

Fertile City Council Minutes August 14, 2017

The Fertile City Council held its regular meeting on Monday, August 14, 2017 at 6:30 p.m. at the Community Center. Present were: Mayor Daniel Wilkens and Council members Reid Jensrud, Linda Widrig, Stanton Wang, and Todd Wise. Also present were City Administrator Lisa Liden, Fair Meadow Administrator Angie Leiting, Public Works Director Kevin Nephew, and Twylla Altepeter from the Fertile Journal. Other visitors were Alex Ranz from Ulteig, Dennis Hanson, Jon Larson, and Dana Knutson.

Under agenda revisions, speeding, nuisance properties, and river access for kayaking were added to the agenda. Another addition was Resolution #8-1-17 which addressed the two year contract with MnDOT for Operations and Maintenance cost reimbursement. The revised agenda was then adopted on a motion made by Council member Wang that was seconded by Council member Jensrud and carried.

There were no public comments made.

The minutes of the July 10, 2017 regular meeting were approved on a motion made by Council member Jensrud that was seconded by Council member Wise and carried. Public Works Director Kevin Nephew then questioned the paragraph in the minutes regarding his involvement in the park project going forward. Mayor Wilkens responded that there were questions and concerns about the way the bidding process was handled as well as the drawings and specifications for the project. Wilkens said that they wanted all information and questions to go through Administrator Liden going forward on the project.

The Treasurer's Report and Bills were then briefly reviewed by Administrator Lisa Liden. Liden went over the out of the ordinary deposits and checks for the month as well as a brief overview of the budget to actual report. Council member Jensrud made a motion to approve the Treasurer's Report and Bills as presented. The motion was seconded by Council member Wang and was carried.

Fair Meadow Nursing Home Administrator Angie Leiting then gave her Administrator's Report. She reported that the month of July began with 42 residents and ended with 39, operating at 95.16 % occupancy. The home had also provided 376 home delivered meals. The profit and loss for the nursing home for the month of July showed a profit of \$13,921.56 with \$11,494.83 of that amount being from the assisted living.

Council member Wang then inquired about the purchased services expense category and what expenses go into that account. Administrator Leiting explained that many of their contracted services go through that account from medical equipment to lawn care. Council member Widrig then asked about the negative amount shown on the balance sheet for the checking account. Leiting explained that the account was not overdrawn since that would require the Mayor to sign warrants and none had been signed. She believed that it was more of a timing issue at the end of the month.

Leiting then presented information on three scholarship applications that had been received. The Advisory Board had already approved the first two applicants but the application for the third employee had not been received in time for the Board to review and approve. Leiting then explained the procedure for paying out the scholarships and that the students have to turn in receipts for books or tuition in order to get reimbursed with the scholarship funds. Council member Wise then asked if employees were required to work at Fair Meadow for a set time period after graduation in exchange for receiving the scholarships. Leiting explained that there was no policy in place but that, typically, scholarship recipients had stayed at Fair Meadow for quite awhile after graduation.

After a brief discussion, Council member Widrig made a motion to approve the scholarship applications for all three applicants. The motion was seconded by Council member Jensrud and was carried.

Leiting then explained that the Advisory Board would like to change the current bylaws that allow for Advisory Board members to only serve for two consecutive three year terms. The Board would like to change that to allow for three consecutive three year terms. Mayor Wilkens asked to table that request until after the operational assessment was complete.

Council member Wang then questioned the amount that was spent at Amazon on the nursing home credit card. Leiting responded that they get a variety of items through Amazon since the pricing is low and the delivery time is fast. She explained further that they get all of their office supplies through Amazon. She also stated that all the invoices for the credit card statement are available at the home if Wang would like to review them.

