

August 7, 2023
5:15 P.M.
City Hall

The Commissioners of the City of Horton met for a regular meeting on Monday, August 7, 2023, at 5:15 p.m.

Mayor Stirton called the meeting to order, and the opening prayer was led Pastor Ron Cobb from the Horton First Christian Church. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by all.

Present: Mayor Stirton, Commissioner Rex West, Carmela Boller, and Tina Nigh. City Administrator John Calhoon and City Attorney Kevin Hill were also present. Commissioner Richard Lovelady was absent.

Motion by Commissioner Boller to adopt the agenda as presented. Seconded by Commissioner Nigh. All aye.

Motion by Commissioner Boller to approve the minutes from the July 17, 2023, regular meeting. Seconded by Commissioner West. All aye.

Motion by Commissioner Boller to approve the minutes from the July 24, 2023, special meeting. Seconded by Commissioner West. All aye.

Motion by Commissioner Boller to approve Appropriation Ordinance #3771 (Payroll) for \$45,620.09. Seconded by Commissioner West. All aye.

Motion by Commissioner Boller to approve Appropriation Ordinance #3772(Disbursements) for \$150,786.93. Seconded by Commissioner West. All aye.

Public Comments

No comments.

Welcome USD 430 Superintendent Dr. Rebecca Kramer

The Commission welcomed new USD 430 Superintendent, Dr. Rebecca Kramer to Horton. Kramer has been in the education field for 28 years, fulfilling a variety of positions. Kramer and her husband are the proud parents of four children.

CDBG-COVID Resiliency Program (CDBG-CVR) (From Governmental Assistance Services)

Garrett Nordstrom from Governmental Assistance Services was present to speak about the CDBG COVID Resiliency (CDBG-CVR) program. Nordstrom asked if the city wants to move forward with the program, and also met the citizen participation requirement of CDBG. Qualifying Projects include upgrades allowing businesses to remain open, preventing future closures due to community illnesses and health emergencies, technology, hardware, and software upgrades including infrastructure, devices, and applications, ecommerce updates including online inventory management and website enhancements, professional development and training for business enhancements, and other updates that can be directly related to resiliency improvements. Nordstrom has

reached out to several businesses in town. Motion by Commissioner Boller to move forward with the CDBG COVID Resiliency (CDBG-CVR) program. Seconded by Commissioner Nigh. All aye. Nordstrom will have a contract for approval for \$3,750.00 and other paperwork to consider for approval at the next Commission meeting. Nordstrom also brought the Commission up to speed on the Community Development Block Grant for a 2023 Housing Improvements Project & Assessment Study. The housing committee has met several times and the housing assessment is fundamentally complete. They are currently identifying local contactors who want to take part in the program. The hope is to be given a grant where they can go and rehabilitate individual homes with low to moderate income citizens, and help bring them back to standard living condition. KDHE has a certification process for lead-safe work practices for contractors. Nordstrom and the committee is working on nailing down a time with reputable contractors in the area and Baker Environmental Consulting to train all of the contractors at once. Nordstrom and his business partner are also looking into a contractor from Nevada with Xtreme Cubes Corp which does modular construction of homes and buildings that will help encourage new affordable construction to the state of Kansas.

Request to be Placed on Agenda- South Brown County Community Foundation

Sarah Gerving, Krissy Torkelson, and Jackie Petersen were present on behalf of the South Brown County Community Foundation. Torkelson provided the second annual Match Day statistics to the Commission. The total amount raised was \$81,828.35, plus additional local matches of \$18,000.00, and \$70,000 from the Patterson Grant bringing a grand total of \$169,828.35. Communities impacted include Willis, Powhattan, Everest, Horton, and USD 430. The top three funds that had the highest donations were the Powhattan Beautification Fund, Zion Lutheran Church, and Friends of Everest Fire Department, and Pottroff and Logan Shop Door - Scholarship Fund tied for third.

