

Fertile City Council Minutes
Special Meeting
December 20, 2023

The Fertile City Council held a special emergency meeting on Wednesday, December 20, 2023 at 7 p.m. at the Community Center. Present were: Mayor Daniel Wilkens, and Council members Mary Kiefert, Amanda Bosman, and Todd Wise. Also present were City Administrator Lisa Liden and Deputy Administrator Stacy Erickson. Fair Meadow Interim Administrator Kalie Crayton participated in the meeting by telephone.

The meeting was called to order at 7 p.m. by Mayor Wilkens and began with those present reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

There were no revisions to the agenda since it was a special emergency meeting to address one item only.

Mayor Wilkens asked Administrator Liden to give the background information on the potential staffing crisis at Fair Meadow Nursing Home. Administrator Liden explained that Fair Meadow was operating short staffed currently due to Covid and that it was learned over the course of the day that there were several staff that were looking to apply at the Villa in Crookston. She explained that the Villa had announced about a week prior that they had done an across-the-board wage increase of \$5 per hour and because of that, several staff were contemplating leaving to go to Crookston since their wages were now substantially higher than what Fair Meadow offered. It was noted that the wages at Mahnomen and Ada were substantially higher than Fair Meadow as well. The last wage increase at Fair Meadow was in October of 2021 when an increase of \$2 per hour across the board was approved.

It was noted that a couple of CNA's had already resigned and there were a few more that were openly talking about applying at Crookston and even Mahnomen or Ada. After counting the number of full-time or close to full-time CNA staff, Liden had determined that about 20% of the staff were contemplating leaving for higher wages. Interim Administrator Kalie Crayton commented that we would be looking at a crisis situation very soon if the staff contemplating leaving were to do so.

Further discussion was held on how Fair Meadow's wages compare to area nursing homes as well as staff morale with all of the changes at Fair Meadow and shifting of duties. Kalie Crayton said that staff were not feeling appreciated for all their extra efforts in taking on additional duties and picking up extra shifts all the time to cover open shifts. Crayton added, however, that the biggest factor in staff leaving was compensation. She noted that she was working on some ideas for staff appreciation, but that right now staff were not happy because they had heard for a long time that there would be a wage increase but nothing had happened. The recent increase in pay at Crookston just made that situation a lot worse in a short period of time. Also discussed was the fact that there were staff shortages in virtually all departments and not just nursing.

A motion was made by Council member Wise to increase the wage scale by \$3.50 per hour across the board. The motion was seconded by Council member Bosman and then further discussion was held on whether that added amount would be enough to retain current staff.

After further discussion and realizing that \$3.50 per hour was likely not enough to retain Fair Meadow's current staff, Council member Wise rescinded his motion for an increase of \$3.50 across the board and Council member Bosman rescinded her second on the motion.

A motion was made by Council member Bosman to approve a wage increase of \$4 per hour across the board for Fair Meadow staff. The motion was seconded by Council member Kiefert and was carried.

After discussion of when the wage increase should take effect, a motion was made by Council member Kiefert for the increase to take effect immediately. The motion was seconded by Council member Wise and was carried.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:31 p.m. on a motion by Council member Kiefert that was seconded by Council member Wise.



Daniel Wilkens
Daniel Wilkens, Mayor


Lisa J. Liden
Lisa J. Liden, City Administrator