saturday, March 28th from 8 to 9:30 a.m. The event will begin and end at the Hillsboro Free Methodist Church. A route map was provided. Tracy Churchwell addressed the council regarding the event. She stated she is not anticipating they will need help from the City, as she believes they will be able to get volunteers to assist where needed. Justison stated he spoke with Chief Randy Leetham, and as long as auxiliary police are not needed, they could provide use of traffic cones. **Motion by Justison and second by Ward to approve the 5K fun run/walk fundraiser on Saturday, March 28th from 8 to 9:30 a.m. starting and finishing at the Hillsboro Free Methodist Church. Motion carried with a 5-0 vote in favor.**

11. Discussion / Action – 2026 MCEDC Dues and Great Rivers and Routes Combined County Contract (Kaitlyn Fath): The City received an invoice for their annual dues to the Montgomery County Economic Development Corporation (MCEDC) in the amount of \$5,902, which is the amount of \$1 per capita according to the City's 2020 Census population. They also received a combined contract with Montgomery County for the Great Rivers and Routes Tourism Bureau, and Hillsboro's share of the proposed payment split is \$6,750. MCEDC Executive Director Kaitlyn Fath briefed the council on what Great Rivers and Routes would bring as a partner, including experienced social media and search engine optimization technicians, paid printing, and media and content production. She reported Litchfield is on board with the partnership, and Nokomis is close. Downs reported the City's MCEDC share should not include the prison population, which would bring the total to around \$4,252. Fath stated the City is welcome to pay whatever they would like. **Motion by Wright and second by Ward to approve paying**

the 2026 MCEDC Dues in the amount of \$4,252 and approve the Great Rivers and Routes Combined County Contract in the amount of \$6,750. Justison abstained. Motion carried with a 4-0-1 vote in favor.

12. Discussion – Tyler Woodring to Address Council Regarding Rental Property Issue:

Tyler Woodring submitted a request to be included on the agenda to discuss an issue regarding a rental property in the City. His desire is for action to be taken against the landlord responsible for the property, claiming it is a public safety hazard. He did not attend the meeting, however Downs stated he still wanted to discuss the proper procedures for addressing properties like this. Justison stated most of the issues Mr. Woodring had appeared to be in the interior. Ward said it would be nice to be able to address all of these derelict properties, but the issue facing most municipalities is cost. No action was taken.

13. Discussion / Action – Paying Bills for the Month of February 2026: Bills for the month total \$486,421.83. Ward reported this was a smaller month than normal. **Motion by Ward and second by Wright to approve paying bills for the month of February 2026 in the amount of \$486,421.83. Motion carried with a 5-0 vote in favor.**

14. Discussion / Action – Ordinance No. 1853 an Ordinance Delegating Authority to the Mayor to Approve Assignments of Certain Leases: The ordinance under consideration allows the mayor to authorize and execute the assignment of leases related to Lakewood Estates. The council held a special meeting on February 6th to approve such a lease. The adoption of this ordinance allows these leases to be assigned without having to go through council. **Motion by Ward and second by Wright to adopt Ordinance No. 1853 an Ordinance Delegating Authority to the Mayor to Approve Assignments of Certain Leases. Justison abstained. Motion carried with a 4-0-1 vote in favor.**

15. Discussion / Action – Purchasing Backhoe Using Business District Funds: The City is in need of a new backhoe, and Street Superintendent Chappellear found a used machine for \$80,000. Moran Economic Development informed the City that using Business District Funds to purchase a backhoe is permissible since the machine will be used in the district. The backhoe is a 2020 John Deere 410L with about 2400 hours on it. **Motion by Butler and second by Wright to approve purchasing a backhoe using business district funds. Motion carried with a 5-0 vote in favor.**

16. Discussion / Action – Ordinance No. 1854 an Ordinance Authorizing the Disposal of Surplus Personal Property Owned by the City of Hillsboro, Illinois: With the council approving the purchase of a new backhoe, the City is able to sell the existing machine. Prior to that, it must be declared surplus property. Butler stated the funds for the backhoe will be returned to the business district. **Motion by Wright and second by Butler to adopt Ordinance No. 1854 an Ordinance Authorizing the Disposal of Surplus Personal Property Owned by the City of Hillsboro, Illinois. Motion carried with a 5-0 vote in favor.**

