

REGULAR MEETING - HOUGHTON CITY COUNCIL  
WEDNESDAY, MARCH 26, 2008 - 5:30 P.M.  
CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS, CITY CENTER

PRESENT: Mayor Pro-Tem Robert Backon, Councilors Rachel Lankton, Robert Megowen, Craig Kurtz, Gernot Joachim and Lee Hauswirth.

ABSENT: Mayor Eric Peterson.

Also present for the City were Director of Public Works Mark Zenner, Police Chief John Donnelly, and Deputy Clerk Ann Vollrath.

ALSO PRESENT: Representatives from the Daily Mining Gazette and WMPL, Calvin Hartwig, Crystal Higginbotham, and Konstantin Zhurazyoe from the MTU Undergraduate Student Government, Courtney Lentowich and Ben Bachran from the Houghton High School Senior Class, and Elaine Wirtanen.

REGULAR MEETING: Mayor Pro Tem Backon called to order a Regular Meeting of the Houghton City Council and the Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MINUTES: On page 4 of the previous minutes there was a correction to Councilor Joachim's name. A motion was made by Lankton and seconded by Hauswirth to approve the minutes of March 12, 2008 as corrected.

Yes: All

No: None

Motion carried.

REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF AGENDA: Mayor Pro Tem Backon added under New Business – Item F(1) – Resolution 2008-1235 and Item I – Set Public Hearing for Ordinance Revisions. He also moved Item H under New Business to Opportunity for Public to Address Council.

OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC TO ADDRESS COUNCIL: Ben Bachran and Courtney Lentowich of the Houghton High School Senior Class asked the Council for a donation to their Alcohol Free Graduation Party and offered to work in exchange for the donation. They will clean up the downtown on a day chosen by Director of Public Works Mark Zenner. A motion was made by Hauswirth and seconded by Megowen to allow the senior class to clean up downtown. They will be paid \$550 if they provide 25 students and \$800 if they provide 35 students. The money will be taken from the General Fund – TV Franchise account.

The Deputy Clerk polled the Council:

Yes: Hauswirth, Megowen, Kurtz, Backon, Lankton, Joachim

No: None

Motion carried

Kalvin Hartwig of the MTU Undergraduate Student Government introduced himself to the Council. He said the MTU-USG is in favor of the City of Houghton Bike Plan. They are promoting biking by students in the community. The USG gave the University \$20,000 for a bike rental program.

PETITIONS AND  
COMMUNICATIONS

None.

REPORTS:

Director of Public Works Mark Zenner reported that crews are installing drywall in the Nara Recreation Facility. Work on the fireplace can begin next week. Crews are busy cold patching and fixing/replacing stop signs covered with graffiti. There have been some frozen sewer lines.

Mr. Zenner explained that both downtown clocks are not working at this time. The clock in front of the Franklin Square Inn has a cut wire. The clock across from Wells Fargo Bank needs about \$1,500 worth of repairs. The City pays a preventive maintenance plan for this clock; however, the present repairs are not covered under the plan. Mr. Zenner is looking at a different way to operate this clock that will be less expensive in the future. The new software will cost approximately \$1,800. He will get back to the Council on this issue.

Councilor Lankton noted that there are two clocks on the east side of downtown and no clocks on the west side. This issue should be looked at when the Streetscape is done and perhaps one of the clocks can be moved at that time.

Mr. Zenner informed the Council that the City of Houghton loaned the City of Hancock a sander recently when both of their sanders were broken. Mayor Pro Tem Backon said this is in accordance with the cooperative spirit displayed at the joint council meetings.

Mr. Zenner provided the Council with a spreadsheet outlining financing alternatives to purchase three Mack dump trucks. He found a good deal on these trucks as the company produced too many of them. He explained the difference between Mack trucks and Kodiak trucks. The Council will look at obtaining bids for the possible purchase of dump trucks during budget work sessions.

Police Chief John Donnelly reported that the department responded to 79 complaints since the last meeting. They had 5 misdemeanor arrests, two felony arrests, and 2 civil infractions. The department has been spending time at the schools recently to deter speeding around them. Chief Donnelly explained the possible purchase of software to help with issuing and collecting parking ticket money that he is looking into. He is going to Marquette to see how it works there and will report on it at the next meeting.

OLD BUSINESS: Deputy Clerk Ann Vollrath explained that the City Manager is seeking public comment on the amendments to the Recreation Plan. Copies of the plan are available at the City Center, Portage Lake District Library, Carnegie Museum, and the City Web Page. Public comment is being accepted until April 21<sup>st</sup>. The Planning Commission will review the comments at their April 22<sup>nd</sup> meeting and make suggestions to the Council at that time.

NEW BUSINESS: A motion was made by Lankton and seconded by Joachim to approve the Accounts Payable for March 15-31, 2008 as presented.

The Deputy Clerk polled the Council:

Yes: Lankton, Joachim, Hauswirth, Backon, Megowen, Kurtz.

No: None

Motion carried.

Mayor Pro Tem Backon explained that a gentleman is interested in setting up a hot dog cart at the beach a couple of days a week and also in front of the old Chamber of Commerce. He did not attend the meeting to answer questions from the Council. A motion was made by Lankton and seconded by Hauswirth to table the issue until the Council hears from the gentleman.

The Deputy Clerk polled the Council:

Yes: Lankton, Hauswirth, Joachim, Backon, Megowen, Kurtz.

No: None

Motion carried.

A motion was made by Megowen and seconded by Joachim to schedule a Public Hearing and meeting of the Rental Housing Board for April 9<sup>th</sup> at 5:30 p.m. regarding a request for a rental license at 109 W. Houghton Avenue.

Yes: All

No: None

Motion carried.

A motion was made by Megowen and seconded by Lankton to adopt **Resolution 2008-1232** – MDOT Act 51 street addition.

The Deputy Clerk polled the Council:

Yes: Megowen, Lankton, Hauswirth, Joachim, Backon, Kurtz

No: None

Motion carried

A motion was made by Joachim and seconded by Lankton to adopt **Resolution 2008-1233** – MDOT Act 51 street addition.

The Deputy Clerk polled the Council:

Yes: Joachim, Lankton, Hauswirth, Backon, Megowen, Kurtz

No: None

Motion carried.

A motion was made by Lankton and seconded by Hauswirth to adopt **Resolution 2008-1235** – MDOT Act 51 street addition.

The Deputy Clerk polled the Council:

Yes: Lankton, Hauswirth, Joachim, Backon, Megowen, Kurtz

No: None

Motion carried

Deputy Clerk Ann Vollrath reported that there is a vacancy on the Library Board because Sharon VanNorwick will not be serving another term. This term begins April 1, 2008 and ends March 31, 2012. Councilor Joachim

suggested looking at applications from last year.

A motion was made by Hauswirth and seconded by Lankton to set a Public Hearing for April 23, 2008 at 5:30 p.m. regarding the four proposed Ordinance revisions received from the Planning Commission.

The Deputy Clerk polled the Council:

Yes: Hauswirth, Lankton, Joachim, Backon, Megowen Kurtz

No: None

Motion carried

Councilor Joachim said he likes the look of the new City web page.

Mayor Pro Tem Backon thanked the Public Works department for their work this winter and spring.

A motion to adjourn was made by Megowen and seconded by Kurtz.

Yes: All

No: None

Motion carried.  
Adjourned 6:35 p.m.

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Ann Vollrath  
Deputy Clerk