

Fertile City Council Minutes July 10, 2023

The Fertile City Council held its regular meeting on Monday, July 10, 2023 at 6:30 p.m. at the Community Center. Present were Mayor Daniel Wilkens and Council members Mary Kiefert and Amanda Bosman. Also present were City Administrator Lisa Liden, Public Works Director Kevin Nephew, and Nicole Rivera from the Fertile Journal. Also in attendance were Kindi Hasbrouck, Kim Carlson, Candace Brouse, Stephanie Berhow, Laura DeLage, Tammie Radermacher, Scott Hall, Joe Leiting, April and Aaron Swenby, Roger Narlock, Terry Baumgartner, Heather Larson, Carol Swenby, Marla Swenson, Brian and Dani Nelson, Angie Leiting, Karla Ness, Jenn Derosier, Becky Hall, Lynda Engman, Melody Pledger, Mark Wang, Marsha Donnell, Eileen Todahl, Jeannie and David Thorson, Sherry Nolte-Wellman, Linda Widrig, Nicole Straus, Rhonda Bennefeld, Kiley Desrosier, Jordan Leiting, Keven and Janet Swenson, Kelsey Braun, Deborah Nelson, Scott Braun, Dick Braun, Cheryll Reitmeier, Lionel and Theresa Sandness, Alan Johnson, Kory Solie, Shawn Theis, Doug Nephew, Brian Nephew, Andrea Duckstad, Ben Sather, Reid Jensrud, Carmen Flynn, Lee and Cindy Abrahamson, Brittany Stuck, Harry Nohre, and Jon and Joan Larson. There were a few others in attendance but the signatures on the sign-in sheet were illegible.

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 Administrator Lisa Liden noted that the language for the change to the golf cart ordinance was not finalized by the attorney yet, so that matter would have to wait until next month. Council member Massmann made the motion to approve the agenda as amended. The motion was seconded by Council member Bosman and was carried.

For the public comment period April Swenby asked to read a public statement regarding the resignation of Fair Meadow Nursing Home Administrator Angie Leiting. A copy of the statement is included with the minutes to be entered into the public record.

The minutes of the June 12, 2023 regular meeting and the June 20, 2023 closed meeting were approved as presented on a motion by Council member Kiefert that was seconded by Council member Wise and was carried.

Administrator 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 deposit of the bond funds for the Community Center project in the amount of \$777,300 as well as the deposits for property taxes and tax increment. Under the check listing Liden noted the check to Fertile Building Center for the nature center shop addition, the check to Wagner Sand and Gravel for gravel in the alleys, the check to Eide Bailly for the audit, and the check to Hildi Incorporated for audit work regarding the fire department pension funds. The balance sheet and profit and loss report were also reviewed.

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

There was nothing to report under the airport.

Administrator Liden explained that there was no written report or financials for Fair Meadow due to the transition with an interim Administrator.

Public Works Director Kevin Nephew had nothing to report for the Public Works Department. Council member Bosman asked about the purchase of the pressure washer that had been approved at the June meeting and whether or not they had purchased the used one on the auction. Nephew explained that the one on the auction wasn't what they needed so they had purchased the new one.

Administrator Liden explained that she had not submitted a written Administrator's report. She went on to note that she had continued her work on the audit and had also been assisting the interim Administrator at Fair Meadow.

There was nothing to report for the Learning Center or the Fire Department.

Under the old business item for the Community Center project, Administrator Liden noted that the contract wasn't finalized so the construction schedule had not yet been set.

The market study and wage scale for Fair Meadow was tabled until the July meeting.

Council member Kiefert noted that since the public comment period was brief and the other agenda items were addressed quickly so there was more time for Council to hear public comments. Mayor Wilkens called on City resident Brian Nephew since he had his hand up. Brian Nephew commented that since the City Administrator didn't submit a written report as is expected he was wondering if she would be reprimanded. He also commented that since Liden had been assisting the interim Administrator there should have at least been nursing home financial reports submitted for the meeting. He ended by commenting that the City Administrator should be back in her office taking care of those duties rather than working at the nursing home.


Doug Nephew then asked to address Council about a water pressure issue at his house. He said that his water pressure was really low and had been for three years. Mayor Wilkens asked Kevin Nephew about the matter and Kevin stated that he had checked into it a couple of years ago and that the meter had been removed to see if the issue was with the meter and it was not the meter. Nephew said that he could go take another look to see if he could determine what the issue was.

An audience member asked if the City was advertising for a new Administrator and they were told that the position was not advertised yet. Brian Nephew asked why the interim Administrator was not at the meeting to give a report. Someone else in the audience asked about where the interim was staying and another audience member commented that she was staying in Crookston. Questions were then asked about the contract and mileage and meals. Administrator Liden stated that mileage and meals were part of the contract. Further questions were asked regarding the rate for the interim and Liden explained she couldn't answer since she couldn't remember the exact number off the top of her head. Several audience members asked if Liden could go get the contract and Liden stated that the contract wasn't readily available and she wouldn't leave the meeting to go locate it. Another audience member stood up and told the Council that they needed to immediately reinstate Angie to the Administrator's job. Brian Nephew commented that the Council should immediately resign.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned on a motion by Council member Wise and seconded by Council member Massmann. Motion carried.



Daniel Wilkens, Mayor



Lisa J. Liden, City Administrator