

**CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF HILLSBORO, ILLINOIS**  
**HILLSBORO CITY HALL**  
**Minutes of the Regular Meeting – Tuesday, March 3, 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

3. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

4. **Public Comment:** None.

5. Minutes of the February 17<sup>th</sup>, 2026 regular 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 the Street Department repaired a water leak, and did sewer jetting on Kinkead and Huber Streets, among other jobs. He reported public properties has been working on preparing the campground for the upcoming season. He said he also held a meeting with his department heads regarding budgets.

A written report for the Police Department was submitted. Commissioner Justison reported Zoning has taken much of Matt Lentz's time, and he will be getting back to abatements soon. He also thanked the fire department and the many members who were in attendance. He thanked them for their responses to the many ground fires that took place over the weekend. He stated he wanted to address some of the rumors surrounding the fire department, which was the reason he believes many of the volunteer firefighters were in attendance. He stated his goal is to find a way to have structural stability within the fire department, and said he has no interest in pulling the wool over anyone's eyes. The reason the dispatcher role is so important, he said, is not because they answer phone calls, but rather the readiness that they as engineers provide. He pointed to one of the recent structure fires that occurred, stating the fire was contained to one room because of the quick response time. He said the essence of getting rid of people or considering getting rid of people defeats the purpose of having the department. He said 96 to 97

percent of the dispatchers' calls over the last few months have been police calls. Another concern he said he has is there are five full-time employees who are under a part-time supervisor, referring to the fire chief. He said the department also lacks a depth chart, as there has been an advertisement for a hiring list open since December and nobody has applied. He said he is hoping to get on the same page with leadership to make sure the role of the dispatcher stays with the City and stays long-term. He said he would like to see the Code reflect a structure to make that happen. He said he believes a code change would be protection for the dispatcher position, and he asked the rest of the council to do everything they can to support the role.

Commissioner Wright stated she is hopeful the lake will fill up as a result of the rainfall.

Commissioner Ward reported he would like to have each department's budget within two weeks.

Mayor Downs stated he recently had a call from the ambulance garage asking about the plowing of alleyways, adding the City does not plow alleyways and hasn't for some time.

**7. Economic Development & Community Planner Report:**

A written report from the Economic Development and Community Planner was submitted. Smith reported she attended a conference last week that was very beneficial and she encouraged the council members to read about it in their reports.

**8. City Engineer Report:**

No report was given.

**9. Discussion / Action – Ordinance No. 1855-A an Ordinance Vacating a Never Developed 20' Alleyway Running North and South and Platted East of South Main Street and West of Vandalia Road in the City of Hillsboro, Illinois:** At the February 17<sup>th</sup> meeting, the council voted to vacate the alleyways near the current White and Associates building at the request of Jeff Eickhoff. This and the following two ordinances vacates those alleys. **Motion by Butler and second by Wright to adopt Ordinance No. 1855-A an Ordinance Vacating a Never Developed 20' Alleyway Running North and South and Platted East of South Main Street and West of Vandalia Road in the City of Hillsboro, Illinois. Motion carried with a 5-0 vote in favor.**

**10. Discussion / Action – Ordinance No. 1855-B an Ordinance Vacating a Never Developed 12' Alleyway Running North and South and Platted East of South Main Street and West of Vandalia Road in the City of Hillsboro, Illinois:** **Motion by Butler and second by Wright to adopt Ordinance No. 1855-B an Ordinance Vacating a Never Developed 12' Alleyway Running North and South and Platted East of South Main Street and West of Vandalia Road in the City of Hillsboro, Illinois. Motion carried with a 5-0 vote in favor.**

