

Fertile City Council Minutes May 8, 2017

The Fertile City Council held its regular meeting on Monday, May 8, 2017 at 6:30 p.m. at the Community Center. Present were: Mayor Daniel Wilkens and Council members Linda Widrig, Stanton Wang, Reid Jensrud, and Todd Wise. Also present were Public Works Director Kevin Nephew, City Administrator Lisa Liden, Fair Meadow Nursing Home Administrator Angie Leiting, and Twylla Altepeter from the Fertile Journal. Other visitors were Donny Larson, Bumpy Erickson, Mark Gullickson, Jeremy Hovde, Scott and Jean Tollefson, Jeremiah Gudvangen and Kyle Engelstad. Brian King and Alex Ranz from Ulteig were also present as well as two gentlemen from the Amish community.

Mayor Wilkens called the Public Meeting to order to address questions regarding the maintenance of Old Mill Road. Wilkens explained that the road tended to have a problem with wash boards and that residents along the road had questions regarding who was maintaining it and how often.

Donny Larson explained about the history of the maintenance agreement that Garfield Township had with the City. When the City purchased land along much of the road in the 1990's, the township retained ownership of the road, but the City agreed to take care of the maintenance which included blading, snow removal and graveling of the road. This was followed by a discussion of the written agreement that was on file as well the notation of the agreement in the Council minutes and the difference between the two regarding who was responsible for graveling.

Rebuilding of the road was also discussed since there are certain sections of the road that are lower than the field alongside which causes problems in the winter. Donny Larson also suggested looking at reducing the speed on the road since that could help with the washboards. Putting a gravel and clay mix on the road was discussed as was applying calcium chloride. It was decided to further explore calcium chloride for this summer and also to increase the grading to two times per week over the summer.

The Public Meeting was then closed and the Public Hearing opened regarding a side yard setback variance for Kathy Motteberg. City Administrator Lisa Liden explained that Motteberg had removed her old garage which was located right at the western property line. The new garage she wanted to build would be moved over to the east a little and would be two feet off the property line. Since the Code called for a 15 foot setback, a variance was required to build the garage. Liden also explained that the lot was small and that there was no location available that would allow her to build a garage and comply with setback requirements. The neighbor to the west had no issue with where the garage was to be located and no other neighbors had expressed concerns about the variance being granted.

The Public Hearing was closed and the regular meeting was reconvened.

Council member Wise made a motion to approve the setback variance requested by Ms. Motteberg. The motion was seconded by Council member Jensrud and was carried.

Fair Meadow Nursing Home Administrator Angie Leiting then gave her Administrator's Report. She reported that the month of April began with 41 residents and ended at 42, operating at 96.82 % occupancy. The home had also provided 365 home delivered meals. Leiting then went over the financial reports for the month and gave a brief overview of the checks written for the month of April. Leiting also noted that the funds for the renovation project were now depleted so the nursing home would be responsible for paying for the completion of the project.

The next item on the agenda that was addressed was the hiring of a consultant firm to do an operational assessment of the nursing home. Mayor Wilkens explained that Council had sought proposals from two

different firms that provide that service and that one of the proposals was quite good and provided thorough information on what would be evaluated and what the end result of the assessment would provide as to information on operational improvements that could be made. Wilkens also explained that he had participated in a phone conference with Darrin Hull of Health Dimensions along with Council member Widrig and Administrator Liden to ask further questions about the assessment process and what the benefits would be.

Mayor Wilkens explained that the assessment would be done in two phases and that each phase took about six weeks. The first phase involved paperwork review and would be done remotely with Fair Meadow staff providing the information. The second phase would involve an on-site visit with interviews of employees as well as time spent observing the work being done. The total cost of the assessment was \$46,500 with additional costs of up to \$4,000 for data costs and also the costs of lodging, meals and mileage for the on-site portion. Mayor Wilkens also stated that Mr. Hull had recommended that the nursing home pay for the assessment rather than the City since it was an operational expense that would be reflected in their costs for the year and would impact their rates in the future.

After further discussion Council member Wise made the motion to retain the services of Health Dimensions Group to perform a full operational assessment on Fair Meadow Nursing Home with the cost being paid by Fair Meadow. The motion was seconded by Council member Jensrud and carried.

The next item up on the agenda was the potential sale of the lots located east of the nursing home. Mayor Wilkens explained that there were at least two parties that were interested in purchasing the lots and that the City had received one written offer. This was followed by a discussion on the best way to proceed with selling the lots and whether a minimum bid should be included in the advertisement.

