

Fertile City Council Minutes

March 11, 2013

The Fertile City Council held its regular meeting on Monday, March 11, 2013 at 6:30 p.m. at the Community Center. Present were: Mayor Brian Nephew, Council members Dennis Hasler, Linda Widrig, Todd Wise, and Tanner Lehmann. City Administrator John Frohrip was absent from the meeting.

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Nephew. Council member Hasler requested that the Personnel Committee report be added to the agenda.

Barry Robertson, Fair Meadow Nursing Home Administrator then gave his report to the Council. The nursing home began the month of February with 44 residents and ended with 42. It operated at 86% capacity and during the month had one admission, one discharge and two residents that passed away. They also served 110 home-delivered meals and provided ten days of adult day care.

Robertson then reported on the Affordable Care Act Workshop that he had attended in Erskine and explained the potential ramifications this would have on the City since we would be considered a large employer under the new laws. He then went over the basics of the Affordable Care Act and also how Minnesota nursing homes were working together to have some of these mandated cost increases pass through to what they get reimbursed.

Robertson also reported that he would be presenting further information to the Council at next month's meeting on the Equitable Cost-Sharing for Publicly Owned Nursing Facilities Program (ECPN). He explained that this is a mechanism for publicly owned Minnesota nursing homes to get more federal dollars. The final approval date for the program is June 30th and the new rates for the nursing home take effect on October 1st. He went on to explain that Mahnommen has been under the program for some time now and that it has been successful for them. Barry was currently working with the attorney that helped Mahnommen with the program.

Council member Hasler then asked about the Governor's proposed rate increase. Robertson reported that this increase was only 1.1% with an additional increase of up to 2% for providing quality care.

This was followed by a brief update on the Assisted Living Project. The building is now heated on the inside and they are compacting the soil further in preparation for pouring the floors. The project is still behind schedule but they are now catching up.

Steve Emery from Widseth Smith and Nolting then reported to the Council on the advertisement for bids on the northeast sewer and lift station project. He started by passing out the bid information explaining that the bids had been opened the previous Thursday and that nine bids had been received. He then went on to give details on the add/deduct portion of the bids which had to do with the kind of pumps that could be installed. Kevin Nephew wanted to go with the Flight Pumps since the City currently uses those pumps on the other lift stations. The base bid amounts were for the Flight Pumps and the base plus add/deduct was for Quality Control Pumps.

Kevin Nephew, Public Works Director, then went on to explain further on why he wanted to go with the Flight Pumps. While he was unfamiliar with the Sweeney Controls, he was happy with the Flight Pumps. The City currently uses Electric Pump from Fargo for service and repair on the other lift stations and that he would like to stick with them for servicing the new lift station. Electric Pump would only be able to provide full service and repair on the Flight Pumps.

Steve Emery explained that Administrator Frohrip had said that the project could be bid again with the City doing some of the work to bring the costs down. One problem with this, however, is that the City work could cause problems with the warranty. Council member Wise asked Kevin Nephew if he had ever worked with Sellin Brothers, the low bidder, on any other projects. Nephew stated that he had worked with them on the force main break a few years earlier. He was also familiar with the work they had done on projects in both Gary and Twin Valley.

Steve Emery then made the recommendation that the City award the base bid amount to Sellin Brothers. He felt that the price was reasonable and had come in substantially lower than the amount that WSN had estimated for the project.

Council member Wise made the motion, seconded by Council member Hasler that the Sellin Brothers bid in the amount of \$206,696.25 be awarded. The motion was carried.

Kevin Nephew then gave his report to the Council. He explained that there were still some water lines to be put in on the Peterson Subdivision project including the individual lines to the lots and any water lines needed for the Industrial Park. He stated that they would have to work around what Sellin was doing on the sewer project when the time came.

Nephew reported that there would also need to be some additional work done on the elevations in the Industrial Park. Steve Emery went over the estimate that WSN had prepared for further leveling work and then he and Kevin Nephew went over the map showing where additional work was required. Nephew stated that the first step in the process would be to get site plan elevations.

Council member Lehmann then asked Nephew about the problem they had with the Case tractor. Nephew explained that they had been having issues with the pump for the PTO but that it was hopefully fixed now. Titan had completed the work on the tractor and it was expected back sometime during the week. He also commented that the front wheel assist on the tractor made a huge difference in hauling snow. Council member Hasler then complimented Nephew on the good job the City had done on snow removal this winter.

