

**Hazen City Commission
Regular Meeting
April 15, 2024
Hazen City Hall**

Present: President Obenauer, Commissioner Haack, Commissioner Pillar, Commissioner Stern and Commissioner Wiedrich.

Others Present: PW Director Brousseau, Editor Arens, Police Chief Wolff, Attorney Kaffar, Jerod Klabunde and Grant Dockter (Moore Eng.), Mark Olson, Jo Neuberger, Michelle Boutillier, Auditor Erhardt, and Buster Langowski.

The meeting was called to order at 5:30 PM by President Obenauer.

President Obenauer led the Pledge of Allegiance and Commissioner Pillar said the prayer.

Minutes: Commissioner Haack moved to suspend the reading and approve the minutes of the April 1st and April 9th meetings, as presented, second by Commissioner Stern. Motion unanimously approved.

Agenda: Commissioner Pillar moved to approve the agenda, as presented, second by Commissioner Stern. Motion unanimously approved.

CONSULTATION WITH ATTORNEY AND ENGINEER

Engineer's Report: Jerod Klabunde, Moore Engineering, presented the engineers report.

Regarding Expedition Estates work, a tentative schedule for repairs was received indicating the underground work is expected to be completed in June with paving of the streets to be completed in July. Plans to properly address 11th Ave SW are still being considered.

Regarding the alley improvements, the contract was awarded to Winkler Construction with work to be commencing in July. A pre-construction meeting will be scheduled soon.

Regarding the meter replacement project, Mr. Klabunde presented Task Order #21 for construction engineering services at an estimated cost of \$23,000. Mr. Klabunde reminded the commission that the city has received a 60% cost share from the State Water Commission for this project.

Commissioner Pillar moved to approve Task Order #21, with an estimated cost of \$23,000, second by Commissioner Wiedrich. On roll call vote: Pillar, "Aye", Wiedrich, "Aye", Haack, "Aye", Stern, "Aye", Obenauer, "Aye", motion carried.

Regarding the lift station controls project, the contract was awarded to Skeel's Electric with no schedule for work received as of this date.

Regarding the sanitary sewer improvement, Mr. Klabunde presented Task Order #22 for engineering technical support relating to proposed spot repairs and relining of blocks of sanitary sewer at an estimated cost of \$15,000. Mr. Klabunde indicated the work is to refine the preliminary special assessment information for public input, considering the costs paid by residents for previous sewer improvements. Commissioner Wiedrich moved to approve Task Order #22, with an estimated cost of \$15,000, second by Commissioner Haack. Upon discussion, Commissioner Stern asked about the estimated cost and was advised the engineer estimates eighty (80) hours of work to refine the details of work to be completed and appear for public meetings regarding the project. Commissioner Pillar

asked about the basis of work if no engineering is completed at this time and Mr. Klabunde informed the commission that, based on the previous engineer's report, the number of manholes that would need repairs is only an estimate but, this would not be required to be completed at this time.

Commissioner Wiedrich discussed having better refined bids if this work were completed and Mr. Klabunde agreed that review of manholes, inverts, and video review would need to be completed prior to bidding the project. Mr. Klabunde said the estimate assumes 1/3 of the cost is to complete inspecting the system, 1/3 of the cost would be for refining the special assessment information and 1/3 of the cost would be for participation in public meetings. On roll call vote: Wiedrich, "Aye", Haack, "Aye", Pillar, "Aye", Stern, "Nay", Obenauer, "Aye", motion carried.

Regarding miscellaneous items, Mr. Klabunde informed the commission that he, and Grant Dockter, arrived earlier in the day and reviewed areas streets around town that will need to be addressed soon. This includes repairs on 7th Street near the school, 7th Street by the police department, a patch on Main Street and spots around valley gutters. Commissioner Wiedrich asked if any of these areas would be part of the proposed sanitary sewer spot repairs and that the city should try to avoid making repairs now and having to dig them up again to make the sewer repairs. Mr. Klabunde stated he would get quotes for this type of work and present them at a May meeting. Commissioner Pillar asked about the lead service line inventory process and Mr. Klabunde advised that nearly 150 residents have responded to the survey, which is about 10% of the city. Mr. Klabunde said the City of Hazen went above and beyond to get information to the residents and has one of the better response rates in the state. Mr. Klabunde added that those residents that do not comply with the voluntary survey will need to be visibly inspected by city personnel.

REQUEST OF CITIZENS

Local Permit-Raffle – Hazen American Legion Post #189: Commissioner Wiedrich moved to approve local permit #2024-08 to conduct a raffle on November 11th at Hazen City Hall, second by Commissioner Stern. Motion unanimously approved.