Petersen presented a check to the city to deposit for \$2,499.00 reimbursing them for a robotic vacuum that was purchased for the city pool. Petersen said that a fund was created last year for the Horton Aquatic Park by Sarah Gerving and herself which raised scholarships to help fund swimming lessons for families that weren't able to make the payment.

Gerving stated she has an agreement to open a fund within the South Brown County Community Foundation for Friends of the Municipal Airport. Gerving also applied for a grant through Grain Belt Express for \$500 to assist in the \$1,000 needed to open the fund within SBCCF. Gerving will continue to apply for grants and work with airport enthusiasts in hopes of keeping the Municipal Airport open and assist in paying the annual insurance premium.

Horton Industrial Development Corporation (HIDC) Discussion on Ballfields

Per the request of the Commission, several HIDC board members were in attendance to discuss wrapping up last minute items needing done at the ballfields. Calhoon said there are concerns within the governing body that the city continues to put money and time towards the project when there is money available either through the South Brown County Foundation or funds that were donated to HIDC specifically for the ballfields. Calhoon recommended that the Commission and HIDC converse and see what direction we are going. Calhoon said that weeds were sprayed at the fields this past weekend, and over seeding and fertilizing will likely have to be done in the next 3-4 weeks. Other items needed completed at the ballfields include gravel in the parking lots, restrooms, additional foul pole installed, and additional concrete. Calhoon said that the city crews have around 400-man hours invested into the ballfields. C. Boller stated that Calhoon needs to determine exactly what needs to be done, and what the cost is. Boller said there have been too many ups and downs with the project and it should have been completed already.

HIDC said that once the city determines prices to submit an invoice to them to pay, or they will reimburse the city with existing funds. The Commission decided that the Baseball Commission members would be approved by the governing body. HIDC will solicit interested individuals for the Baseball Commission and give to the City Commission to consider for approval of appointments.

1st Reading of Ordinance No. 1208 Regarding Speed Limit at Mission Lake

At the last meeting a motion was made by Commissioner West to authorize an Ordinance to be prepared for the 1st reading at the next Commission meeting following the traffic investigation by the Horton Police Department to increase the speed limit from 20 mph to 30 mph from 15th Street north on Wilson Drive up to the 20-mph speed limit sign at the volleyball court. This past weekend Commissioner Boller conducted a traffic study at the lake, and based on it he recommended a speed limit of 25 mph. Mayor Stirton suggested that rather than increase the speed limit and incur the expense, that the police officers should enforce the speed limit. The first reading of the Ordinance was tonight, and the Commission will determine at the next meeting on 08/21/2023 whether or not to increase the speed limit.

Consider Approval of Butler & Associates Contract for Collection Services

Motion by Commissioner West for the city to enter into a contract with Butler & Associates for collection services. Seconded by Commissioner Boller. All aye. The City of Horton will refer any delinquent debt owed to the city for court, fines, special assessments, and utilities to Butler & Associates to collect. Butler & Associates has the technology necessary to handle all our claims, combined with the effectiveness of a law firm. They use an innovative collection database and provide their clients with attorney involvement in all stages of recovery. They have an experienced staff dedicated to our collection needs.

Public Works Updates

Public Works Superintendent Randy Mayfield was present to provide updates to the Commission on the water, sewer, electric, and street departments. Detailed reports showing the summary of work orders created, and the status of work orders by department were provided. Mayfield stated that the chlorine bottles at the water plant are not working properly and will need repaired or replaced.

Police/Dispatch Updates

Chief Boller said he will get with Andrew Jones this week to conduct test runs on all of the school zones lights to assure they are working properly prior to the first day of school.

City Administrator

The city has hired two new employees. Xander Monson is working in the sewer department, and Ted Crow will begin his position in the electric generation department on August 14th.

After negotiating a better price with gWorks, and having them waive the implementation cost of \$1,500, Calhoon recommended that the city proceed with purchasing the HR Hub. HR Hub is an easy to use time-tracking cloud-based payroll solution that allows the payroll clerk to complete our payroll in fewer steps. gWorks currently provides the city with Municipal Fund Accounting Software, Utility Billing, and Accounts Payable modules. Motion by Commissioner Nigh for the city to move forward with purchasing the HR Hub Module. Seconded by Commissioner Boller. All aye.

