

## **Fertile City Council Minutes September 12, 2022**

The Fertile City Council held its regular meeting on Monday, September 12, 2022 at 6:30 p.m. at the Community Center. Present were Mayor Daniel Wilkens, and Council members Todd Wise, Matthew Massmann and Mary Kiefert. Also present was City Administrator Lisa Liden, Public Works Director Kevin Nephew, Fair Meadow Nursing Home Administrator Angie Leiting, Amanda Bosman, Shawn Theis, and Twylla Altepeter with 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.

Under agenda approval Mayor Wilkens asked to add Fair Meadow's request for shift differential and an appointment to Council to the agenda. The agenda was approved as amended on a motion by Council member Massmann that was seconded by Council member Wise and was carried.

Mayor Wilkens asked Amanda Bosman to come to the front and introduced her to the group. He explained that Bosman was interested in serving on City Council and had filed to run for the two-year term in the upcoming election. Given her interest in serving, Mayor Wilkens nominated her to be appointed prior to the election to fill the Council seat that had been vacated when Stanton Wang resigned.

A motion was made by Council member Wise to appoint Amanda Bosman to fill the currently vacant Council seat. The motion was seconded by Council member Massmann and carried. Amanda Bosman was sworn in by City Administrator Lisa Liden and took her seat at the Council table.

Under public comments Shawn Theis asked to address Council about a couple of matters. First, he inquired about the dirt pile that was located a block away from the Community Center on Main Ave. East. He was concerned that the pile was in the driving lane and wasn't marked with cones or barricades. Public Works Director Kevin Nephew explained that the street had been dug up for a sewer repair and the area filled with gravel. An asphalt company had cleared the hole just that afternoon to pave over the area. They were likely delayed and unable to fill it until the next day so Nephew said that he would put cones in front of the dirt pile so that it would be more visible.

Next Theis asked whether the City could contact MnDOT to see if they could fix the water shut offs on the corner of Highway 32 by his house. It was quite loud when vehicles hit them regularly and he was annoyed by the sound all hours of the day and night. Other people in the neighborhood also complained about the noise. Kevin Nephew explained that MnDOT had caused the problem when they repaved the highway but that the City would likely have to fix it since it involved a City valve. Nephew said he would look into perhaps getting a riser to raise the cap up to the level of the highway.

Theis then asked if Council could address the parking issue on the ATV trail just west of the school. Whenever there were school events, the vehicles would fill the parking lot across from the school and the parking would extend all the way to the ATV trail. Mayor Wilkens said that the school could be asked about putting up signage stating that there was no parking on the trail.

The minutes of the August 8, 2022 Council meeting were approved as presented on a motion by Council member Kiefert that was seconded by Council member Massmann and 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 August. Under the deposits Liden noted that the only out of the ordinary receipts were \$5,585 for camping fees and \$2,658 from MnDOT for airport maintenance costs. Liden noted that the campground had been full for all of August with two different construction crews. Under the check listing Liden noted that disbursements were high for the month primarily due to the payment to MN Public Facilities for \$108,827.71 for principal and interest payment on the 2019 and 2020 water projects. Liden noted that the amount to MNPFA included the final payment for the water treatment plant. Liden also noted the checks to Downs and Nowacki for work on the air conditioning and replacing the auditorium lights, the check to Ziegler for the repairs on the road grader, and a check to Ehlers for the annual TIF report filing. The balance sheet, profit and loss, and budget to actual reports were also briefly reviewed.

The Treasurer's Report was approved on a motion by Council member Wise that was seconded by Council member Kiefert and was carried.

Fair Meadow Administrator Angie Leiting gave the report for Fair Meadow Nursing Home. The month of August began and ended with 40 residents, operating at 91.62% capacity. They had also served 178 home delivered meals.

In reviewing the profit and loss reports, Leiting reported that for the month of August there was a combined total profit of over \$229,000 with the nursing home showing a profit of over \$233,000 and the assisted living showing a loss of just over \$4,000. For the year-to-date profit and loss, the nursing home and assisted living showed a loss of almost \$54,000 with the nursing home showing a loss of over \$46,000 and the assisted living a small loss of just over \$7,000. For the budget to actual comparison, income was slightly above the target amount and expenses for the nursing home and assisted living were higher than the target primarily due to the high costs of temp nursing staff.

Leiting reported that the Personnel and Budget Committees had met prior to the regular Council meeting to discuss offering a shift differential at Fair Meadow. She explained that there was a shift differential offered several years ago but that it had been discontinued when there were no problems with hiring and retaining evening and overnight nursing staff. Now, however, it had become increasingly difficult to attract and retain nursing staff for those shifts so Leiting would like to offer the differential again. She stated that the Committees had agreed to offering a shift differential of \$2 per hour for night shift and \$4 per hour for the overnight shift.