APPROVAL OF APPLICATIONS AND BUILDING PERMITS

Building Permit w/Variance Request – M. Olson: The commission reviewed plans for a twin home project at 102 1st Ave NW. The proposed project will require variances to ensure the proposed structure will be suitable for the property. The project is part of a program to introduce high school students to skilled trades and education. Mr. Olson indicated that he has approached the schools about future participation in similar projects. President Obenauer stated he like the idea of student involvement. Commissioner Haack moved to approve the building permit and variances, second by Commissioner Wiedrich. Upon discussion, Commissioner Stern asked about the project timeline and Mr. Olson indicated this project will be completed this year by contractors with student assistance, with another project to be considered in Beulah in 2025 and then another project in Hazen the following year, with the process taking a bit longer in the future. It was also determined that the project will require a ten-foot (10') front yard variance. On roll call vote: Haack, "Aye", Wiedrich, "Aye", Pillar, "Aye", Stern, "Aye", Obenauer, "Aye", motion carried.

Tax Exemption Request (57-02-08(36) NDCC) – Childrens Playhouse:

Tax Exemption Request (57-02-08(36) NDCC) – Energy Capital Cooperative Childcare: The commission reviewed requests of The Children's Playhouse and Energy Capital Cooperative Childcare for property tax

exemptions pursuant to ND Century Code. The commission was advised that this would be an annual process, like other property tax exemptions, and does not include the value of the land, only structures. Commissioner Wiedrich moved to approve both requests, as presented, second by Commissioner Haack. On roll call vote: Wiedrich, "Aye", Haack, "Aye", Pillar, "Aye", Stern, "Aye", Obenauer, "Aye", motion carried.

Gaming Site Authorization(s) – Hazen Winter Sports: Jo Neuberger appeared before the commission requesting approval of gaming site authorizations for Hazen Winter Sports. Ms. Neuberger appears annually requesting city approval and there are no changes from previous years. Commissioner Stern moved to approve the site authorizations, as requested, second by Commissioner Wiedrich. On roll call vote: Stern, "Aye", Wiedrich, "Aye", Haack, "Aye", Pillar, "Aye", Obenauer, "Aye", motion carried. Sites/games authorized are as follows: 1) Bison Sports Bar/Electronic Pull-tab Device, Pull-tab Dispensing Device, Sports Pools, Prize Board Dispensing Device; 2) Box's Bar/ Electronic Pull-tab Device, Pull-tab Dispensing Device, Sports Pools; 3) Jimmy's Lounge/ Electronic Pull-tab Device, Pull-tab Dispensing Device, Sports Pools; and 4) Longshots Bar Electronic Pull-tab Device, Pull-tab Dispensing Device, Sports Pools.

REPORTS

Water/Sewer/Garbage: Commissioner Pillar had nothing to report at this time.

Street/Cemetery: Commissioner Haack informed the board crack sealing is nearly finished because of a lack of available tar and the need to keep tar on hand for emergency needs. Commissioner Stern asked if the city will be/should be sealing cracks at the curb or gutter line and PW Director Brousseau said this has not been done in the past. Mr. Klabunde indicated this is usually done on new construction, but it is not a priority and that no two cities do this consistently. Commissioner Wiedrich asked if the city has looked at using "cold tar" and PW Director Brousseau indicated this tends to peel up. Commissioner Haack also indicated that both angle blades are at Hazen Welding for installation of the snow gates.

Finance/Busing/Library: Commissioner Stern informed the board that the library received grant funds from Basin Electric and MDU which will be used for window replacement projects.

Police/Fire/Forestry: Commissioner Wiedrich informed the board that the police department calls for service in March were Officer Beyer responded to twenty-nine (29) calls for service, Officer A. Melberg responded to thirty-one (31) calls for service, Officer S. Melberg responded to sixteen (16) calls for service and Chief Wolff responded to fifty-five (55) calls for service. Chief Wolff advised the commission that Officer S. Melberg was at training and had time off as the reason for the reduced number of calls. Commissioner Wiedrich informed the board that the police department has one body camera that needs replacement so, the department received quotes to upgrade all four (4) body cameras. The cost proposals are from LensLock at a cost of \$15,775 spread over five (5) years, and ProVision at a complete cost of \$2,100 for the cameras. Commissioner Wiedrich moved to approve the purchase of four (4) cameras from ProVision at a cost of \$2,100, second by Commissioner Stern. On roll call vote: Wiedrich, "Aye" Stern, "Aye", Haack, "Aye", Pillar, "Aye", Obenauer, "Aye", motion carried. Chief Wolff informed the commission that the police department received a sizable donation from Workover Solutions which will be used for equipment and training. Chief Wolff also informed the commission that the shotguns have been ordered from Hazen Mercantile.

Commissioner Wiedrich informed the board that interviews for the Public Works/Forestry position were held earlier today and that offers of employment will be presented. To date, no applications for summer employment have been received.

