

## **Fertile City Council Minutes July 12, 2021**

The Fertile City Council held its regular meeting on Monday, July 12, 2021 at 6:30 p.m. at the Community Center. Present were Mayor Daniel Wilkens, and Council members Stanton Wang, Matthew Massmann and Todd Wise. Also present were City Administrator Lisa Liden, Public Works Director Kevin Nephew, Fair Meadow Administrator Angie Leiting, City Engineer Alex Ranz, Shawn Theis, Bob Rosga, and Twylla Altepeter from the Fertile Journal.

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

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

Under public comments, Bob Rosga asked to address Council. He stated that he was a resident of Fertile for over ten years and that he wanted to discuss the new special vehicle ordinance. He noted that he has no issue with the ordinance but was only concerned with the enforcement of it. He said that he has archery hunted at the Learning Center for several years and has seen four wheelers, rangers, and golf carts on the Learning Center trails where they are not allowed. If the City couldn't enforce those rules, he was wondering how the new ordinance was going to be enforced.

Mayor Dan Wilkens replied by first explaining the reasoning behind the adoption of the ordinance. According to State Statute, until a city adopts a special vehicle ordinance, those vehicles are illegal to operate on City streets. The ordinance, therefore, provided a legal avenue to be able to operate special vehicles on City streets. He noted that the vehicles are all motor vehicles and need to be operated accordingly by following all rules and regulations that apply. Wilkens explained further that not too many years back, golf carts were primarily used to go back and forth to the golf course. Now, they are driven all over for errands. This was followed by a brief discussion on four-wheelers.

Administrator Liden explained that the ordinance had been sent to the Sheriff's office requesting their assistance with enforcement. Liden noted that enforcement of the new ordinance would be quite a bit easier than the motor vehicle rules at the Learning Center since there were deputies through town patrolling frequently. Patrolling at the Learning Center was not feasible. Further discussion was then held on vehicles on the Learning Center trails and on parking to enter the trail system.

The minutes of the June 14, 2021 minutes were next up for approval. Mayor Wilkens noted that on the bottom of page one that the final pay request for the runway project would be submitted in July and not June as it was written in the minutes.

The June 14, 2021 minutes were approved as corrected on a motion by Council member Massmann that was seconded by Council member Wang. The motion was carried.

City Administrator Lisa Liden gave the Treasurer's Report. Liden went over the out of the ordinary deposits and checks for the month of June. Liden noted the out of the ordinary checks written to Agassiz Asphalt for the runway project, checks to Short Elliott Hendrickson for engineer fees for ongoing projects at the airport, a check to Swenby Construction for the new slab at the Learning Center front door, and a check to J & R Wastewater for sewer jetting.

The Treasurer's Report and Bills was approved on a motion by Council member Massmann, seconded by Council member Wise and carried.

Fair Meadow Administrator Angie Leiting gave her report to Council. She reported for the month of June that they started and ended the month with 37 residents, operating at 88.41% capacity for the month. They had also served 116 home delivered meals. Leiting noted that the average occupancy for the past six months was about 90%. While that number was low for Fair Meadow, it was higher compared to other area nursing homes. Due to the continued low occupancy the payroll and staffing was still cut by 15%. Leiting noted also that the cash balance was at about the same level that it was before COVID.

Council member Wise asked about the \$187,000 accounts receivable on the balance sheet for the assisted living. Leiting couldn't remember off-hand what that would be since it was so much higher than usual but she stated she would check with Dani Nelson to see what that was.

The profit and loss for the month of June showed combined income of over \$15,000 with the nursing home showing income of almost \$27,000 and the assisted living reporting a loss of over \$11,000. The combined year-to-date profit and loss showed an income of over \$400,000 with the nursing home showing a profit of almost \$461,000 and the assisted living a loss of over \$52,000. For the budget to actual report, it was noted that the target number was 75% and that income was at 86% and expenses were at 78%.

Leiting reported that assisted living staff had been leaving employment and that she would like to have a personnel and budget committee meeting to see if the wage scale could be adjusted. Mayor Wilkens said that a meeting could be held as soon as possible and that Administrator Liden would email the committee members to check on their availability in the next two weeks.