- 17. Discussion / Action – Resolution No. 2026-09 a Supplemental Resolution Under the Illinois Highway Code Regarding West Fairground Avenue, and Local Public Agency Amendment #1:** This resolution addresses using STU funds for the West Fairground Avenue project. Connor reported there was a clerical issue when the original contract was submitted in 2023. He said the overall engineering number has not changed. **Motion by Butler and second by Ward to adopt Resolution No. 2026-09 a Supplemental Resolution Under the Illinois Highway Code Regarding West Fairground Avenue, and approve Local Public Agency Amendment #1. Motion carried with a 5-0 vote in favor.**
- 18. Discussion – Downtown Main Street Project Design – Lighting and Greenspace:** Butler, Connor, Smith, Jenkins, Chappellear, and Joe Lyerla met downtown last week to discuss details regarding the design of the Downtown Main Street Sidewalk project. Connor expressed a desire to have guidance regarding some of the details with lighting and greenspace. He said there have been questions about how many total light poles to install, as well as the size of the poles. Regarding greenspace, Butler stated there will be bumpouts located in a couple areas downtown, and he suggested having planters located on them. Ward stated the bumpouts will still cause issues with vehicles needing to inch out before crossing intersections. Butler reiterated that the sidewalks will be decreased by one foot to widen the street. Connor stated he is welcoming feedback from the council members before proceeding. No action was taken.
- 19. Discussion / Action – Façade Improvement Grant Reimbursement to Jardogs.AI, Inc. for Work Completed at 925 S. Main St.:** In December, Jardogs.AI was awarded a façade improvement grant for a new sign on their building at 925 South Main Street. The total project cost was \$11,734.19, and the City’s reimbursement amount is \$5,000. **Motion by Ward and second by Butler to approve the façade improvement grant reimbursement to Jardogs.AI, Inc. in the amount of \$5,000 for work completed at 925 S. Main St. Motion carried with a 5-0 vote in favor.**
- 20. Discussion / Action – Purchase and Installation of Snow Plow for City of Hillsboro Fire Department Vehicle(s):** The City received a quote from Delfs Garage for a western snow plow for the fire department at a cost of \$6660, and an estimate from Maul’s Shop in Jacksonville to install the plow at a cost of \$1,543.44. Justison reported they looked at putting a snow plow on the Kubota last year, but it was extremely cost prohibitive. He said this item is in the budget for this year. **Motion by Ward and second by Wright to approve purchasing a snow plow for the City of Hillsboro Fire Department from Delfs Garage for a cost of \$6,660, and the installation of the plow by Maul’s Shop for a cost of \$1,543.44. Motion carried with a 5-0 vote in favor.**
- 21. Discussion / Action – Proposal from Sentinel Emergency Solutions for Electric Fire Blanket for City of Hillsboro Fire Department:** The City received a proposal from Sentinel Emergency Solutions for an electric fire blanket for the fire department for a cost of \$3,290. Justison stated they had a training event on what would happen with an electric vehicle fire. He said there are limited things you can do in an electric vehicle fire, but this is one of them. **Motion by Justison and second by Ward to approve**

purchasing an electric fire blanket for the fire department from Sentinel Emergency Solutions for a cost of \$3,290. Motion carried with a 5-0 vote in favor.

