

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF  
THE GOVERNING BODY OF  
THE CITY OF HAYS, KANSAS  
HELD ON JANUARY 11, 2001

**1. CALL TO ORDER BY CHAIRMAN:** The Governing Body of the City of Hays, Kansas met in regular session on Thursday, January 11, 2001 at 7:30 p.m.

Roll Call: Present: Troy Hickman  
Henry Schwaller IV  
Larry Schmidt  
Howard Rome  
Wayne Billinger

Mayor Hickman declared that a quorum was present and called the meeting to order.

**2. MINUTES:** Wayne Billinger moved, Howard Rome seconded, that the minutes of the regular meeting held on December 28, 2000, be approved.

Vote: Ayes: Troy Hickman  
Henry Schwaller IV  
Larry Schmidt  
Howard Rome  
Wayne Billinger

**3. CITIZEN COMMENTS:** Howard Rome moved, Henry Schwaller IV seconded, that tonight's meeting adjourn by 11:00 p.m.

Vote: Ayes: Troy Hickman  
Henry Schwaller IV  
Larry Schmidt  
Howard Rome  
Wayne Billinger

**4. CONSENT ITEMS:** Henry Schwaller IV moved, Larry Schmidt seconded, that the following Mayoral appointments be approved:

Hays Housing Authority – Harlan Murphy – term expires February 14, 2005

Enhancement Committee – Jim Aubel and the Vice-Mayor

Vote: Ayes: Troy Hickman

Henry Schwaller IV

Larry Schmidt

Howard Rome

Wayne Billinger

### **OLD BUSINESS**

**5. SALES TAX ADVISORY COMMITTEE:** There has been a great deal of interest expressed by many different groups about the possibility of voting on another sales tax issue to finance various public improvements within the City of Hays. Discussions include the possible use of such sales tax proceeds to finance the expansion of the Hays Public Library, construction of a new fire station and training facilities, street improvements, storm drainage improvements, and recreation facilities. A ½ cent citywide sales tax was approved in 1998 for the construction of the Hays Aquatic Park and is set to expire in October 2001.

City Manager Hannes Zacharias recommended seven Hays residents be appointed by the Mayor with the consent of the City Commission to form a Sales Tax Advisory Committee. This committee would then work with City staff in conducting public hearings and researching the topic of the sales tax issue and report back to the Commission.

Comment [DAW1]:

Commissioner Schwaller stated he favors the formation of such a committee and suggested up to 30 members be appointed to the committee for a more diverse representation.

Commissioner Rome stated he felt it is important to let the citizens participate in deciding if the City should extend the sales tax and how the revenue should be spent.

Wayne Billinger moved, Henry Schwaller IV seconded, that a Sales Tax Advisory Committee be established to research and make recommendations

regarding a new city wide sales tax (to follow the expiring ½ cent pool sales tax) to fund public improvements.

Vote: Ayes: Troy Hickman

Henry Schwaller IV

Larry Schmidt

Howard Rome

Wayne Billinger

**6. WATER UTILITY REVIEW:** Mayor Hickman stated that prior to making any changes in the City of Hays water policies, it is important to remain committed to water conservation and to endorse the concept of reasonable use through appropriate distribution practices. The Commission may want to focus on some sort of policy or mission statement before changes are made.

Commissioner Schwaller stated we should address these issues in three parts. The first would be to develop an objective. Secondly we need to figure out what kind of demand the community will require, and finally determine the costs associated with delivering water to our customers.

City Manager Zacharias stated there are pretty good estimates as to what the capital improvement costs of the South Russell Well Field will be. What is not known are the operational expenses. Some of that information should be forthcoming in the next few months.

Henry Schwaller IV moved, Larry Schmidt seconded, that Item 6 B, discussion of changes to the City's surcharge fees, be tabled.

City Manager Zacharias stated staff is working on an analysis of the unit cost of water, the needs issue, and a rate structure analysis. All of this information could be presented in a future study session.

The Mayor called for the vote.

Vote: Ayes: Troy Hickman

Henry Schwaller IV

Larry Schmidt

Howard Rome

Wayne Billinger

**A.** Assistant City Clerk Doris Wing presented information regarding a survey she conducted of other cities of similar size regarding their policies for disconnecting water service for delinquent accounts.

Eight cities were surveyed. The range of days from when the bills were mailed to when meters were disconnected for non-payment ranged from 26 days to 47 days. Hays allows 25 days. All eight cities impose a penalty varying between 2 – 10 % for bills not paid by the due date. Hays does not have a penalty. The reconnect fees ranged from \$10 - \$30. The reconnect fee for Hays customers is \$10.

Discussion was held on various ways to extend the due date. Commissioner Schmidt suggested that instead of reminders being sent out, the arrears be placed on next month's bill along with a statement that would say the bill is past due and the customer has another 10 days to pay the bill before the water would be disconnected. This would save about \$500 a month in postage costs along with form, envelope, and staff time-savings. The consensus of the Commission was to raise the reconnect fee to \$20.

Staff was directed to prepare the necessary ordinance for approval at a future meeting.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

**7. SALES TAX FOR LIBRARY EXPANSION:** Hays Library Board President Beth Bowerman stated four different surveys indicate the public wants the library location to remain downtown. The public has also overwhelmingly stated it approves using sales tax to pay for the project, which is estimated to cost \$2.5 million. The Library Board feels a single issue for a modest tax increase for 18 months will pass; bundling several issues together would fail. A resolution calling for the election of the reauthorization of the ½ cent sales tax must be made prior to February 22, 2001 in order to be on the April 3, 2001 ballot.

Architect Alan Stecklein reviewed the proposed expansion plans which would add more than 11,000 square feet per level with a total of approximately 38,000 square feet of new space to the existing building.

Several citizens spoke in favor of the Library expansion and urged the Commission to pass a resolution placing this issue on the April ballot.

Henry Schwaller IV moved, Wayne Billinger seconded, that staff be directed to draft a resolution regarding initiating a ½ cent citywide sales tax for 18 months for Library improvements.

Commissioner Billinger stated the Hays Library Board has done their homework and is prepared to go ahead with their project; they should not have to wait for the City to initiate the Sales Tax Advisory Committee. He supports their efforts and will vote for a resolution.

Commissioner Schmidt stated many people have approached him and stated they would like to see a short break between the pool sales tax and the library sales tax. Going right into another sales tax to support the library may hurt the City down the road when the Commission tries to get other projects through. He is a supporter of the library, but other items are just as important.

Mayor Hickman stated all the Commission had to do was direct staff to draft a resolution to put this issue on the ballot; the voters will decide whether to support the library project.

Commissioner Schwaller stated he supported this proposal. A library is the cornerstone of knowledge and this is something that just cannot be put off any longer.

The Mayor called for the vote.

Vote: Ayes: Troy Hickman  
Henry Schwaller IV  
Larry Schmidt  
Howard Rome  
Wayne Billinger