After discussion of the matter, Council member Jensrud made the motion to advertise the lots for sale on sealed bids with a minimum bid of \$20,000 with the opportunity for parties to orally raise their bid at the time of opening. The City would also reserve the right to reject any and all bids. The motion was seconded by Council member Wang and was carried.

Kevin Nephew, Director of Public Works, then gave his report to the Council. He began by requesting permission to hire a part-time person for the summer months to work about 10 hours per week. A motion was made by Council member Jensrud to approve advertising for a summer maintenance worker with the final selection to be made at the June 12th meeting. The motion was seconded by Council member Wise and was carried.

Nephew then reported that he had requested a bid for a new John Deere mower to be purchased. He had gotten a bid the year before but the decision had been made to wait. The current mower was getting a little beaten up and in need of small repairs more frequently. He recommended purchasing a new one this year while the City could still get a decent trade-in value on the current one. He also noted that the price had gone down slightly from the year before. The new unit was basically the same as the current one but that the new one would be four-wheel drive.

After discussion of the matter, a motion was made by Council member Widrig to accept the quote from John Deere and purchase a new mower. The motion was seconded by Council member Wise and was carried.

The next item up for discussion was the replacement of the broken street light and pole located at the south end of town. In discussions with Brian Downs they had determined that it would be best to relocate the pole across highway 32 rather than replacing it at its previous location. They would also like to add one more streetlight further to the south so that it would help to provide light for the golf course parking lot. Nephew stated that the golf course board would be meeting the following day and that he had asked whether they would be interested in paying something towards the additional light by their lot. Council member Jensrud then asked Nephew whether he had contacted the State to see if they would be willing to pay for the lights.

Nephew stated that he would check with the State on it and that all he wanted at this time was permission to proceed with the necessary paperwork to get permission to bore under highway 32.

The progress on the park project was then briefly discussed. Ulteig had presented an estimate on how much it would cost for their firm to draw up complete plans and specs for the project. After reviewing the estimate, it was decided that there would be no plans and specs drawn up by the engineers and that Kevin would continue to work with local contractors to get the specs for the various aspects of the building written up locally so they could be submitted for further quotes from contractors. A Park Project Committee meeting was planned for 9 a.m. on Friday, May 12th for further discussion of the matter.

Brian King then presented a scope of services estimate related to the RV dump station project. Engineer services would include a title search for the two private lots that the City would require a utility easement on as well as a boundary survey of those properties. They would also prepare the easement descriptions for submittal to the City attorney to complete the easement. The total cost of those services would be \$4,500. King noted that the cost could be less if they were able to locate survey pins close to the project area.

After discussion, Council member Jensrud made the motion to accept the scope of services as presented. The motion was seconded by Council member Wang and was carried.

Alex Ranz then reviewed the Project Priority List that had been submitted to the State the previous Friday. The PPL listed all of the water projects that the City could undertake in the next years to increase water pressure within the City. The next step in the process would be for the City to submit an Intended Use Plan (IUP) to the State and that was due on June 1st. Submitting the IUP was not a commitment by the City to do those projects, but that it was necessary to get any potential projects on the list at State level in order to pursue them should the City decide to do so.

Council member Jensrud made the motion to approve proceeding on submitting the IUP by June 1st. The motion was seconded by Council member Widrig and was carried.

Approval of the City Engineer contract with Ulteig was tabled for further review.

The next item up on the agenda was the issue of horse droppings in town. Two gentlemen from the Amish community were present and Mayor Wilkens asked them to join Council at the front of the room to discuss the matter. They indicated that they had read in the paper that there had been some complaints about horse droppings on the streets in town and that their community wanted to know what they could do to alleviate the problem. They didn't want to inconvenience residents and they were sorry that it had become an issue. They then offered to start carrying a bucket and shovel when they come to town so that droppings could be picked up as they occurred. Also discussed were the routes that they could take through town that would be safer as well as how important it was to pick up the droppings that accumulate in the areas they park in when they are in town. The gentlemen stated that they would spread the word throughout their community and that they would all work on keeping the droppings picked up.

Under the Airport Commission, Mayor Wilkens reported that he had been in discussions with Randy Aarestad and Tom Rongen regarding engineer services for the airport. If the Commission was interested in pursuing becoming a federal (NPIAS) airport, then it would be necessary at some point to do an RFP for an airport engineer. Wilkens reported that the Commission would be meeting on May 15th to discuss doing an RFP for an airport engineer and to also go over the list of Capital Improvement List projects that MnDOT recommended for the airport.