Calhoon said the Horton Fish & Game Club will operate the newly purchased Neptune Rake and portable winch system at the Little Lake on Saturday, August 19th. The Neptune Rake that was purchased by the city will remove weeds, overgrown lily pads, and detritus from the lake(s).

Mayor Stirton

Mayor Stirton spoke about the recent Open House at the new wastewater treatment facility. He said the Horton Chamber, officials from USDA were present. Calhoon and Stirton both said that there was not a lot of public participation. Officials from United States Rural Development arrived early to the Open House to meet with Calhoon to look over the deteriorated condition of the Mission Lake Dam/Spillway with hopes of assisting the city in finding funding sources to begin much needed repairs.

Commissioner Lovelady

Not present.

Commissioner West

No report.

Commissioner Boller

Commissioner Boller asked Calhoon when BG Consultants will make a recommendation on which company to move forward with regarding core samples at the Mission Lake spillway. Two RFP's have been received.

Calhoon said that he has received a verbal quote to complete an appraisal at the Armory for \$1,500.00, which can take up to 30 days.

C. Boller said that trimming trees needs to be an ongoing priority to prevent any loss of power due to limbs in power lines. Boller assured that the city has a plan in place.

Commissioner Nigh

Commissioner Nigh recommended that the city update the Welcome Packets on the City of Horton website. She also asked that department heads receive copies of the budgets.

Nigh read aloud a letter that she wrote. She said that what she is about to say is going to be very upsetting to a lot of people in this room, but she has spent weeks looking at the budget, doing unlimited hours of research online, and looking to see what other cities comparable to the size of ours do. Obviously, money is an issue and the Commission is talking about raising taxes on our citizens, and she wanted the Commission to hear her out. She said this is not personal, this is business, and business only.

Nigh said she would not be doing her job as Finance Commissioner if she didn't make the residents voices heard. Some of the highlights of Nigh's letter included:

- Citizens cannot afford for their taxes to be raised.
- A city of 1500 residents does not need, nor should we be paying a City Administrator over \$80,000 annually, or probably between 90 – \$100,000 by the time all benefits are paid. We have a City Clerk that is very capable of doing, and helps with much of what is being done by the City Administrator. These positions can be combined with pay changes accordingly, and we would still be saving our tax payer a significant amount of money.

- Nigh found eight cities within the state of Kansas, which she could pull thousands more, with populations between 1061 and 2108. Of the eight cities, only two had a City Administrator.
- Nigh requested a time study of the police department and a copy of scheduling, as well as for the other departments. Nigh said we don't want to see the safety of the community compromised, but we have a very significant budget for the police department and dispatch, and again, a town of 1500 residents. This needs to be looked at carefully.
- We cannot skimp on the needs of our citizens. Keeping our town healthy and safe has to be the priority.
- Providing utilities, areas of entertainment, maintenance, etc. are all needs in a healthy community. In providing for the needs of our community, Nigh believes it is our responsibility to spend taxpayer money wisely, and assure we are not wasting their hard-earned money.
- Nigh ended by saying that the Municipal Airport needs to remain open. She doesn't feel that it is losing the city money in any way. Also, she feels that the city should move forward with the debated sale of the Armory.

2024 Budget Workshop

The Commission held the third 2024 Budget Workshop. There was extensive open dialogue between the Commission regarding items that Nigh brought up under her agenda, along with ways to cut the budget, rather than increase the mill levy. Audience members Wade Edwards and Avery Thornton also chimed in at times with the permission of Mayor Stirton. The Commission will resume discussions on the 2024 budget on 08/21/2023 with hopes of coming to a consensus and consider for approval.

Motion by Commissioner Boller to adjourn the meeting at 8:32 p.m. Seconded by Commissioner West. All aye.

Kim Knudson, City Clerk

Bryan Stirton, Mayor