- 22. Discussion / Action – Pay Application #7 to Plocher Construction for Work Completed on the Wastewater Treatment Facility Upgrade Project:** The amount due this pay application is \$1,202,677.06. **Motion by Wright and second by Ward to approve pay application #7 to Plocher Construction in the amount of \$1,202,677.06 for work completed on the Wastewater Treatment Facility Upgrade project. Motion carried with a 5-0 vote in favor.**
- 23. Discussion / Action – Purchasing Fireworks from Spectrum Pyrotechnics, Inc. for the Independence Day Celebration:** During the previous meeting, the council expressed a desire to seek out proposals for an enhanced fireworks display to coincide with the nation's 250th anniversary celebration. The original proposal came with a price of \$13,000, which is a \$1,000 increase from last year's cost. City Clerk Jenkins received three additional quotes from Spectrum Pyrotechnics at costs of \$15,000, \$18,000, and \$20,000. He also reached out to two other pyrotechnic display companies, with only one returning his request. The company who responded urged the City to stay with the same vendor as it is becoming impossible to put together shows on the 4th of July this year. Ward stated the council could do either the \$18,000 or the \$20,000 show. Wright suggested going with the \$20,000 since it is the 250th celebration. **Motion by Wright and second by Butler to approve purchasing fireworks from Spectrum Pyrotechnics, Inc. for the Independence Day Celebration in the amount of \$20,000. Motion carried with a 5-0 vote in favor.**
- 24. Discussion / Action – Vacating Alleyways Adjacent to Vandalia Street and South Main Street:** The City received a request from Jeff Eickhoff to vacate the alleyways adjacent to the current White and Associates building. In order to vacate the alleys, the council will have to adopt an ordinance doing so. Approving a motion to vacate today is the first step in the process. Wright asked if the alleys are vacated, if the property owners would be able to build on them because there is a sanitary sewer that is located in one of them. Butler said they could not build on them if there is an easement, which the City will be getting. Jenkins stated this motion is symbolic as vacating the alleyways will not become official until an ordinance is passed. **Motion by Butler and second by Ward to approve vacating the alleyways adjacent to Vandalia Street and South Main Street as requested by Jeff Eickhoff. Motion carried with a 5-0 vote in favor.**
- 25. Discussion / Action – Campground Fees for 2027 Season:** The Natural Resources Committee is recommending increasing the campground fees for the 2027 season by an amount of 10 percent, in addition to an increase of two percent every other year. Currently, permanent campers pay an annual fee of \$1,540 with sewer and \$1,210 without. If approved, the fees would increase to \$1,700 with sewer and \$1,330 without. Ward said it makes more sense to him to increase it by one percent every year instead of two percent every other year. Jenkins stated he suggested increasing the fees every other year so campers would be able to pay the same amount for two consecutive years. Justison said he felt better about an annual increase as opposed to increasing it every

other year. **Motion by Justison and second by Ward to approve increasing the Sherwood Forest Campground fees by 10 percent for the 2027 season and one percent every year after. Motion carried with a 5-0 vote in favor.**

- 26. Discussion – Properties at Eagle Zinc:** Butler reported at least four different companies have reached out looking to acquire land at the former Eagle Zinc property. He stated there is an area next to where the solar panels were installed that could potentially house a business as well. He stated interested business owners should submit to the City Clerk’s office how much space and how big a building they need.
- 27. Discussion / Action – “Closed Session” in Accordance with 5 ILCS 120 Section 2(C)(1) The appointment, employment, compensation, discipline, performance, or dismissal of specific employees, specific individuals who serve as independent contractors in a park, recreational, or educational setting, or specific volunteers of the public body or legal counsel for the public body, including hearing testimony on a complaint lodged against an employee, a specific individual who serves as an independent contractor in a park, recreational, or educational setting, or a volunteer of the public body or against legal counsel for the public body to determine its validity:** Motion by Wright and second by Ward to approve a “Closed Session” in Accordance with 5 ILCS 120 Section 2(C)(1) The appointment, employment, compensation, discipline, performance, or dismissal of specific employees, specific individuals who serve as independent contractors in a park, recreational, or educational setting, or specific volunteers of the public body or legal counsel for the public body, including hearing testimony on a complaint lodged against an employee, a specific individual who serves as an independent contractor in a park, recreational, or educational setting, or a volunteer of the public body or against legal counsel for the public body to determine its validity. Motion carried with a 5-0 vote in favor. The council entered into closed session at 8:11 p.m. The council returned to open session at 9:07 p.m. No action was taken.
- 28. Discussion / Action – Soliciting Bids for Independent Legal Representation for the City of Hillsboro Fire Department:** This item was pulled from the agenda. No action was taken.
- 29. Discussion / Action – Adjourn:** Motion by Justison and second by Wright to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried with a 5-0 vote in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 9:07 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
David Jenkins, City Clerk