- 11. Discussion / Action – Ordinance No. 1855-C an Ordinance Vacating a Developed 15’ Alleyway Running East and West and Platted East of South Main Street, West of Vandalia Road, and North of East Mechanic Street in the City of Hillsboro, Illinois:** This ordinance includes an easement for the sanitary sewer that is located in the alley. **Motion by Butler and second by Justison to adopt Ordinance No. 1855-C an Ordinance Vacating a Developed 15’ Alleyway Running East and West and Platted East of South Main Street, West of Vandalia Road, and North of East Mechanic Street in the City of Hillsboro, Illinois. Motion carried with a 5-0 vote in favor.**
- 12. Discussion / Action – Ordinance N. 1856 an Ordinance Authorizing the Execution of a Lease of City-Owned Real Estate:** This ordinance executes the lease of the billboard adjacent to City Hall with CDL Billboards. The new agreement is for 10 years, and includes a fee to the City of \$340 per year. **Motion by Butler and second by Ward to adopt Ordinance No. 1856 an Ordinance Authorizing the Execution of a Lease of City-Owned Real Estate. Justison abstained. Motion carried with a 4-0-1 vote in favor.**
- 13. Discussion / Action – Mutual Termination of Lease Agreement Between the City of Hillsboro and Darrin Jorn and Becky Jorn:** With the council approving a new agreement for the billboard adjacent to City Hall, the existing lease can now be terminated. **Motion by Butler and second by Wright to approve the mutual termination of lease agreement between the City of Hillsboro and Darrin Jorn and Becky Jorn. Justison abstained. Motion carried with a 4-0-1 vote in favor.**
- 14. Discussion / Action – Ordinance No. 1857 an Ordinance Authorizing and Approving the Acquisition of Certain Property Located at 206 Springfield Road by the City of Hillsboro, Illinois:** Adopting this ordinance approves purchasing 206 Springfield Road for a sum of \$8,000. This will be the site of one of the City’s “Welcome to Hillsboro” signs. Business District funds can be used to purchase properties inside the district. This property is located at the top of the hill on Route 16 next to Hilltop Auto. **Motion by Butler and second by Wright to adopt Ordinance No. 1857 an Ordinance Authorizing and Approving the Acquisition of Certain Property Located at 206 Springfield Road by the City of Hillsboro, Illinois. Motion carried with a 5-0 vote in favor.**
- 15. Discussion / Action – TIF/Business District Redevelopment Grant to Tony Drago for Work to be Completed at 439 S. Main St.:** Mr. Drago is requesting \$70,000 for the continued renovation of his building at 439 South Main Street. Work includes the installation of new HVAC systems; construction and installation of new bathrooms, flooring, lighting, electrical, and plumbing; and a new roof for the rear of the building. He received a TIF grant in 2019 for work on the same building. Ward stated he wants to look at covering half of the roof and half of the HVAC, and not fund the interior in order to keep consistent with the other grants that have been distributed. He stated this would bring a total reimbursement amount to \$21,900. **Motion by Ward and second by Butler to approve awarding a TIF Redevelopment Grant to Tony Drago for an amount**

not to exceed \$21,900 for work to be completed at 439 S. Main St. Motion Justison and Wright abstained. Motion carried with a 3-0-2 vote in favor.

16. **Discussion / Action – Façade Improvement Grant Reimbursement to Historic Red Rooster for Work Completed at 123 E. Seward St.:** The council awarded the Historic Red Rooster a Façade Improvement Grant during their June 17, 2025 meeting for the installation of a new lighted sign at the corner of Seward Street and the Courthouse Square. The total cost of the project was over \$33,000. **Motion by Ward and second by Butler to approve the façade grant reimbursement to the Historic Red Rooster in the amount of \$5,000 for work completed at 123 E. Seward St. Justison and Wright abstained. Motion carried with a 3-0-2 vote in favor.**
17. **Discussion / Action – Advertisement for Hillsboro in Looking for Lincoln Publication:** The cost to publish a half-page ad in the Looking for Lincoln visitor's guide is \$1,100. The proposed ad includes photos that were taken with the Lincoln impersonator, who visited the City last year. **Motion by Ward and second by Wright to approve publishing a half-page ad in the Looking for Lincoln visitor's guide for a cost of \$1,100. Motion carried with a 5-0 vote in favor.**
18. **Discussion / Action – Pay Application #8 to Plocher Construction for Work Completed on the Wastewater Treatment Facility Upgrade Project:** This item was pulled from the agenda. No action was taken.
19. **Discussion / Action – Amendment #3 to the Owner-Engineer Agreement for the City of Hillsboro Wastewater Treatment Facility Upgrade Project:** The proposed amendment revises the Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) Integration portion of the agreement, including screen development and controls programming for control panels in the headworks building, sludge pump building, UV Disinfection, control building, electrical building, and trickling filter building. The added cost with this amendment is \$290,000. **Motion by Wright and second by Butler to approve Amendment #3 to the Owner-Engineer Agreement for the City of Hillsboro Wastewater Treatment Facility Upgrade Project. Motion carried with a 5-0 vote in favor.**
20. **Discussion / Action – Pay Application #3 to Korte Luitjohan for Work Completed on Phase II of the Lead Service Line Replacement Project:** The amount due this payment application is \$169,560. **Motion by Ward and second by Wright to approve pay application #3 in the amount of \$169,560 to Korte Luitjohan for work completed on Phase II of the Lead Service Line Replacement Project. Motion carried with a 5-0 vote in favor.**
21. **Discussion / Action – Bids for Phase 3 (2026) of the Lead Service Line Replacement Project:** On February 17<sup>th</sup>, the City opened bids for phase 3 of its lead service line replacement project. However, the IEPA has since withdrawn funding for the investigation portion of the project, meaning this will need to be rebid. Project Manager Don Taul stated the investigation portion of the project is a major part of it. **Motion by**