Council member Jensrud then questioned whether it was necessary to get a different engineer firm for the airport considering that the RFP process had just been completed for the City. He stated that he was under the belief that the new City engineer, Ulteig, would also be the airport engineer. This was followed by a

discussion on whether or not the Council should approve any possible RFP that the Commission would like to do before the process is started. Mayor Wilkens then invited Council member Jensrud to attend the Commission meeting on May 15th.

Mayor Wilkens then left the meeting to tend to personal business, and Vice Mayor Widrig took over in his absence.

The City Administrator's Report was then given to Council and included annual audit work, a phone conference with Health Dimensions, a loss control meeting with the League Insurance representative, and car show preparation in addition to her regular monthly and quarterly activities.

For the Learning Center Liden reported that someone had dropped off a cardboard box at the Center with seven baby foxes. The Education Director was able to get in touch with a rehabilitation center which picked them up.

Council member Jensrud then gave the fire department report. For the month of April they had been out on three different calls for the month. He reported also that one of their firemen is testing with the State to become a trainer so it will soon be possible to do in-house fire training. Also discussed was the addition of a siren on the southeast side of town so that Ridgewood Estates would be able to hear the siren. An overhang was also going to be added to the fire hall to assist with rain and snow runoff to prevent further water damage to the building. The report was ended with discussion on the fire department showing an interest in a lot in the Industrial Park that could be used for training.

The minutes of the April 10th and April 24th meetings were approved on a motion by Council member Jensrud that was seconded by Council member Wise and carried.

The Treasurer's Report and Bills were then presented by Administrator Liden, who gave a brief overview of the receipts and checks for the month of April. Council member Wang made a motion to approve the Treasurer's Report and Bills. The motion was seconded by Council member Jensrud and was carried.

The next agenda item was an amendment to the Fire Association Bylaws. The current bylaws refer to the previous Mayor by name and they would like approval to amend them to state "Mayor" with no name referenced in order to avoid future amendments whenever a new Mayor is elected.

A motion was made by Council member Widrig to approve the amendment to the Fire Association bylaws. The motion was seconded by Council member Wise and was carried.

A sign for the cemetery on the south end of town was then discussed. Administrator Liden explained that the Concordia Cemetery and Pleasant Hill Cemetery are located together south of town and that Concordia was interested in posting a sign that listed some of the rules of the cemetery in regard to plantings, artificial flowers and upkeep of grave sites, so they were wondering if the City would be interested in including Pleasant Hill on the sign so that the same rules applied throughout the cemetery. Concordia would also like for the City to share in the cost of the sign and the cost was estimated at \$750 so the City share would be \$375.

A motion was then made by Council member Jensrud for the new rules to apply to Pleasant Hill Cemetery and for the City to share in the cost of the sign. The motion was seconded by Council member Wise and was carried.

A temporary liquor license for St. Joseph's Church for their annual Hoe Down was approved on a motion by Council member Wang that was seconded by Council member Jensrud and carried.

The next item on the agenda was a tax abatement business subsidy that was approved for TDS in September of 2013. Administrator Liden explained that this was the first year that the property was taxed and that the City had not followed all the procedures required by the State in regard to commercial tax abatements. A formal Resolution would need to be drawn up stating the specifics of the abatement such as the property it applied to, the amount of the abatement and also the start and end dates. A Public Hearing would then be required to approve the Resolution. Liden asked that Council call for the Public Hearing on June 12th at the next regular monthly meeting and that she would take care of the Resolution and proper notices in the meantime.

Council member Jensrud made the motion to call for a Public Hearing in regard to a tax abatement for TDS at the June 12th meeting. The motion was seconded by Council member Wang and was carried.

Now that the audit was complete for the most part, Eide Bailly wanted to know about presenting the audit to Council. Liden explained that the three options were to skip the annual presentation, have the audit presented remotely by webcam, or to have Eide Bailly attend in person. The first two options had no additional cost, but the in person presentation would cost an additional \$500.

After a brief discussion, Council member Jensrud made the motion to not have the audit presentation done but to see if Council could get a printed version of the Management Summary to review. The motion was seconded by Council member Wang and was carried.

The meeting ended with a brief review and update of the 2017 Priority List. After a discussion of the leaf burning ordinance and whether or not that should still be allowed as it currently is by City Code, a motion was made by Council member Wang to keep the City Code as it currently is for allowing burning of yard waste. The motion was seconded by Council member Jensrud and was carried by a vote of three to one with Council member Wise voting no.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned on a motion by Council member Jensrud.