

Fertile City Council Minutes December 14, 2015

The Fertile City Council held its regular meeting on Monday, December 14, 2015 at 6:30 p.m. at the Community Center. Present were: Mayor Brian Nephew and Council members Dennis Hasler, Todd Wise, Linda Widrig, and Reid Jensrud. Also present were Public Works Director Kevin Nephew, City Administrator Lisa Liden, Danielle Meunier, Roger and Vanna Raaen, Sylvia Rickey, Dean Rasmussen, and Twylla Altepeter.

Mayor Nephew called the meeting to order and there were no additions to the agenda.

Fair Meadow Administrator Angie Leiting was not present for the meeting but had submitted a written report to the Council. The report showed that the month of November began with 40 residents and ended with 39 and operated at 78.06% capacity for the month. They had also served 147 home delivered meals. It was also reported that 13 of the 19 units at the Assisted Living were occupied and that a new resident would be coming in January.

Danielle Meunier, Learning Center Education Director, then reported to the Council. Meunier reported that all of the curriculum had been updated and that she had developed several off-site programs that could be presented to small and large groups. She also shared that she had just completed designing a new brochure for the education programs that she would be able to mail out to schools in the area as well as distribute to interested parties at her off-site programs.

Ms. Meunier then explained that the Learning Center was in need of additional funding from the City to help cover her wages for the coming months. All the work she had been doing was to help increase the education programming and income but until that growth was realized there was a need for additional funding beyond the \$5,000 contribution the City makes each year.

After further discussion of the matter, Council member Hasler made the motion for the City to contribute an additional \$5,000 to the Learning Center for 2015. The motion was seconded by Council member Widrig and was carried.

Kevin Nephew, Director of Public Works then gave his report to the Council. Nephew reported that they were currently working on some of the equipment since there was no snow to move. They were working on replacing hydraulic lines on the grader but they should look at replacing the seals around the cylinders since they were leaking slightly. He stated that the work would have to wait until spring since that repair would take the grader out of commission for at least one week. Nephew also reported that he would soon start looking at a replacement for the mower since it was 11 years old and had about 2500 hours on it. They weren't having any issues with it as of yet but just felt it was time to replace it before it started having issues.

Under old business, the next item was to revisit the certification of the Rural Service District. Mayor Nephew explained to those present that when the eligibility of properties was evaluated in August that the Council went by what Polk County had to say in regard to improvements on those properties. What the Council didn't know at that time was that the Rural Service District was created in 1984 as part of an annexation agreement. According to the annexation agreement

those properties were to remain in the District until such time they receive City water and sewer services.

After further discussion, Council member Hasler made the motion to rescind the motion removing 11 parcels from the Rural Service District. The motion was seconded by Council member Jensrud and was carried.

Council member Jensrud then gave the Fire Department report. The department made two calls during the month of November. One was for an apartment fire in town and another for a brush fire. The Bylaws were now completed and the new radios would be in by the end of the year. Some of the old radios would be donated to Moorhead for fire school and some of the radios would be retained by the department.

Council member Widrig then reported on the Personnel Committee. She explained that the current Personnel Manual was very outdated and that the Personnel Committee would be meeting monthly to work on updating it. The Committee had also met with Administrator Liden and timecards were now being handed in before paychecks were distributed. Liden reported that the City accountant would be in on December 17th to set up vacation and sick accruals on Quickbooks.

Council member Widrig then stated that she would like to see vacation done on an accrual system rather than the full year's vacation being awarded on January 1 of each year. She felt that employees should have to earn their vacation throughout the year and that giving it out on an accrual basis would avoid problems if employment was ended mid-year. This was followed by a long discussion on how vacation should be accrued.

Council member Jensrud then made the motion to change the way that vacation is awarded over to an accrual basis. The motion was seconded by Council member Wise and was carried.

The minutes of the November 9, 2015 meeting were approved on a motion by Council member Hasler that was seconded by Council member Wise and was carried.

The Treasurer's Report and Bills was the next item addressed on the agenda. After a brief review of the financial statements and the checks for November, the Treasurer's Report and Bills was approved on a motion by Council member Widrig, seconded by Council member Hasler and was carried.

The budget and levy for 2016 were then presented. Administrator Liden reported that the budget had been adjusted slightly from the preliminary one that was presented in September. A new projection for 2015 was done and based on that projection a few of the expense categories had been adjusted up or down slightly but the levy had remained the same.

A discussion was then held on the park bathrooms and the need to have them rebuilt in the next few years so that they could remain open year round so that they were accessible during the winter months for those using the sledding hill.

After further discussion on what was budgeted for parks and buildings for 2015, Council member Jensrud made the motion to take the \$20,000 that was remaining in the Capital Improvements – Buildings and put it in a separate account designated for building a new bathroom in JD Mason Park. The motion was seconded by Council member Widrig and was carried.

A motion was then made by Council member Wise to approve the 2016 budget as presented. The motion was seconded by Council member Widrig and was carried.

Resolution #12-1-15 City Clerk's Certificate of Final Tax Levy was then approved on a motion by Council member Widrig that was seconded by Council member Jensrud and was carried.

The final agenda item that was reviewed was the three year audit proposal that had been submitted by Eide Bailly. Administrator Liden explained that usually an engagement letter was signed each year for the current audit but that Eide Bailly had submitted a three year engagement letter with the costs spelled out for each of the three years. The most recent proposal that had been submitted showed a loyalty discount that resulted in substantial savings over the proposal that they had sent a year prior. This was followed by a discussion on the cost of Eide Bailly coming to present the audit each year and whether or not it was necessary for them to come do that.

After further discussion, Council member Jensrud made the motion to accept the proposal submitted by Eide Bailly minus the presentation cost each year. The motion was seconded by Council member Hasler and was carried.

Mayor Nephew then gave a brief update on the natural gas service that would be coming to Fertile. Community Co-op had requested that the City send a letter to the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission to expedite the approval of the line that would run to Fertile. A representative of the Co-op would likely be coming to the January meeting to discuss the timeline for the service being installed in town and to answer any questions.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Brian Nephew, Mayor

Lisa J. Liden, City Administrator