Council member Wise made a motion to approve Fair Meadow offering shift differential pay of \$2 per hour for the evening shift and \$4 per hour for the overnight shift. The motion was seconded by Council member Bosman and was carried.

Leiting briefly went over the audit report for the year ended September 30, 2021 and then the budget was reviewed. Leiting pointed out the addition of an annual cost of \$87,000 for the shift differential pay and also the \$200,000 for temp staff. Leiting stated that she hoped they were done with having to rely on temp staff, especially with the shift differential being offered and questioned whether the amount for temp staff should be adjusted accordingly. Council member Massmann recommended that the temp staff amount be left in the budget just in case.

After further discussion of the budget, a motion was made by Council member Wise to approve the budget for Fair Meadow Nursing Home. The motion was seconded by Council member Massmann and was carried.

Kevin Nephew, Public Works Director was next to give his report. He began by explaining that he had been contacted by Kristen Hamre regarding digging a well in City limits. Kristin and JJ Hamre were building a new home on the west end of town on the hill above Summit Avenue that overlooks the golf course. There currently wasn't water available at that location and the hill could present some problems in getting water to their site.

Nephew then questioned whether they would be allowed to dig a well and Administrator Liden explained that wells were only forbidden if there was ready access to City water. Mayor Wilkens pointed out that Hamre's would have better quality water if they had City water since well water in that area would be very rusty. Discussion was held on bringing the water to the Strem property located below the hill and then boring up to Hamre's and whether that would be feasible. It was decided that Nephew would work with Moore Engineering on getting an estimate on how much it would cost to get water to the Strem property and then to the Hamre property.

Discussion was then held on the Eric and Joan Ellegaard plat that had been presented for approval. Administrator Liden noted that she had emailed the engineer who had sent the plat and reported that it would need to be redone since the plat as presented included the road right-of-way for an extension of Stephen Drive in the Ellegaard plat. Nephew explained that he had spoken with Eric Ellegaard about the matter and that he didn't have any issue with the property line being changed so the road right-of-way wouldn't be impacted. Discussion was held on the utility easement that was indicated on the southern side of Stephen Drive and any potential alley rights-of-way that may need to be preserved.

City Engineer Jeff Ebsch arrived at the meeting so he was asked to join the discussion about the Ellegaard matter. Nephew then asked Ebsch about getting a water line to the Strem property explaining where the water main was that would be tapped into and approximately how long the line would be going down Summit Ave. It was determined that Jeff Ebsch would get an estimate on getting the water main down to the Strem property and also on how much it would be to bore a service line to the JJ Hamre property.

Jeff Ebsch continued his report by giving an update on the water projects that had been listed on the Priority Project List for the State. The bonding bill that would have provided the funding for the projects had not passed the legislature so funding wasn't currently available to proceed on the projects. The projects would stay on the list and once funding was available, he would have a better idea on how much would be paid by grant and how much would be financed with loans.

The City Administrator's report was briefly reviewed with Administrator Liden reporting on her work with the primary election, the bi-annual work with Standard and Poors on determining the City's bond rating, letters that had been sent out on dog complaints, and extensive work on the 2023 budget.

Under the Learning Center it was reported that the Board of Directors would be holding a meeting the following week. Mayor Wilkens reported that a new Education Director had been hired.

For the Fire Department, Administrator Liden reported that the department had only one call for the month of August and that it was a false alarm at the nursing home. Liden reported also that they are working on ordering a new fire truck.

Under new business, the fire department request for a temporary liquor license for their regional fire meeting was approved on a motion by Council member Massmann that was seconded by Council member Bosman and was carried.

Administrator Liden reported on the new health insurance rate quote that had been received from the Northwest Service Cooperative. There was a 3.9% rate increase for the single plan that the City pays for and a 6.03% increase on the family plan. She explained that Council needed to approve that the plans would be offered to employees for the coming year.

A motion was made by Council member Wise to approve the health plans that were quoted for the upcoming year. The motion was seconded by Council member Massmann and was carried.

The final item on the budget was the preliminary budget for 2023 and the levy request. Administrator Liden explained some of the highpoints of the budget and that the preliminary budget that was presented did not show a levy increase for 2023. Discussion was held on increasing the levy by a small amount to keep up with the inflationary increases on operating expenses.

After discussion of the matter, a motion was made by Council member Massmann to approve Resolution #9-1-22 setting the preliminary levy at \$240,000 which represented a 4.8% increase over the current year's levy. The motion was seconded by Council member Wise and was carried.

A motion was made by Council member Wise to approve the preliminary budget and to set the budget meeting date for December 12<sup>th</sup>. The motion was seconded by Council member Kiefert and was carried.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:56 p.m. on a motion by Council member Bosman.

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Daniel Wilkens, Mayor

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Lisa J. Liden, City Administrator