Kevin Nephew, Director of Public Works, then gave his report to the Council. He began by explaining that he had a request from Dennis Hanson of Hanson Chiropractic to put a storm sewer in the alley behind his offices. Every time it rains, the alley gets a lot of runoff from not only the chiropractic building but also the EMS building. It tended to pool for a long time in one area at the back of Hanson's property. Hanson was considering an expansion to the back of his building and that the area where water typically pools would be more problematic. Nephew said that the cost to install a storm sewer would be \$3,000 and that it would be hooked into the main to the north on Albert Avenue. Council member Wise then asked whether property owners typically shared in the cost of storm sewers. Administrator Liden responded that cost share was typical for sanitary sewer but not storm sewer.

After further discussion, Council member Widrig made a motion to approve the installation of a storm sewer behind Hanson Chiropractic with the City paying for the cost. The motion was seconded by Council member Wang and was carried.

Nephew reported that they would start the installation of the storm sewer on Thursday. He then reported that the RV dump station was done and that the only thing needed was signage. Liden reported that the signs had been ordered and should be done in the next couple of weeks. Mayor Wilkens then inquired about the sanitary sewer going to the east past the RV dump station and whether or not the line was insulated yet. Nephew reported that it had already been insulated. He also reported that the water and sewer had been installed to the new car wash on the north end of town.

The City Engineer, Alex Ranz, was then asked if he had anything to address in regard to public works. Ranz stated that he had been working on a water model to present to Council but he cautioned that it would be a rather long presentation and discussion. Ranz was wondering if Council would be interested in scheduling a special meeting to discuss the matter. After discussion of a special meeting and Council availability, Council member Jensrud made the motion to call for a special meeting on August 25th at 6:30 p.m. to look at the water models that Ulteig had prepared. The motion was seconded by Council member Widrig and was carried.

This was followed by a brief discussion on assessing improvements such as water and sewer. Liden explained how the costs had been passed on to residents for recent sewer expansions and that residents in Olmscheid's were given ten years to hook up and that most of them had. The cost of the project was split between the City and residents and that those who were hooked up were paying a monthly fee of \$33.33 on their water bill for the hook up.

Before ending the Public Works report, Administrator Liden inquired about giving a raise to the part-time summer position. She explained that with the retirement of Dana Knutson, the part-time position involved more hours and more duties beyond mowing and that she felt the increased duties warranted a pay increase.

After discussion of the matter, Council member Jensrud made a motion to increase the pay to \$12 per hour. The motion was seconded by Council member Wise and was carried.

This was followed by a discussion on the open Public Works position and where to advertise and also on pay scale. It was decided to advertise in the area newspapers as well as the shopper. As for pay scale, the Personnel Committee would meet with Administrator Liden to explore the matter further and come to Council with a recommendation at the special meeting later in the month.

A brief discussion was also held on the possibility of the City buying a plow truck from the County. Also discussed was the effectiveness of a truck for snow removal versus using a road grader in town.

Under the airport committee, Mayor Wilkens reported that he had met with MnDOT Aeronautics when he was in the cities to discuss future projects for the airport including zoning. Wilkens asked Liden to get in touch with MnDOT to come up with three potential dates that they would be available to attend another commission meeting. The group would need to discuss zoning at the airport and what was required by the State.

While under airport, Administrator Liden then asked for Council approval on Resolution #8-1-17. Liden explained that the contract was the same as in previous years and that the State was currently reimbursing 75% of eligible M & O costs up to a total of \$15,146 per year.

Council member Wang made a motion to approve Resolution #8-1-17, State of Minnesota Airport Maintenance and Operations Grant Contract. The motion was seconded by Council member Widrig and was carried.

Administrator Liden then gave her report on her activities for the month of July.

Under Agassiz Learning Center, a discussion was held on improving river access for kayakers and swimmers. Council member Wang noted that he was frequently down by the bridge at the Learning Center and that the rocks and weeds made it difficult to get to the river at that location. After discussion on possible solutions, Mayor Wilkens recommended that the Learning Center Board look into this issue.

