

The Hartington City Council met for a regular meeting on January 26<sup>th</sup>, 2026 at City Hall beginning at 5:00 P.M. Notice of time and place of the regular meeting was given in advance notice by posting.

Present were Mayor Becker, Councilman Christensen and Kathol; City Clerk-Treasurer Schulte, and Legal Counsel Nikki Brandt. Councilman Bartling and Sudbeck was absent.

Mayor Becker called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance. The Council then moved to approve the minutes of the January 12<sup>th</sup> meeting and the Complex Workshop meeting. A motion to approve the minutes of the January 12<sup>th</sup> meeting and the Complex Workshop meeting was made by Councilman Kathol and seconded by Councilman Christensen. A roll call vote was taken: Christensen – yes, Kathol – yes, Becker - yes. Motion carried.

The council discussed the modified commercial lease agreement with Skylon Ballroom LLC. Mayor Becker explained that Corey needed to extend the contract until April 2027 to align with his liquor license requirements, representing a four-month extension from the original December termination date. The council agreed this would sync the lease with the liquor license anniversary date, making future renewals more streamlined. The motion to approve the modified lease was made by Councilman Christensen and seconded by Councilman Kathol. A roll call vote was taken: Christensen – yes, Kathol – yes, Becker - yes. Motion carried.

Councilman Christensen introduced the issue of removing fluoride from the municipal water treatment process for consideration by voters. He explained that while the state requires fluoride injection unless sufficient natural fluoride is present or citizens oppose it, many communities have elected to discontinue the practice. He noted that the chemical cost is approximately \$20,000 over a five-year period, in addition to equipment costs for injection pumps at each of the city's four wells. Councilman Christensen stated that most communities have voted to discontinue fluoride treatment and indicated he saw no compelling reason to continue the practice locally. Following discussion, the council voted to place the question of removing fluoride treatment on the ballot, anticipated for the May 14 primary election, with a March 1 deadline for ballot inclusion. The motion to place the question of removing fluoride treatment on the ballot was made by Councilman Christensen and seconded by Councilman Kathol. A roll call vote was taken: Christensen – yes; Kathol – yes; Becker – yes. Motion carried.

The council conducted an extensive review of the master fee schedule, last revised in 2025. Clerk Schulte presented comparative data from similar-sized communities and recommended various rate adjustments. For water services, they discussed raising the minimum charge from \$26 to \$28 and increasing the per 100-gallon rate from \$.20 to \$.22.5. Sewer rates were adjusted from \$25.75 to \$28.00 for the minimum charge. Garbage collection fees saw substantial discussion due to rising disposal costs and tipping fees. The council approved increasing the weekly rate from \$4.50 to \$5.75 (\$24 monthly total). The council maintained the \$4.00 extra bag fee and current collection procedures rather than implementing a tag system used by some communities. Additional fee adjustments included increasing sign permits from \$20 to \$30, maintaining current planning and zoning fees and adding new fees for services like check reprints and various permits. The pool requested changing their swimming lessons fee without annual membership fee to \$55, and key fob pricing was restructured with different rates for ages 9 and under (\$10) versus 10 and older (\$20). Transfer station fees were adjusted with Utility Supervisor Corey's input, increasing the minimum charge for residents from \$10.50 to \$12 and raising the per-ton rate from \$70 to \$80. Non-resident fees increased from \$105 to \$118 per ton with a \$16 minimum. Additional charges were added for appliances containing Freon due to higher disposal costs. The motion

to approve all changes and draft a resolution was made by Councilman Christensen and seconded by Councilman Kathol. A roll call vote was taken: Christensen – yes; Kathol – yes; Becker – yes. Motion carried.

Mayor Becker presented the LB840 drawdown request in the amount of \$372.10 for Industrial Park signage. A motion to approve the LB840 drawdown request for Industrial Park signage was made by Councilman Kathol and seconded by Councilman Christensen. A roll call vote was taken: Christensen – yes; Kathol – yes; Becker – yes. Motion carried.

The December, 2025 Cedar County Sheriff's Report was reviewed. There were 467 ¼ hours patrolled. School traffic was 1 ¼ hours. Calls of service were: 2 Accident, 2 Welfare Checks, 2 ID Theft, and 1 Criminal Mischief. Traffic stops were 5 Verbal Warnings, 8 Written Warnings, and 3 Citations. 1 Arrest was made.

#### Department Reports:

Park – Councilman Kathol: Reported he would be following up with Kathol Construction about shelter house siding that wasn't completed in the fall. Plans include preparing the park for pickleball courts and general spring maintenance.