The regular meeting was then closed for a Public Hearing on an alley vacation. Mayor Nephew asked Kevin Nephew if he had any problems or concerns with the vacation and he responded that the only potential problem was in regard to the utility easement that needed to remain in place. The only public comment on the proposed vacation was by Libby Eid that there was some confusion as to which alley it was.

The Public Hearing was closed and the regular City Council meeting was resumed.

Council member Wise then made a motion to approve Resolution #2-1-13 Petition Request to Vacate an Alley. The motion was seconded by Council member Hasler and the motion was carried.

Libby Eid reported that during the month of February 14 volunteers had served a total of 41.5 hours at the Learning Center. She explained that the month of February had been difficult with illness among the volunteers as well as quite a few snow days.

After a review of the minutes of the February 11, 2013 meeting Council member Hasler made a motion to approve, seconded by Council member Lehmann. The motion carried.

The Treasurer's Report and Bills were then reviewed. Council member Hasler asked about the check to Minnesota Public Facilities Authority and what it was for. Deputy Administrator Liden explained that this was the semiannual interest payment on the loan for the water treatment plant.

Council member Widrig then referred to the Budget vs. Actual report and questioned the amount that was budgeted for the Clerk Wages and whether this was for the Deputy Administrator position. Widrig was concerned that the actual amount was quite large when compared to the amount budgeted and wanted to know why this was. Liden explained that her position had been budgeted for four hours per day since the time she had started but that in actuality she was working quite a few more hours than that. Upon further questions from Council member Hasler Liden stated that she had actually been working full time hours since April or May. This was followed by a discussion on what constitutes full time employment in Minnesota.

Council member Hasler expressed concern over the fact that Liden was now working full-time without Council knowledge or approval and questioned whether there had been an increase in the office work that made the extra hours necessary. Mayor Nephew commented that there was some increase in the work with the Assisted Living project, the Peterson project and also the work that Liden does for the Nature Center. Council member Hasler then questioned whether the work for the Nature Center was part of the full time hours that Liden had been working. Liden responded that her Nature Center work was in addition to the 40 hours per week worked for the City and that she keeps track of her hours for the Learning Center to keep those hours separate from her City hours.

The next item discussed was the hours that the City Office is open for business and when lunch breaks are taken. This was followed by discussion on what office hours should be and whether or not extended hours should be offered for one night a week to accommodate residents who work out of town. After further discussion it was determined that office hours should be from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. with an extension to 6 p.m. on Wednesday. It was also determined that the office staff should take their lunch breaks at different times to avoid the office being closed over lunch hour. Council member Hasler requested that the hours be posted on the office door as soon as possible.

Council member Hasler then made a motion to approve the Treasurer's Report and Bills. The motion was seconded by Council member Wise and was carried.

Council member Wise then inquired about the EDA bill from Ehlers. After a brief discussion it was noted that the EDA would be discussing the bill at their next meeting.

Following a brief discussion on Polk County's request for the City to participate in their Hazard Mitigation Plan update process, Council member Hasler made to motion to approve Resolution #2-2-13 Statement of Interest in All-Hazard Mitigation Planning for the City of Fertile. The motion was seconded by Council member Wise and was carried.

This was followed by a report from the Personnel Committee. Council member Widrig reported that everything that the committee wanted to work on and update were policies already in the Personnel Manual and that they just needed further work and there were some that needed to be enforced better.

Council member Widrig then questioned Administrator Frohrip, who had recently arrived at the meeting, about working from home and the paperwork that he brings home. Frohrip explained that the paperwork he has at home is just copies and not the originals. Widrig questioned whether copies of City paperwork should be allowed out of the office and stated that she would like to see all of Frohrip's work done in the office so that papers are not going out of the office that may be confidential in nature.

Council member Hasler questioned Frohrip about whether he works at home because he has to or because he prefers to. Frohrip explained that it is easier for him to concentrate on his work at home because there are fewer interruptions. He stated he also likes to have certain paperwork at home so he can double and triple check things at night. He also stated that he frequently does research in the evenings on the State website.

Council member Hasler then reported on the information that the Personnel Committee had been given on job descriptions, evaluation forms and compensation from other cities. This was followed by a discussion on how the Personnel Committee works. It was explained that the committee would look over all the materials they had received and narrow things down for review by the entire Council.

The Council then revisited the earlier discussion of established office hours for the benefit of Administrator Frohrip who had been absent during that portion of the meeting. The Council reiterated that they wanted the office hours of 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. posted on the office door and also that lunch breaks were to be staggered so that the office remained open.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Brian Nephew, Mayor

John J. Frohrip, City Administrator

