

Fertile City Council Minutes March 9, 2020

The Fertile City Council held its regular meeting on Monday, March 9, 2020 at 6:30 p.m. at the Community Center. Present were: Mayor Daniel Wilkens, and Council members Todd Wise and Stanton Wang. Council member Widrig was absent. Also present were City Administrator Lisa Liden, Fair Meadow Nursing Home Administrator Angie Leiting, 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 Wise and carried.

There were no public comments.

Under the minutes Mayor Wilkens recommended one change in the second paragraph of page three. Wilkens wanted that paragraph to say that the trail cameras would be used to monitor the trails for wildlife activities and trail surveillance.

The minutes as amended were approved on a motion by Council member Wise, seconded by Council member Wang and carried.

City Administrator Lisa Liden next gave a brief overview of the financial statements and the out of the ordinary bills paid in February. Liden noted the check to Dean Johnson for snow removal and welding on light poles, the check to the county for lease and maintenance of election equipment, and the checks to Ulteig and Short Elliot Hendrickson for work on current projects. The Treasurer's Report and Bills was approved on a motion by Council member Wise and seconded by Council member Wang. Motion was carried.

Fair Meadow Administrator Angie Leiting gave her report to Council. She reported that the month of February began with 39 residents and ended with 41, operating at 92.77% capacity for the month. They had also served 212 home delivered meals. The profit and loss for the month of February showed a loss of just over \$1,000 with the nursing home reporting a small income and the assisted living a loss of slightly over \$11,000. The year to date profit and loss showed a loss of just under \$14,000 with the nursing home showing a profit of over \$47,500 and the assisted living showing a loss of over \$61,500.

Mayor Wilkens asked if there was anything that could be done to make the assisted living more profitable and Leiting said that was not likely. Part of the reason for the loss is the increased regulation of assisted living facilities and the requirement for a dedicated RN on staff. Part of the loss was also due to more accurate apportionment of the expenses that are shared between the nursing home and assisted living.

In reviewing the budget to actual report Leiting noted that most of the actual numbers to date were on track with the budget. She ended by noting that the income side of the budget would require adjustment since it was based on an estimated 6% increase in the rates. Leiting had received the final rate notice and the rates had gone down 1%. The Fair Meadow Finance Committee would meet at some time in the future to adjust the budget if needed.

City Engineer Alex Ranz began his report by letting Council know that the City's Safe Routes to School application had not been accepted. There were many applicants this year and the bulk of the funding went to larger cities.

Ranz went on to give an update on the RV campground project. During the planning they had encountered a sewer issue on Blaine Street where it was determined that there was insufficient grade on the sewer main to allow for the added sewer use from the campground. The project should include replacing the sewer on that block of Blaine Street and, since that would require removing the asphalt from the street, the water main should also be replaced with a bigger line. The current line is only 2" and should be replaced with a 6" line. This was followed by discussion on bringing the water line to the south dead end on Blaine and then looping into the fire hydrant on the fairgrounds to provide even better flow.

Ranz reviewed the handout that he had provided Council giving a cost breakdown of the of the RV campground water and sewer, the Blaine Street sewer and water replacement, the water looping on the fairgrounds and the new hydrant for the fairgrounds. One chart showed all the project costs when treated as stand alone projects. The second chart showed all the projects combined into one project with cost savings realized from engineer and construction oversight costs. Ranz noted that with the replacement of the water and sewer on Blaine and the looping on the fairgrounds that the project could possibly be added to the 2019 water project which would make it eligible for Public Facilities (PFA) loan funding. Mayor Wilkens asked Alex Ranz to contact PFA to see if loan funds were available for the combined projects.

Ranz went on to report that there had been an issue with the turf establishment costs on the 2019 water project. The subcontractor had billed out \$40,000 higher than the contract amount and Sellin was not willing to pay the additional amount since the subcontractor had gone outside the project perimeters. After negotiating the matter, Sellin had agreed to pay \$8,000 above the contract amount since the added seeding was needed in some areas.

Public Works Director Kevin Nephew then asked about the areas that had been seeded late in the year and what would happen if the seed didn't take. Ranz explained that it was covered under warranty and any of those areas would have to be reseeded this summer.

Kevin Nephew, Public Works Director, gave his report to Council. Nephew began by asking if the Fire Department had discussed and agreed to the water salesman being moved to the east side of the fire hall. Council member Wang replied that it had been discussed at one meeting and that it had not gone over very well. Wang recommended that someone from the City attend the next business meeting of the Fire Department on April 2nd to explain how the water salesman would work and get department approval to move it.

Nephew reported that he was going to wait to purchase the pusher blade for the road grader until late summer or early fall. There was a two month wait once it was ordered so there was no point in ordering it now since it would be spring before it arrived. In the meantime, he would look at other options for the blade to see if the City could save money.

For the Agassiz Environmental Learning Center, Mayor Wilkens reported that the Education Search Committee had interviewed Brent Silvis for the Education Director position. Silvis has experience in education and a good resume so the committee would recommend to the AELC Board that Silvis be hired for the position.

For the Fire Department, Council member Wang reported that the department had responded to four calls in February. One was a medical assist, another was for a chimney fire, another call they got called back

from, and a false alarm. Wang noted that the department would be taking part in an upcoming hazmat training.

For the Airport, Dan Triller's report noted that the zoning was done and Short Elliott Hendrickson was checking to see if another public hearing would be required to complete the process. The runway reconstruction project had been moved to State fiscal year 2021 but, given that the State's fiscal year starts July 1st, the project could be completed in late summer. Regarding the land acquisition project, offers had been made to the affected landowners and they were waiting to hear their decisions.

The Personnel Committee had nothing to report.

The first item to be addressed under new business was the clarification of a 1923 vacation of a portion of Polk Avenue. The vacation had not been formally recorded at the county so Resolution #3-1-20 was required to confirm and clarify the vacation.

A motion was made by Council member Wise to approve Resolution #3-1-20 Confirming and Clarifying Vacation of Portion of Polk Avenue, Townsite of Fertile. The motion was seconded by Council member Wang and was carried.

The next matter up for discussion was a request for a City donation in support of the summer reading program at the Fertile branch of Lake Agassiz Regional Library. Liden explained that the summer reading program was well attended in Fertile and that the donations would be used to purchase supplies.

After a brief discussion, a motion was made by Council member Wang to approve a \$250 donation to the library for the summer reading program. The motion was seconded by Council member Wise and carried.

The final item up for discussion was a change to a couple of the water fees. Administrator Liden explained that she would like to change the Unread Meter Fee of \$10 to a Meter Estimating Fee of \$5. This would clarify that the charge is for estimating fees when customers don't turn in a reading. The amount could be lowered to reflect the time that it takes to estimate meters.

The second change Liden requested was to increase the Meter Reading/Testing fee from \$10 to \$15 since that service required more staff time since maintenance staff had to go to customers homes and read the meter.

A motion was made by Council member Wise to approve the changes to the water fees that Administrator Liden requested. The motion was seconded by Council member Wang and was carried.

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 7:17 p.m. on a motion by Council member Wise.

Daniel Wilkens, Mayor

Lisa J. Liden, City Administrator