Council member Jensrud then gave the Fire Department report. The department had responded to two calls during the month of July. He also noted that the pager system was now coming off of the water tower in Fertile rather than the tower by Marcoux. The department was also working on writing up Standard Operating Procedures as well as job descriptions. They had also looked into whether the City or department had paid for the existing sirens, and it was determined that the department had paid for them. They felt, however, that the City should pay the cost of a new siren on the eastern edge of town.

The Personnel Committee reported that they would meet in the next week to come up with a recommendation on pay scale for the vacant public works position as well as salaries for the 2018 budget.

Under new business, the first item discussed was a request by the Sand Hill Snowcruisers to reroute their trail up the steep hill just past the bridge on Old Mill Road. There is currently a large deposit of gravel at the base of the hill that will need to be spread out to allow for access. After a brief discussion, a motion was made by Council member Jensrud to approve moving the gravel to allow snowmobiles access to go up the hill. The motion was seconded by Council member Wang and was carried.

The next item up for discussion was amending the City Code to allow for chickens in Fertile. Administrator Liden had provided a sample ordinance in the Council packets, but Mayor Wilkens had found a simpler ordinance that had been adopted by Shakopee, MN. That sample ordinance was then reviewed and was changed to reflect allowing for six hen chickens and to specify that a building permit would be required for the construction of a coop.

A motion was then made by Council member Jensrud to modify the Shakopee Ordinance with the changes indicated. The motion was seconded by Council member Wise and carried. Council member Jensrud then

made a motion to call for a Public Hearing on September 11th to hear public comment on amending City Code to allow for chickens in town. The motion was seconded by Council member Wang and carried.

Mayor Wilkens then reported that he and Liden had recently gone on a tour of town and had compiled a list of several problem areas that needed to be addressed. Some of the problems, such as weeds on public property, had mostly been addressed by maintenance staff. Some of the other matters required sending letters to residents, which Liden would take care of.

The matter of speeding traffic was then up for discussion. This was generally a problem on Highway 32, which would require State involvement to come up with solutions. Council member Wang noted that speeding was also a problem on Main Ave. both east and west, Washington Ave. W., and the sports complex road. The speeding on Main Ave. was especially problematic given that there are two daycares on that street in addition to many families with young children. Possible solutions were discussed including placement of either stop signs or “children at play” signs. Mayor Wilkens also reported on a recent incident where a Highway Patrol car came through town at a high rate of speed in response to an accident in Twin Valley. The State Patrol had been contacted and the officer was spoken to about slowing down going through town.

The next item up for discussion was nuisance properties in town. Mayor Wilkens reported that J.R. Dale had contacted him about the letter he received regarding his property on Second Ave. Dale explained that he was having health issues and also that the building to be torn down had to be emptied out. He said that he would look into taking care of this as soon as possible.

Council member Wang then inquired about a property on the west end of Lincoln Ave. Administrator Liden reported that a letter had been sent and that the next step would be a letter from the City Attorney explaining the potential criminal complaint that would be filed if the property is not cleaned up.

Mayor Wilkens then explained that he would like to have a public meeting at the September meeting to address leaf burning in town. Administrator Liden stated that she would get a notice in the Journal.

The next item up for discussion was getting a date set for a public presentation on the results of the operational assessment that was done for Fair Meadow. After comparing calendars, Liden was asked to contact Health Dimensions to see if either September 12th or 13th was available for the presentation.

Jon Larson then asked whether the City would be spraying for weeds again. He stated that there were quite a few along the street on Washington Ave West. Liden explained that City maintenance staff would be out spraying at least one more time and that she would let them know about the weeds on Washington.

A discussion was then held on the matter of health insurance for employees. Liden explained that the cafeteria plan, which included City insurance, had to be eliminated in 2015 since it no longer complied with the Affordable Care Act requirements. Since Council felt that offering insurance to employees was an important benefit, the Personnel Committee said that the matter would be looked at when they met the following week.

Discussion was also held on the Fair Meadow operational assessment and what the timeline would be for the next steps including implementation of the recommendations.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned on a motion by Council member Jensrud.

Daniel Wilkens, Mayor

Lisa J. Liden, City Administrator