

Fertile City Council Minutes November 10, 2014

The Fertile City Council held its regular meeting on Monday, November 10, 2014 at 6:30 p.m. at the Community Center. Present were: Mayor Brian Nephew and Council members Todd Wise, Tanner Lehmann, Linda Widrig and Dennis Hasler. Also present were Administrator Lisa Liden, Public Works Director Kevin Nephew, and Twylla Altepeter.

Barry Robertson, Fair Meadow Nursing Home Administrator was unable to attend the meeting so he had left copies of his monthly report for all the Council members. Robertson's report showed that they began the month of October with 45 residents and had ended with 47 operating at 91.74% capacity. In addition, the nursing home had provided 25 days of adult day care and had served 145 home delivered meals.

Kevin Nephew, Public Works Director, was the first to report to the Council. Nephew reported that Christmas lights would be put up the following week. He also reported that he had met with the MNDOT Aeronautics electrical engineer regarding the problems with the runway lighting at the airport. The engineer would return later to meet with Brian Downs to go over the electric schematics for the lighting. In the interim, he recommended having Downs find the electrical short in the system to get the lights working again. This was followed by a brief discussion on the ditching project at the airport and what further information was needed by the watershed to approve the ditch permit.

Council member Lehmann then asked Nephew regarding the emergency lighting that the City has for vehicles. He commented that he had seen Dana Knutson working on at the intersection of Washington Ave and Mill Street and that the only light on the vehicle was a small blue rotating beacon. He felt this was not very visible during the daylight hours. After a discussion on the matter, Kevin Nephew stated that he would look into purchasing light bars for the City pickups.

This was followed by a discussion on the sewer blockage on Washington Ave. NE. Nephew explained that he had to call in a jetting service to clear the partially blocked line since the sewer snake that the City uses was not long enough to reach the blockage. He was not aware of how much the City would be charged by the jetting service but that it was an emergency that had to be taken care of as soon as possible. He also stated that we were fortunate that the company was already in the area working on a sewer line in Mahanomen. Nephew then explained that J & R Wastewater usually comes in and jets one-fifth of the sewer lines in town each fall but they were behind schedule so they hadn't done the lines yet for this year. When J & R did come, Nephew would also have them jet the sewer lines that had been having problems.

After a review of the minutes of the October 20, 2014 meeting, Council member Widrig made a motion to approve the minutes as presented. The motion was seconded by Council member Hasler and was carried.

The Treasurer's Report and Bills were then reviewed by the Council. Liden gave a review of the receipts and disbursements as well as the budget to actual reports. Council member Widrig made a motion to approve the Treasurer's Report and Bills, and the motion was seconded by Council member Wise. The motion was carried.

The next item addressed by the Council was the airport grading and ditching project. Liden explained that the City had already spent over \$7,000 on plans and specifications for the project and if the project were not completed, the City would not be reimbursed by the State for those costs. She explained further that if the bids come in or near the original engineer's estimate for the project, that the City would not have to invest much more in the project once the State reimbursed 90% of the total project costs.

After a discussion of the matter, Council member Hasler made the motion to advertise for bids on the project. The motion was seconded by Council member Lehmann and was carried.

After a review of the election results, Council member Hasler made the motion to approve Resolution #11-1-14, Resolution Approving the Canvass of the Municipal General Election Held on November 4, 2014. The motion was seconded by Council member Widrig and was carried.

This was followed by a discussion of MN Pollution Control's online reporting requirements for wastewater. Liden explained that only a portion of the monthly reporting to MPCA was done online and that currently she was filing those reports for Kevin Nephew. With the new requirements, however, Kevin would have to be filling out worksheets online and would, therefore, need a computer or access to a computer. Liden further explained that Nephew was to attend a training session on November 19th and that he was supposed to have a laptop with him. After some discussion, it was determined that Nephew could use his personal tablet for the training and then determine what he would need for a computer once he learned what the online filing involved.

The next agenda item that was addressed was the assessing of past due water and general fund accounts receivables on 2015 property taxes. Liden explained that the past due water bills were final bills on properties that were no longer occupied or had gone into foreclosure. The general fund accounts receivable had been outstanding for longer than a year and were for calcium chloride and building permits. After a discussion on the matter, Council member Widrig made the motion to assess the delinquent accounts on 2015 property taxes. The motion was seconded by Council member Lehmann and was carried.

The final agenda item up for discussion was the salary and benefit package increases for 2015. Administrator Liden reported that the Personnel Committee had met earlier in the month and after reviewing the salary and benefit information from several other cities had come up with their salary recommendation for 2015. Council members Hasler and Widrig, who are on the Personnel Committee, both commented that salary levels for Fertile are significantly lower than salaries in other cities and that getting salaries up to those levels would take a few years of higher than usual salary increases.

As for their recommendation, the committee proposed that the \$2,400 in raises that had been diverted into the benefits package over three years needed to be returned to the salary side of the compensation package. That \$2,400 in benefits would then be restored to the benefits side by the City in addition to a \$300 annual increase in benefits. Finally, the City would give a 3.5% COLA increase for 2015. As for Terry Baumgartner's compensation, she would be given a raise of 65¢ per hour from \$12.60 an hour to \$13.25 an hour.

After a discussion of the matter, Council member Hasler made a motion to adopt the salary and benefit proposal recommended by the Personnel Committee. The motion was seconded by Council member Lehmann and was carried.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Brian Nephew, Mayor

Lisa J. Liden, City Administrator