

## **Fertile City Council Minutes June 12, 2023**

The Fertile City Council held its regular meeting on Monday, June 12, 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.

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 Bosman that was seconded by Council member Kiefert and carried.

There were no public comments.

The minutes of the May 8, 2023 regular meeting and the May 22, 2023 special meeting were approved on a motion by Council member Bosman that was seconded by Council member Kiefert and 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 May. The only out of the ordinary deposit was for auction proceeds in the amount of \$6,481.80. Under the check listing Liden noted the check to the League of MN Cities Insurance Trust for Worker's Compensation, the check to Valley Plains Equipment for mower hubs, and the check to the Fertile Building Center for materials for the nature center shop expansion project. 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 Kiefert that was seconded by Council member Bosman and was carried.

There was nothing to report under the airport.

Kevin Nephew, Public Works Director, gave his report next. Nephew referred Council to page 43 of the packet which gave information on a power washer that he would like to purchase. The power washer had a bigger pump and more power and could be used for washing the curbs prior to repainting every summer and for thawing out frozen sewer lines in the winter. The new power washer would be much easier to use since it was self-contained on a trailer compared to the current set up which required getting the generator, water tank, and power washer all loaded up.

Kevin Nephew noted that there currently was a similar power washer on an Oistad on-line auction but he wasn't certain of the specs on it and the condition it was in. He stated that he and Chris Zimmel would look into that unit as well as other potential used units but would like the authority to order the new one if a suitable used one was not available.

After a brief discussion of the matter, a motion was made by Council member Bosman to spend up to \$16,500 for a new power washer that would meet the needs of the maintenance department. The motion was seconded by Council member Kiefert and was carried.

He went on to report that everything went well with cleaning the media in the water treatment plant. He noted that the town didn't run out of water while the plant was off-line but the tower did get down to 10%. Mayor Wilkens asked about the condition of the water tower and Nephew replied that he would have to check on the timing of the next cleaning. He noted that the City is under contract with KLM to check on the status and condition of the water tower.

Administrator Liden also noted that Kevin Nephew had asked the county to stripe the center of the Nature Center road while they were in town so the county had done that at no cost to the City.

With Nephew's report completed, discussion moved on to the agenda item regarding the bank paving the alley directly to the east of the bank and bank parking lot. Mayor Wilkens asked Kevin Nephew if there would be any issues with the bank doing that and Nephew replied that he was fine with it and that it shouldn't cause any issues with alley maintenance.

A motion was made by Council member Kiefert to approve the bank paying to have the alley paved directly east of the bank and parking lot. The motion was seconded by Council member Bosman and was carried.

City Administrator Liden gave the nursing home report in the absence of Angie Leiting who was dealing with the State survey at the nursing home. Liden reported that the month of May began with 40 residents and ended with 40, operating at 95% capacity. They also served 123 home delivered meals. Liden noted that the new Medical Director through Essentia would be Dr. Cheryl White but that there was no information provided in Angie's materials regarding the therapy changes noted in her memo. Council then reviewed the 2023 Legislative Recap information that was included with the memo.

The checking, savings, and cash accounts had a balance of slightly less than \$69,000 as of May 31<sup>st</sup>. The profit and loss for May showed a combined income of just over \$11,000 for the month with the nursing home showing an income of just over \$19,000 and the assisted living showing a loss of almost \$8,000. The year-to-date profit and loss showed a combined income of just over \$190,000 with the nursing home showing income of over \$260,000 and the assisted living a loss of almost \$70,000. The budget to actual report showed the revenues and expenses close to the budget numbers.

City Engineer Jeff Ebsch was next to give his report to Council. Ebsch reported that the two projects the City had submitted for funding in 2023 had not been funded under the bonding bill. The two projects would be resubmitted for 2024. Jeff Ebsch then called Josh Wayt, a funding specialist for Moore Engineering to participate by phone and to explain some other funding options for the projects that would combine grant and loan funds from varying agencies. There were grant funds available through the Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) of up to \$600,000 with no city cost share required. Those funds could be combined with other funds through Rural Development, MN Public Facilities, and the Dept. of Health to cover the costs of the projects. Josh Wayt noted that his preference was to work with the other agencies rather than Rural Development since their application process was quite complicated.

Administrator Liden asked if it was possible to start the application process and then withdraw later if the grant versus loan components of the funding made the projects cost prohibitive for the City. Josh Wayt stated that it would be possible to withdraw the applications at any point during the process. Mayor Wilkens asked about the timelines for the applications and Wayt noted that the DEED funding had an application process that started in January. It was determined to look further into the funding options that had been discussed for the two water projects that were currently listed.

Jeff Ebsch moved on to a discussion of developing a capital improvement plan (CIP) for the City. He would like to begin work on that if the City was still interested and the first step in the process would be scheduling a round-table discussion to get input on what future projects or maintenance needs could be included in the plan. He briefly reviewed a sample plan that Moore Engineering had done for the city of Casselton to show the component parts of the plan and the schedules and graphs that could provide guidance through the budgeting process to see that funds were available to cover the items included in the plan.

Ebsch also reported that the GIS WebMap was completed for the City and showed the locations of items like water and sewer mains, storm sewer mains, as well as water shutoffs. He noted that any number of things

could be added to the map and that Chris Zimmel had indicated an interest in getting the coordinates for the water curb shut offs for the service lines determined so that they could be added to the map. It was noted that it would make it much easier to have those mapped accurately for shut offs that need to be done in the winter. Ebsch stated that he would like to schedule a Council demonstration of the WebMap with Council and that perhaps that could be done in conjunction with the round-table discussion of the CIP. Mayor Wilkens indicated that Council would be interested in getting together to move forward on the CIP as well as seeing a demonstration of the WebMap. A date would be scheduled in the next couple of months to meet.