Pool – Councilman Bartling: absent

Complex/Auditorium – Councilman Sudbeck: absent

Fire/Ambulance – Councilman Christensen: nothing

General – Mayor Becker: Reported on the Nordby housing development variance issue relating to the setback requirements, noting that the porches encroach into required setbacks. The council discussed requiring individual variance applications for each affected property and recommended addressing incomplete sidewalk connections.

Legal Counsel Nikki Brandt: Reported that legal matters are ongoing with airport authority litigation, with the attorney filing a motion to stay proceedings pending FAA decision. The first legal bill of \$25,000 was received, which will be forwarded to the airport authority for payment.

Clerk Schulte: nothing

During public comments, it was noted that the Cedar County Theatre will not be using the auditorium this year. Lee Carl inquired about the inactive LB840 Citizens Advisory Committee, which has not met in several years despite requirements for regular meetings. Clerk Schulte stated she will follow up with Economic Development Coordinator Miranda Becker.

The following bills were presented for payments:

#### General:

AMGL, 680.00, League Association of Risk Management, 2,821.20, SpecSoft, 15.30

Streets:

Black Hills Energy, 598.30, Bomgaars, 587.85, Fischer Feed & Supply, 607.60, Guardian, 13.60, M&H Sand & Gravel, 295.74, Midwest Service & Sales, 1,284.40, Menards, Inc., 153.25, Pomp's Tire Services, Inc., 388.00, Usable Life, 29.00, Wiechelman's Repair Shop, 693.12

Water:

Cedar-Knox Public Power District, 1,220.50, Feimer Construction Co, Inc, 4,738.06, Lemon House, LLC, 80.17, Nebraska Public Health Environmental Laboratory, 68.00, Plumbing & Electric, 843.04

Sewer:

Black Hills Energy, 176.44, Bomgaars, 35.10, Midwest Laboratories, Inc., 373.15, Olson's Pest Technicians, 60.00

Sanitation:

Guardian, 6.80, L.P. Gill, Inc., 5,701.84, N Sudbeck, 70.00, Usable Life, 14.50, S Wiebelhaus, 26.95

Fire:

Black Hills Energy, 292.03, Dearborn Life Insurance Company, 124.88, Fischer Feed & Supply, 396.95, Wiechelman's Repair Shop, 88.15, Yankton Janitorial Supply, Inc, 76.80

Ambulance:

Avera Sacred Heart Hospital, 11.90, Black Hills Energy, 292.02, Bound Tree Medical, LLC, 437.92, Matheson Tri-Gas Inc, 75.39, Teleflex, LLC, 920.00, Yankton Janitorial Supply, Inc, 76.80

Pool:

Black Hills Energy, 49.62

Complex:

Plumbing & Electric, 180.50

Library:

Black Hills Energy, 650.05, B Pichman, 250.00, Demco, 60.18, K Emanuel, 30.00, Guardian, 13.60, Hartington Chamber of Commerce, 50.00, Ingram Library Services, 811.84, T Anderson, 280.00, Usable Life, 29.00

City Hall:

Black Hills Energy, 69.19, Eakes Office Solutions, 547.50, Guardian, 6.80, Usable Life, 14.50

Auditorium:

Black Hills Energy, 1,430.34, Bomgaars, 8.90, X-Pert Lawn and Landscaping, 240.00

Economic Development:

Guardian, 6.80, Usable Life, 14.50

Transfer Station:

Cedar-Knox Public Power District, 343.39, Deere Credit, Inc., 730.02, Olson's Pest Technicians, 80.00, Pomp's Tire Service, Inc., 76.00

Veterans Memorial:

X-Pert Lawn and Landscaping, 240.00

Skylon Event Center:

Black Hills Energy, 882.28, Stockwell Engineers, Inc, 6,074.30

January Payroll: 30,905.12

A motion to pay the bills including an additional Check #66255 for \$3,890 payment to HNPS for tobacco and liquor license fees was made by Councilman Christensen and seconded by Councilman Kathol. A roll call vote was taken: Christensen – yes; Kathol – yes; Becker – yes. Motion carried.

A motion to adjourn was made by Councilman Christensen and seconded by Councilman Kathol. A roll call vote was taken: Christensen – yes; Kathol – yes; Becker – yes. Motion carried.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:51 P.M. The next scheduled meeting is February 9<sup>th</sup>, 2026.

Submitted By

Casey Schulte  
City Clerk-Treasurer