City Engineer Alex Ranz was next to give his report. He began by giving an update on the issue with the sidewalk on the north side of the school. In the spring of 2020 Sellin had looked at the sidewalk and all of the pop outs that had appeared over the winter and at that time had agreed to a full replacement of the sidewalk. After delays due to COVID and then resistance from the concrete subcontractor, Sellin had asked for MnDOT to look at the sidewalk since the project followed MnDOT specs for the concrete. MnDOT had inspected the sidewalk and had verified that MnDOT specs had been met. While MnDOT agreed that there was an issue with pop outs, they admitted that they were in foreign territory since they didn't know how to proceed to rectify the situation.

Once Sellin got the MnDOT report verifying that the specs had been followed, they were no longer willing to replace the sidewalk. Sellin wanted to know what the City's expectation was in light of the report. Ranz did note, however, that MnDOT did state that the pop outs could become a trip hazard if they are not repaired, so that did give the city a basis to withhold at least part of the retainage to cover the repairs. The epoxy fill repair method recommended by MnDOT was then discussed. Kevin Nephew would contact Aaron Swenby to get his opinion on the repair method and to get an estimate on how much it would cost to do the repair and the city could then determine how much retainage should be withheld.

Ranz then reported that there was a multi-billion-dollar infrastructure bill that would be going through and a substantial amount of money would be available to small cities for utility projects. Depending on a city's debt load, and the type of project, some projects could potentially be funded at 100%. This was followed by a discussion on various water and wastewater projects that could be done. Kevin and Alex would meet during the next week to discuss various options.

The only item to address under the airport, was the final pay application for the runway project. A motion was made by Council member Wang to pay the \$43,334.18 requested on the pay application. The motion was seconded by Council member Wise and was carried. Administrator Liden noted that the pre-construction meeting for the apron and taxiway project would be scheduled soon and that the state contract for the project was fully executed.

Kevin Nephew, Public Works Supervisor, was next to give his report to Council. He began by stating again that he would get in touch with Swenby right away about the school sidewalk to get a quote on repairing it. Mayor Wilkens inquired about getting the Wi-Fi installed at the campground. Nephew reported that he was working with Garden Valley on it and that he would get the pole from the east side of the campground moved to the center for mounting the equipment. Garden Valley would also be utilizing Otter Tail's light pole for more equipment. Wilkens then inquired about the gates to the Learning Center trail located off of the Old Mill Road and if those were going to be installed soon. Nephew explained that he had located some gates that a local person would maybe be willing to donate. He was waiting to hear on that.

Mayor Wilkens then asked about getting directional signage up for the sports complex, the fairgrounds, and the RV campground. Since the signage would be on highway 32 MnDOT would have to be consulted on where they should go. Council member Wang inquired about trees and bushes that overhang the streets and sidewalks and whether the City or property owners was responsible for trimming them. Administrator Liden stated that the homeowners were responsible for boulevard trees and bushes. Discussion was then held on getting a list compiled of the property owners who need to trim their trees. Kevin Nephew said that there have been times in the past where the city has taken care of trimming the trees.

City Administrator Lisa Liden gave her report and began by noting that the audit was finally complete. She noted that she had done further work with the special vehicle permit forms as well as finalizing the signage for the campground. The outdoor forms box, payment box, and registration forms for the campground had been received so registration could all be handled on site. Liden had also completed and filed three credit applications with MnDOT for airport projects and had processed the necessary permits for the beer garden, 5K run, and parade for the Polk County Fair. Liden ended by noting that she had worked with April Swenby on a new page for the website that gives details on the camping options in Fertile.

Under the Learning Center Administrator Liden reported that the city had been approved for a DNR grant for \$18,000 to purchase new grooming equipment for the cross country ski trails.

For the Fire Department Council member Wang reported that there had been only two calls during the month of June. One was for a lightning strike in town and the other for a fire alarm at the lake. The department was also planning for the assistance they would provide during the fair.

The last agenda item to be addressed was a request from Riverview for some flexibility on time for their lease of the clinic space. Administrator Liden explained that the lease start date was August 1<sup>st</sup> but Riverview would need to get in sooner than that to get the clinic set up.

A motion was made by Council member Massmann to allow Riverview to come in ahead of the August 1<sup>st</sup> start day. The motion was seconded by Council member Wise and was carried.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:42 on a motion by Council member Wise.

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Daniel Wilkens, Mayor

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Lisa J. Liden, City Administrator