Under the Learning Center Mayor Wilkens reported that the shop addition was going well and that the next steps to be completed were to get the electricity hooked back up to the shop and to get the overhead doors put in.

For the City Personnel Committee, it was reported that they had met to go over the placement on the wage scale for the Deputy Administrator position as well as some changes to the Personnel Policy regarding pro-rated time off benefits. Administrator Liden reported that she had been in contact with Baker Tilly who had done the wage study and developed the wage scale for the City. After reviewing the job description for the Deputy position they had determined it would be at grade 10 on the scale. After discussing the matter, the Personnel Committee agreed with the grading of the position and determined that the current Deputy should start on the scale at the first step since that represented an adequate increase in pay above her current level.

The other item addressed by the Personnel Committee was offering pro-rated time off benefits of vacation, sick, and holiday pay for part-time, year-round employees. Liden reported that the committee recommended adding those benefits on a pro-rated basis determined by the average weekly hours worked over the previous year. Liden noted that the Personnel Policy needed to be amended to reflect that change and that the necessary changes to the corresponding pages in the policy were included in the packets and shown highlighted in yellow.

After a review of the Personnel Policy changes, a motion was made by Council member Kiefert to approve the placement on the wage scale for the Deputy position and to approve the Personnel Policy changes for time off as recommended by the Personnel Committee. The motion was seconded by Council member Bosman and was carried.

The first item on the agenda under new business was to call for a Public Hearing at the July meeting to amend the Special Vehicle section of the City Code. Administrator Liden reported that there continued to be a problem with young children driving golf carts on City streets. She explained that the current Code wasn't clear enough in requiring that drivers be at least 16 and have a license to drive and that was causing enforcement issues for the Sheriff's Office. Liden reported also that there had been a golf cart accident recently that involved a young driver that resulted in a serious injury to an underaged passenger. The accident had taken place on the fairgrounds but the golf cart had been operated on City streets to arrive at the fairgrounds. The Sheriff's Office was limited in what it could do as far as charges related to the accident due in part to the ambiguity in the City Code. Administrator Liden would work with the City Attorney to amend the Code so that it was much clearer that drivers needed to be at least 16 and licensed. She added that all that was required at this meeting was to call for the public hearing to amend the Code.

After discussion of the matter, a motion was made by Council member Bosman to call for a Public Hearing for July 10<sup>th</sup> to amend the City Code. The motion was seconded by Council member Kiefert and was carried.

The next item on the agenda was the bi-annual maintenance and operations contract with MNDOT Aeronautics. Administrator Liden explained that the contract was the same one that has been signed every other year and allowed the City to submit for state reimbursement of allowable expenses involved with the City airport. She noted the current reimbursement rate was still 75% and that it covered snow removal, mowing, and certain repairs. The staff and equipment costs were also reimbursed.

A motion was made by Council member Kiefert to approve Resolution #6-1-23 Authorization to Execute Minnesota Department of Transportation Airport Maintenance and Operation Grant Contract. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Bosman and was carried.

Next on the agenda was the contract between the City and Polk County for the ARPA grant funding Nature Center building addition. The County had approved a grant in the amount of \$144,000 to add space to the Learning Center to provide a fully handicap accessible restroom in addition to more space to make it more accessible to all users. Liden noted that the final plans for the addition were not yet complete but that a preliminary layout plan had been submitted to Mutchler Bartram Architects to provide a cost estimate for the contract with the County. The estimate, including architect fees, was \$200,000 so the addition would likely need to be downsized to fit within the grant amount. With the submission of the preliminary layout and the cost estimate, the City could now sign the grant application to complete the process and secure funding.

After discussion of the matter, Council member Bosman approved signing the Subrecipient Grant Agreement with Polk County. The motion was seconded by Council member Kiefert and was carried.

Official recognition of the new Juneteenth holiday was the next item up for consideration. Administrator Liden explained that the Minnesota legislature had passed a law that recognized Juneteenth as an official holiday in Minnesota and that no government business could be conducted that day. To make the holiday official for the City, Council should also recognize the holiday and would have to determine whether it was a paid holiday for City staff.

After discussion of the matter, a motion was made by Council member Kiefert to recognize Juneteenth as an official holiday with holiday pay for City employees. The motion was seconded by Council member Bosman and was carried.

The meeting was then closed per MN Statute 13D.05 Subd. 2(b) for a brief discussion of an ongoing investigation on a motion by Council member Kiefert that was seconded by Council member Bosman and was carried.

The meeting was reopened on a motion by Council member Bosman that was seconded by Council member Kiefert and was carried.

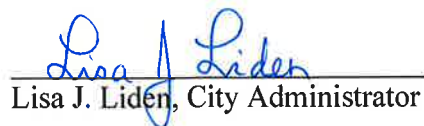
A motion was made by Council member Kiefert and seconded by Council member Bosman to authorize a banking resolution to change the signatories on the Fair Meadow accounts to Mayor Wilkens and City Administrator Liden. The motion was carried.

A motion was made by Council member Bosman to appoint City Administrator Liden as an assistant to the Interim Administrator for Fair Meadow Nursing Home, Sandy Larson. The motion was seconded by Council member Kiefert and was carried.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:04 p.m. on a motion by Council member Kiefert.



Daniel Wilkens, Mayor



Lisa J. Liden, City Administrator