

Fertile City Council Minutes February 10, 2020

The Fertile City Council held its regular meeting on Monday, February 10, 2020 at 6:30 p.m. at the Community Center. Present were: Mayor Daniel Wilkens, and Council members Linda Widrig, Todd Wise, and Stanton Wang. Also present were City Administrator Lisa Liden, Public Works Director Kevin Nephew, City Engineer Alex Ranz, and Twylla Altepeter from the Fertile Journal.

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Wilkens at 6:30 and began with those present reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

The agenda was approved on a motion by Council member Wang that was seconded by Council member Widrig and carried.

There were no public comments.

Under the minutes Mayor Wilkens recommended a couple of changes. On the sixth paragraph on page two he noted that the wording on the tires referred to by JR Dale needed to be changed to reflect that the tires were stored on City property adjoining the Dale property and that JR Dale was worried about the tires being stored by his property in the event of a fire. In the third to last paragraph Mayor Wilkens recommended adding the date of July 15th to the sentence regarding the timeline for the removal of JR Dale's building.

The minutes as amended were approved on a motion by Council member Widrig that was seconded by Council member Wise and carried.

City Administrator Lisa Liden next gave a brief overview of the financial statements and the out of the ordinary bills paid in January. Liden made note of the two pass-through grants from the NW MN Foundation that had been paid out to the recipients. Also noted were the payments made for the ice machine repair, engineer work at the airport, and a check for the curb and gutter that had been put in on Lincoln Ave. East. The Treasurer's Report and Bills were approved on a motion by Council member Wise that was seconded by Council member Wang and was carried.

The City Engineer's Report was the next item on the agenda. Alex Ranz explained the contract for the new hydrant in the fairgrounds that he was presenting for approval. The contract total of \$6,100 would cover title search of the property, plans, staking, and permitting. Ranz also noted that the City would have to get two bids on the installation since the cost estimate was around \$30,000.

Following a brief discussion, a motion was made by Council member Wang to approve the contract with Ulteig for \$6,100 for the engineer work on the new fairground's hydrant. The motion was seconded by Council member Widrig and was carried.

Next Alex Ranz reported that the Fair Board had been unwilling to grant a 60-foot easement for the RV campground, so the layout plan had been updated once more to have all the lots on only City property. This was followed by a discussion on two lots that were located on the far south side on the plan and whether those should be electric only sites to not disturb tree roots of the large tree located on the south east corner. Mayor Wilkens then inquired about the timeframe for the RV campground. Ranz explained that as soon as the layout is approved, he will need to start on the permitting process.

Fair Meadow Administrator Angie Leiting was not present for the meeting so her report was presented by City Administrator Lisa Liden. It was reported that Fair Meadow began and ended the month of January with 39 residents and operated at 92.24% occupancy. They had also served 250 home delivered meals. For the month of January, the nursing home showed a profit of just over \$85,000 but the assisted living operated at a loss of over \$26,000. The two combined showed a profit of \$58,600. The year to date profit and loss showed a combined loss

of \$3,700 with the nursing home operating at a profit of over \$55,000 and the assisted living operating at a loss of over \$59,000.

Kevin Nephew, Public Works Director, gave his report to Council. His report began with further information on the new V-plow that he would like for the front of the new road grader. The cost of the plow would be \$18,889 and the installation would cost around \$2,000. This was followed by a discussion of hooking up the plow to the grader and the controls to run it. Nephew noted that there is an extra hydraulic port on the front of the grader to hook it into.

After discussion of the matter, a motion was made by Council member Wang to approve the purchase of the V-plow. The motion was seconded by Council member Wise and was carried.

Kevin Nephew reported that somebody would be coming in to reprogram the computer at the treatment plant so the timing for backwashing would be based on gallons used versus head pressure. Mayor Wilkens asked if Nephew had checked the low water pressure issue that a resident had brought to his attention. Nephew said that he hadn't done that yet and Mayor Wilkens asked him to do so as soon as possible. Nephew explained that it could either be a plugged water softener or partially plugged meter.

Council member Widrig left the meeting at 7:04 to attend a basketball game.

The Public Works report continued with Kevin Nephew suggesting that the sewer main on Blaine Street be extended to the south to provide sewer to the Skanson lot. Nephew also commented that the elevation of the current sewer main on Blaine Street from Jefferson Ave. SE to the end of the line by the old rink was not very good. Mayor Wilkens then asked about the plans for moving the water salesmen to the fire hall from its current location by the old rink. Nephew replied that Brian Downs was supposed to be working on those plans. Mayor Wilkens asked to have that items prioritized since spring would arrive soon and the new salesmen should be in place before the old one is removed as part of the campground project.