**Butler and second by Wright to reject all bids for phase 3 of the lead service line replacement project and to rebid the project. Motion carried with a 5-0 vote in favor.**

- 22. Discussion / Action – EV Charging Station:** The City has a proposal from Laughlin Electric to construct an electric vehicle charging station, which would be located on the east side of the courthouse square. The cost is \$7,855. The city received a \$50,000 check from Ameren last year to pay for the construction of EV charging stations. Wright said they originally wanted to put the stations in the City parking lot behind Sullivan's, but there is no City electricity there yet. She stated the charging station in the proposal takes about four hours for a full charge. She stated the City will maintain a website where customer transactions are tracked. She recommends the City go with the five-year subscription, which is \$800, and can be paid for using the grant money. Ward asked if there will be an "EV Parking" sign. Wright said she would like a sign, but does not want to ticket anyone for parking there because she believes the cord will reach to the two adjacent spots. Butler stated he was voting no because he did not like the location. **Motion by Wright and second by Justison to approve the proposal from Laughlin Electric for the construction of an electric vehicle charging station for a cost of \$7,855, and a five-year subscription for \$800. Butler voted no. Motion carried with a 4-1 vote in favor.**
- 23. Discussion / Action – Advertising for Summer Employment with the City of Hillsboro:** **Motion by Justison and second by Butler to approve advertising for summer employment for 2026 for the City of Hillsboro. Motion carried with a 5-0 vote in favor.**
- 24. Discussion / Action – Authorization for City's Attorneys to Transmit Proposed Letter to Laborers' Union:** The City Attorney drafted a letter to submit to the laborers' union following the February 17<sup>th</sup> closed meeting. **Motion by Ward and second by Butler to approve authorization for the City's attorneys to transmit a proposed letter to Laborers' Local 773 Union. Justison voted no. Motion carried with a 4-1 vote in favor.**
- 25. Discussion – Possible Referenda for the November General Election Regarding Public Safety Matters:** Downs reported Commissioner Justison hit many of the points during his report earlier in the meeting. He stated he wants to keep the seats at the fire station filled, and there is one dispatcher planning on leaving already because of rumors that have been going around. He stated the City does not want to lose the police department either. Butler said the council has never considered cutting the dispatchers when discussing budgets. Ward said they cut a lot from last year's budget and cutting the dispatchers was never a consideration. Justison stated the State is no longer going to transfer 911 calls to local dispatchers, but rather the County 911 would directly dispatch the local engineers/firefighters. Dispatcher Dustin Carlock addressed the council regarding how the dispatching works. He said with police calls, the local dispatchers can speak to the callers after the dispatching occurs. He also encouraged each of the council members to visit the fire station and observe how the department operates. He also stated

he doesn't want to leave the department, but he does not feel protected. Downs and Justison both stated they don't want either police or fire department to go away. No action was taken.

26. **Discussion – Water Treatment Plant Keystone Solar Project:** The City has obtained information regarding to the installation of solar panels at its Water Treatment plant. Wright stated she is exploring options on how to reduce bills at the water plant, and she wants each of the council members to look at the materials provided so they can proceed.
27. **REMINDER – The Next Hillsboro City Council Meeting is Tuesday, March 24, 2026**
28. **Discussion / Action – Adjourn:** Motion by Justison and second by Ward to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried with a 5-0 vote in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 8:12 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
David Jenkins, City Clerk