

## **Fertile City Council Minutes**

### **March 13, 2023**

The Fertile City Council held its regular meeting on Monday, March 13, 2023 at 7:15 p.m. at the Community Center. Present were Council members Mary Kiefert, Matthew Massmann, and Todd Wise. Also present was City Administrator Lisa Liden, Public Works Director Kevin Nephew, and Fair Meadow Nursing Home Administrator Angie Leiting.

The meeting was called to order by Vice Mayor Wise at 7:15 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 Kiefert and carried.

There were no public comments.

The minutes of the February 23, 2023 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 February. Under the deposits Liden noted the only out of the ordinary deposit was the \$75,000 from Fair Meadow to pay back the short-term loan that was made. Under the check listing Liden noted a check to Downs and Nowacki for shop lights, a check to Minnesota Public Facilities for water loan interest, and a payment to Amazon for some items for the food shelf. Liden explained that the food shelf would reimburse the City. The balance sheet and profit and loss were also reviewed. Liden noted that the budget to actual report was not presented at the meeting since the 2023 budget numbers needed to be put into QuickBooks for the report to be prepared and she had not had time to do that yet.

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.

Fair Meadow Administrator Angie Leiting gave the report for Fair Meadow Nursing Home. The month of February began with 41 residents and ended with 41, operating at 93.79% capacity. They had also served 125 home delivered meals.

The profit and loss for the month of February showed a combined loss of almost \$14,000 with the nursing home showing a loss of almost \$9,000 and the assisted living a loss of over \$5,000. Leiting noted under the expenses the \$16,700 dual training grant expense amount and explained that the amount would be reimbursed by the State next month. That amount alone explained the loss for the month of February. The year-to-date profit and loss showed a combined profit of over \$113,000 with the nursing home showing a profit of over \$147,000 and the assisted living a loss of almost \$34,000. For the budget to actual report, both income and expenses were either at or a little below the budgeted level.

Council member Massmann asked about the occupancy at the Assisted Living and Leiting replied that there currently were three empty units but there would soon be four.

Leiting began to go over the items that she was requesting from Council and had explained briefly in a memo included in the meeting packets. The first item was regarding potentially offering outpatient therapy at Fair Meadow. Leiting explained that therapy services are currently offered through Benedictine Health Services and they had just increased the amount that Fair Meadow had to pay. Right now only two residents were

receiving therapy services, but since the therapist had to travel to Fertile anyway and Fair Meadow had to pay mileage, Leiting was wondering about exploring offering outpatient therapy at the nursing home.

Discussion was held on the matter and Council expressed concern about competing with Riverview Rehab Services who had a clinic in the Community Center. After discussion, Council told Leiting that she could check into the matter further to see if it was feasible.

The next matter to address was the Meals on Wheels program that was offered in Fertile. Fair Meadow prepared the meals and volunteers delivered them. Leiting explained that the program had been losing money for quite some time due to increasing food costs. Leiting was wondering if they should drop the program or increase the meal prices so that they were at least breaking even on the cost.

Discussion was held on how many people in the community use the service and whether it would be a hardship for them if the program was dropped. Also discussed was whether the program would still be affordable for some if the prices were raised.

After discussion of the matter, a motion was made by Council member Massmann to increase the meal price from \$7.45 per meal to \$10. The motion was seconded by Council member Kiefert and was carried. Leiting noted that they had to give a 30-day notice of the price increase.

The amount charged for employee meals was the next item discussed. Currently employees were charged \$6 for lunch and \$3 for supper. Leiting felt that with increased costs, the meal prices should be increased to adjust for inflation. She also noted that you can't get lunch anywhere in town for \$6 anymore. Council member Massmann noted, however, that having food available on site at a reasonable cost was one perk that many people working in the medical field greatly appreciated. It was difficult, if not impossible, for nurses in particular to leave for lunch due to the demands of their jobs and usually only a half hour lunch break didn't allow time to leave and get food.

After further discussion, a motion was made by Council member Massmann to increase the lunch price to \$7 and the supper to \$4. The motion was seconded by Council member Kiefert and was carried.

The final nursing home item to address was Leiting's request to add a position line on the wage scale for a nursing assistant (CNA) van driver. Leiting explained that when a resident had a medical appointment out of town, that the nursing home was responsible for lining up transportation. Currently there was only one ride service operating in Fertile and that frequently they were unwilling or unable to transport. When that happened, the resident had to be transported in the nursing home van and a CNA had to go along. Quite often the maintenance assistant would drive and a CNA would ride along which was costing about double since two staff were paid to go. Leiting said that she currently had a CNA that was willing to drive to the appointments but wanted more per hour to do so since there was more for her to do when there wasn't a dedicated driver.

City Administrator Liden noted that it might be better to not add a specific position on the wage scale to cover that situation and instead make it a per hour addition to pay just like call pay or shift differential. Discussion was held on how much per hour should be paid for those duties.

A motion was made by Council member Kiefert to pay \$8 per hour in addition to regular pay for nursing staff when they are driving residents to medical appointments. The motion was seconded by Council member Massmann and was carried.

Kevin Nephew, Public Works Director, gave his report next. He reported that he was monitoring a water main break at the southwest corner of the nursing home lot. He explained that he had suspected a leak somewhere in the system based on the number of gallons being pumped each day, but had only recently discovered the general area where the leak was located. He explained further that he had not pinpointed the exact location of

the leak and that he was just going to continue monitoring it until spring if possible. Since that water line supplied the nursing home and assisted living their water would have to be shut off for at least four hours to make the repair. Nephew felt that the repair would go much more smoothly if the snow was melted and the ground was thawed. That would likely make it easier to pinpoint the exact location of the leak as well.

Nephew reported that there had been another sewer backup that impacted the same three residences as the backup a little over a month ago. The location of the backup and the likely cause of it was the same as the earlier on as well. A claim had been filed again with the City's insurance again, and the claim was denied this time as well since the City was doing everything it needed to do to prevent backups. A notice had been sent to the nursing home about the use of "flushable" wipes and a large ad had been put in the Journal about it as well in order to educate the public about how the wipes can plug the sewer system.

Nephew would continue to monitor the manhole on a once or twice a week schedule where the sewer blockage was occurring to make sure that it was still flowing freely. When J & R Wastewater came in to jet sewer lines this year, he would also have them camera the manhole and the line as it comes in to make sure there weren't any issues with the line at that location that could be contributing to the blockage.

The first item addressed under new business was the appointment of election judges for the primary and general election to fill the County Commissioner seat vacated by Gerry Jacobson's death. A motion was made by Council member Massmann to approve the appointment of Stacy Erickson, Patricia Benbo, Cheryl Reitmeier, Senora Pederson, Valerie Leiser, Angela Leiting, and Kim Carlson as election judges. The motion was seconded by Council member Kiefert and was carried.

The final item to be addressed was the sale of two lots in the Industrial Park. Administrator Liden explained that Shawna and Sam Haugen were interested in two lots on the far south end of the Industrial Park just across the street from Fertile Repair. The west lot had access to water and sewer and that lot would be used to put up a 100 ft. by 50 ft. building for expanding their Garden Center business to include a landscape and hardscape business. The east lot would be for future expansion and storage. Liden noted that the EDA had met recently and they approved the sale of the lots since the business qualified to be located in the Park.

After discussion of the matter, a motion was made by Council member Kiefert to approve the sale of the lots to Shawna and Sam Haugen. The motion was seconded by Council member Massmann and was carried.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:40 p.m. on a motion by Council member Kiefert and was carried.



Daniel Wilkens, Mayor



Lisa J. Liden, City Administrator