HCD: Buster Langowski informed the commission that his office has been busy with four (4) individuals visiting about bringing new businesses to town. Mr. Langowski explained the programs available to businesses including the Flex Pace Interest Buy-down through the Bank of ND which can reduce loan interest by up to 5% with HCD participation. Commissioner Wiedrich asked about updated information on Talon Metals and Mr. Langowski said he had nothing new to report but hoped there may be more information when Mercer County Economic Development meets later this week.

President: President Obenauer informed the board that he was contacted about providing crushed asphalt to the Energy Capital Cooperative Childcare at a reduced cost, or alternately upon payments, to repair the parking lot at the facility. There was discussion about having just approved a property tax exemption and making precedent for other businesses requesting materials. There was no objection to allowing them to make payments, over time, for the full regular cost of the materials. The auditor will share this with the cooperative.

CORRESPONDENCE

MCED Dues: The commission reviewed a letter from Mercer County Economic Development (MCED) relating to assessment of membership dues. Mr. Langowski explained that dues are paid by all municipalities of the county, by area industries, and private memberships. The collection of dues has been stagnated for years and MCED is planning to update several studies, which in the past helped secure funding for housing in Hazen and Beulah, as well as childcare services/facilities which are beneficial to the local workforce. Commissioner Wiedrich moved to approve payment of dues to MCED in the amount of \$3,500, second by Commissioner Haack. On roll call vote: Wiedrich, "Aye", Haack, "Aye", Pillar, "Aye", Stern, "Nay", Obenauer, "Aye", motion carried.

NDIRF Annual Meeting: The commission was reminded of the annual meeting of the ND Insurance Reserve Fund on May 9th in Bismarck. If a commissioner wishes to attend, they are to let the auditor know and the RSVP will be returned.

Behavioral Health Summit Sponsorship: The commission reviewed information for the 2024 Summit on Behavioral Health in Energy Country to be held in Dickinson ND, June 19th & 20th. In the past the city has provided sponsorship for the event at the "Friendship Sponsor" level. Commissioner Wiedrich moved to continue sponsorship of the summit at the Friendship Sponsor level at a cost of \$600, second by Commissioner Pillar. On roll call vote: Wiedrich, "Aye", Pillar, "Aye", Haack, "Aye", Stern, "Aye", Obenauer, "Aye", motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

No public comments were received at this time.

Approval of Bills: Commissioner Wiedrich moved to approve the bills, as presented, second by Commissioner Pillar. Pre-paid and bills approved for payment are as follows: Aramark, 408.71; Cenex, 1931.67; Coal Country CHC, 220.00; Dale Mulske, 108.54; Donovan & Kaffar PLLP, 1450.00; Fitterer Oil LLC, 1371.02; Hazen Motor Farm Equipment Co, 12.45; Hazen Rural Fire Dept, 2023.87; Hazen Star, 1143.02; Hazen Welding, 500.00; ITD, 28.30; MCED, 3500.00; Mercer Co Treasurer, 4930.20; MOCIC, 100.00; MDU, 4571.66; ND Dept of Health, 50.00; NAPA, 349.94; ND One Call Inc, 3.35; Roughrider Electric Coop Inc, 4474.82; The Hub, 1613.96; Verizon Wireless, 326.61; Vision West ND, 600.00; West River Telecommunications, 3220.95. On roll call vote: Wiedrich, "Aye", Pillar, "Aye", Haack, "Aye", Stern, "Aye", Obenauer, "Aye", motion carried.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 6:32 PM CT. The next regular meeting of the commission is scheduled for Monday, May 6, 2024, at 5:30 PM CT in the Commission Room of the Hazen City Hall.

Approved: _____
Jerry Obenauer, President

Attest: _____
Monte J. Erhardt, Auditor

**Hazen City Board of
Equalization Meeting
April 15, 2024
Hazen City Hall**

President Obenauer reconvened the meeting of the Board of Equalization at 6:32 PM. The board had recessed the meeting on April 9th to confirm data and values based on objections raised. Assessor Erhardt reviewed the data, and corrections were made which reduced the city valuation by \$20,000. The total value of property for assessment in 2024 is now \$185,758,520 pending adjustment for exemptions approved this evening during the city commission meeting. Commissioner Haack moved to approve the equalized property value and presented to be used to calculate the 2024 property tax, second by Commissioner Stern. On roll call vote: Haack, "Aye", Stern, "Aye", Pillar, "Aye", Wiedrich, "Aye", Obenauer, "Aye", motion carried.

There being no further business, the meeting of the Board of Equalization was adjourned at 6:35 PM CT.

Approved: _____
Jerry Obenauer, President

Attest: _____
Monte J. Erhardt, Auditor