Under the Learning Center, Council member Wise asked about the open Education Director position. Mayor Wilkens explained that the position is not yet filled on a permanent basis but that a short-term substitute was currently teaching the winter survival course for schools during the winter. Mayor Wilkens noted that the doorknobs at the Learning Center had now all been switched out to the lever knobs to comply with ADA requirements. The faucets in the restrooms had also been switched out to single lever. Fixing the thresholds at the entry would have to wait until spring since it would require pouring concrete.

Under the Fire Department Council member Wang reported that the department had one call in January and it was a mutual aid call for a garage fire. He noted that many department members would also soon be taking part in Fire One training. This was followed by a brief discussion on possible locations for a new building for the department since they were running out of space at their current location.

Under the airport, the written report submitted by Dan Triller of Short Elliot Hendrickson was briefly reviewed. It was noted that the zoning paperwork had been submitted to MnDOT for approval. Under airport lighting it was noted that there were obstructions found on the flight survey so the approach angles for the PAPI's had to be adjusted. The runway reconstruction design is at about 70% and the land appraisals had been completed for the land acquisitions. The report ended by stating that the Capital Improvement Plan had been updated in the MnDOT system.

The Personnel Committee reported that a quote had been received from Bakertilly to work on updating job descriptions and doing a wage study in order to develop a wage scale. Administrator Liden explained that the quoted cost was between \$5,500 and \$7,500 with the low fee representing no site visits and the high number would include two site visits. If no work was done on job descriptions the fee would be decreased by \$1,400. The Personnel Committee recommended hiring Bakertilly to do both the job description updates and the wage study. Mayor Wilkens commented that working with Bakertilly would give the City a solid base on wage scale for years to come and that it would be good to have outside expert assistance on the job descriptions.

A motion was made by Council member Wang to hire Bakertilly to update job descriptions and do the wage study. The motion was seconded by Council member Wise and was carried.

Under the Nature Center Mayor Wilkens brought up the cameras that had been purchased by the City a few years ago to monitor the trails for illegal vehicle traffic. Wilkens explained that the cameras had never been put up and had been returned to the City by Reid Jensrud after he resigned from Council. Mayor Wilkens recommended turning the cameras over to the Learning Center Board so they could decide where to put them out on the trail system.

The first item to be addressed under new business was the audit engagement letter from Eide Bailly. Administrator Liden noted that there would be an added \$4,500 charge for the audit this year for a single audit. The single audit is required due to the receipt of federal funds for the water project.

After a brief discussion a motion was made by Council member Wang for Mayor Wilkens to sign the engagement letter. The motion was seconded by Council member Wise and was carried.

The next item under new business was offering a reduced rental rate to a resident who was interested in having a weekly youth dance class starting in March and running through May. The classes would be held every Monday from 6 to 9 p.m. to offer hour long classes to three different age groups. Administrator Liden explained that the normal rental rate for the auditorium is \$60 but given the fact that the class would have a light footprint on the building, a reduced rental rate could be offered.

Discussion was then held on the lower rate that was offered to the Conservation Club a few years earlier and Administrator Liden noted that the Conservation Club is a non-profit while the dance class would be operated for profit so the reduced rental rate could be higher for the dance class.

Following discussion of the matter, a motion was made by Council member Wang to reduce the rental rate to \$30 per night for the dance class. The motion was seconded by Council member Wise and was carried.

The final item on the agenda was easements or acquisitions of land adjoining the Learning Center. Administrator Liden explained that there were currently three areas where Nature Center trails are located on private property. There was a fourth area where a new trail should be developed to connect with the ATV trail south of Fertile. The Learning Center Board would like to start the process of either getting easements for these areas or possibly acquiring the portions of property where the trails were located. In order to get started on the process, Council approval was required for the City Attorney to assist in contacting property owners.

After a brief discussion a motion was made by Council member Wise to approve enlisting the assistance of the City Attorney with getting either easements or acquiring the portions of private property where Nature Center trails were located. The motion was seconded by Council member Wang and was carried.

Under announcements it was noted that the Fire Department Annual Meeting would be held on February 20th and that Council was invited to attend.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:29 on a motion by Council member Wise.

Daniel Wilkens, Mayor

Lisa J. Liden, City Administrator

