

**MINUTES OF THE FIRST MEETING OF FISCAL YEAR 2024-2025
OF THE MORRIS CITY COUNCIL
HELD ON MAY 1, 2024, at 10:15 AM.**

The meeting of the Morris City Council, the first of Fiscal Year 2024-2025, was called to order by Mayor Chris Brown, on Wednesday, May 1, 2024, at 10:15 AM., in the City Council Chambers. Present were:

Alderman Jake Duvick	Alderman Alex Clubb
Alderman Julian Houston	Alderman Jim Black
Alderman Dean Tambling	Alderman Herb Wyeth
Alderman Sarah Mettille	Alderman Carrie Hall

INVOCATION

Mayor Chris Brown introduced Pastor Steve Larsen of First Baptist Church and called upon him to give the Invocation.

**APPROVE LIST OF
BILLS FOR MAY 1,
2024**

It was moved by Alderman Houston and seconded by Alderman Black, the list of bills be approved and ordered paid, when funds are available and signed by the proper committees. This motion was carried by the following vote:

Ayes: Alderman Wyeth, Duvick, Houston, Tambling, Clubb, Black, Hall and Mettille.
Nays: None

**APPROVE LIST OF
BILLS FOR MAY 1,
2024-TIF I ONLY**

It was moved by Alderman Houston and seconded by Alderman Clubb, the list of bills be approved and ordered paid, when funds are available and signed by the proper committees. This motion was carried by the following vote:

Ayes: Alderman Wyeth, Duvick, Houston, Clubb, Black, Hall and Mettille.
Abstain: Alderman Tambling
Nays: None

**APPROVE
MAYOR'S PUBLIC
BOARDS AND
COMMISSION**

It was moved by Alderman Houston and seconded by Alderman Black, the appointments to Public Boards & Committees recommended by Mayor Brown, be approved. See list attached. This motion was carried by following vote:

Ayes: Alderman Wyeth, Duvick, Houston, Tambling, Clubb, Black, Hall and Mettille.
Nays: None

**APPROVE
REGULARLY
SCHEDULED
MEETING DATES**

It was moved by Alderman Houston and seconded by Alderman Clubb, that Mayor Brown's regularly scheduled meeting dates as listed and attached for the following committees: City Council, Business & Community Development, Development Review Board, Fire & Police Commission, Planning Commission, Police Pension Board and Zoning Board of Appeals be approved. This motion was carried by the following vote:

Ayes: Alderman Wyeth, Duvick, Houston, Tambling, Clubb, Black, Hall and Mettille.
Nays: None

APPROVE LIST OF LIQUOR LICENSES

It was moved by Alderman Clubb and seconded by Alderman Wyeth, the list of liquor licenses attached, be approved. This motion was carried by the following vote:

Ayes: Alderman Wyeth, Duvick, Houston, Tambling, Clubb, Black, Hall and Mettille.

Nays: None

APPROVE MISCELLANEOUS LICENSES

It was moved by Alderman Black and seconded by Alderman Clubb, the list of miscellaneous licenses attached for the following: Bowling Alley, Theatre, Taxicab, Amusement Devices, Cigarette and Video Gaming Devices, be approved. This motion was carried by the following vote:

Ayes: Alderman Wyeth, Duvick, Houston, Tambling, Clubb, Black, Hall and Mettille.

Nays: None

MAYOR -FISCAL YEAR 2023-2024 REVIEW

I want to start by thanking the Morris City Council, city administration, public works, the Morris Police Department, and everybody else that works hard to serve our community, keep our residents safe, and make Morris the best it can be. Your hard work and dedication are the foundation of what makes us great, and I look forward to another exciting year working towards our goals.

The City of Morris is experiencing change for the better and is receiving a bit of a makeover. As we meet here this morning, our new water tower, which was under construction at this time last year, is in service and doing its job. The new fire department building was a vacant lot a year ago, and now it is almost ready for occupancy. The new Morris YMCA, which broke ground less than a year ago, has risen from the ground and will serve its first customers in just a matter of months.

The transformation of our parks is well underway as well. Goodwill Park looks amazing, and we can't wait to reopen it for all residents to enjoy. The new playground equipment, picnic pavilion and overall rejuvenation serve as a visual for what our parks can and will become. The \$600,000 OSLAD grant we received is being put to use in West Side Park. Just a few weeks ago, work started on what promises to make it a shining jewel in our parks system with its new ball fields, skate park, pickle ball courts, bean bag courts and trail system which will tie in with the YMCA trail next door. Work on it will hopefully be completed by the end of the year with a grand re-opening early next year.

Improving our parks and our residents' quality of life is and will continue to be a top priority in our administration. The future of our outdoor spaces and facilities will be unrecognizable after our work is completed.

Our ability to apply for and receive grant dollars has continued this year and as I speak, we are working on a federal grant application which will be submitted today through Congressman Darin LaHood's office. Just three years ago, Grundy County was last out of 102 counties in grant dollars received per capita. I think we have moved up that list just a bit in the last three years. In three short years, we, as a city, have received more than \$23 million dollars in grant money. That is incredible and I want to thank our team and this council for their support in

our efforts. Just this year, we received \$1.8 million through Community Project Funding for Calhoun Street Bridge, \$2 million for Brisbin Road improvements, \$250,000 for Downtown Morris wayfinding signs, \$50,000 for lead service line replacement, and another \$20,000 for 4 new bottle filling stations in our parks. These opportunities will continue to be there for us, and we will continue to pursue them as they become available.

As we are talking about dollars, I want to express my appreciation and say thank you to our City Clerk, Lori Werden, for her countless hours spent on our budget for fiscal year 2024/2025. As we heard a few months ago following our annual city audit, the City of Morris is in a strong, healthy financial position. As we close out the fiscal year and prepare to move forward into a new year, I appreciate the hard work of this administration and our city council which took the time to sit down with Lori to go through this budget line by line to make sure we are all on the same page and focused on continued financial responsibility.

With all that said, I am proud to say we have put forth the first city budget with a surplus since 2011/2012. Our sales tax revenues have increased by 35% since 2021 and overall, our revenues across the board have increased almost 44% since 2021. Coupled with controlled spending I am also pleased to announce that Morris had an estimated \$29.7 million across all funds as of April 20th, 2024, and approximately 6.1 million in the general fund. Those numbers represent a 21% increase across all funds and a whopping 49% increase in the general fund respectively.

In closing, I want to thank all of our staff once again and I would also like to thank our citizens that make Morris the special place that it is. May we all continue to serve our community in such a way that sets an example for the rest to follow.

ANNOUNCEMENT

Mayor Brown announced Morris Retail Association will be hosting a “Cinco de Mayo” Girls Night Out on Friday, May 3, 2024, from 4-9pm, the first Three French Hens Market will be held Saturday, May 11, 2023, from 8am to 2pm., and the next regular scheduled City Council meeting will be held Monday, May 13, 2024.

ADJOURNMENT

It was moved by Alderman Houston and seconded by Alderman Clubb the meeting be adjourned at 10:27 a.m. This motion was carried by a unanimous voice vote.

ATTEST:  CITY CLERK