

Fertile City Council Minutes September 11, 2017

The Fertile City Council held its regular meeting on Monday, September 11, 2017 at 6:30 p.m. at the Community Center. Present were: Mayor Daniel Wilkens and Council members Reid Jensrud, Linda Widrig, Stanton Wang, and Todd Wise. Also present were City Administrator Lisa Liden, Fair Meadow Administrator Angie Leiting, Fair Meadow Business Manager Dani Nelson, Public Works Director Kevin Nephew, and Twylla Altepeter from the Fertile Journal. Other visitors were Alex Ranz and Brian King from Ulteig, Randy Aarestad, Bruce Aakhus, and Dana Knutson.

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Wilkens at 6:30 and the agenda was approved on a motion by Council member Jensrud that was seconded by Council member Wang and was carried.

There were no public comments.

The minutes of the August 14th regular meeting, the August 24th Special meeting, and August 25th Special meeting were approved on a motion by Council member Wang, seconded by Council member Widrig and carried.

The Treasurer's Report and Bills were then briefly reviewed by Administrator Lisa Liden. Liden went over the deposits and checks for the month as well as a brief overview of the budget to actual report. Council member Widrig made a motion to approve the Treasurer's Report and Bills as presented. The motion was seconded by Council member Jensrud and was carried.

Fair Meadow Administrator Leiting then gave her monthly report to Council. The home started and ended the month of August with 39 residents operating at 93.47% capacity. They had also served 421 home delivered meals. The profit and loss statement for the nursing home and assisted living combined showed a monthly income of \$64,919.87 and a profit of \$13,163.43 for the assisted living when the numbers were separated out. Leiting explained that the negative balance for the checking account shown on the balance meant that if all the checks written were to clear immediately that they would be overdrawn but it was no concern since they would never all come through before beginning of the month deposits are made.

Council member Widrig then asked Leiting about the two checks listed in the amount of \$1,204.48 for Point Click Care. Widrig was wondering what the monthly charge was for the service. Leiting explained that they must have paid for the previous month and the current month during August so that was why there were two checks listed. Council member Widrig then asked about two of the payroll checks that were listed since they seemed considerably higher than they should be. Leiting stated that she would check into it further and get back to Widrig but that it was likely that the employees had cashed in some vacation hours.

Administrator Leiting then reported that Cheryl Hegg was willing to serve on the Advisory Board to fill the recently vacated position. There was no motion made to approve.

Public Works Director Kevin Nephew had little to report so he asked Brian King from Ulteig Engineers to make his report to the Council. King reported that the Public Facilities Authority had put out their list of approved projects for 2018 and that Fertile had made number 24 on the list. He stated that it was rare that a City would make that list with their first submittal but given the age of the City's water system, Fertile's projects were a high priority. King went on to say that 19 of the projects on the list are holdovers from the previous year so it was likely that there would be little

grant funding available this year but that Fertile would be positioned quite well for grant funding in the next cycle.

King then asked about scheduling a special meeting in December to go over the new flow scenarios that had been discussed at the August special meeting. Kevin Nephew then asked how many improvements would be made to system with the first project and whether that would be mainly looping. This was followed by a general discussion on looping and a few locations in town that could be hooked up to the water mains on adjoining streets.

Mayor Wilkens then closed the regular meeting and opened the Public Hearing that had been called regarding an amendment to the City Code to allow for the raising of chickens within City limits. Council member Widrig expressed some concern over having chickens in town after hearing recent news stories about the spread of salmonella due to chickens. It was explained that the bacteria can be spread outside the chicken coop on people's shoes.

Bruce Aakhus who was present at the meeting expressed some concern over having chickens in town and that allowing them could be a "slippery slope" that the Council might not want to start. Mayor Wilkens then explained that the city of Shakopee had allowed chickens for eight years and that there had been no problems.

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

A motion was made by Council member Wise to approve Ordinance #2017-03, An Ordinance Amending Chapter 93 of the Fertile City Code Pertaining to the Keeping of Hen Chickens. The motion was seconded by Council member Jensrud and was carried with Council member Widrig voting no on the matter.

The next matter up for discussion was whether or not to continue to allow the burning of leaves within the City. Mayor Wilkens began by reading the current City Code on the matter. He then stated that he has been approached by some City residents who have breathing issues due to either asthma or COPD. Leaf burning causes further breathing problems for residents with those health issues and they would like to see the City ban the practice. Wilkens then stated that at the time the current Code was written there was no way to dispose of leaves but that there now was a yard waste disposal site, so burning was no longer necessary.

Council member Jensrud then stated that while it was true that there was a site for dropping off yard waste that not everyone is able to haul their leaves to the site. This was followed by a brief discussion on solutions to help residents get their yard waste hauled away. Discussion was also held on what the State law says regarding burning. Bruce Aakhus stated that he would like to leave the Code as is since it is much easier to burn leaves on site rather than hauling them away. Council member Jensrud also stated that he would like to leave it as is since there was now considerably less burning with the waste site being available. It was decided to leave the Code as it is now and to revisit the matter next year if necessary.

The next item up on the agenda was a couple of zoning changes. The first one was a request by Red River State Bank to have the property located across the alley to the east of the bank. Randy Aarestad was present at the meeting and he explained that the bank would like to purchase the property and tear down the house currently located on the lot to put up a double garage. The bank would be doing a major remodel on the interior of the bank and they would like to have a garage across the alley for storage of building materials and for other bank storage after the remodel was complete. Administrator Liden explained that the lot was currently zoned residential and that the

construction of a garage was only allowed with a dwelling on the lot. If the lot was rezoned to commercial, however, a garage could be built on the property. This was followed by further discussion on setbacks as well as the process and timelines for rezoning.

After further discussion of the matter, Council member Jensrud made the motion to call for a Public Hearing on rezoning the parcel on September 25th at 6 p.m. The motion was seconded by Council member Wang and was carried.

The next zoning request that was addressed was to amend the City Code to allow for public buildings in the central business district. The current City Code did not list public buildings as an allowed use in the business district but that current public buildings were grandfathered in. The watershed, however, was interested in building an addition on to their current building and that according to State Statute, the expansion of a non-conforming use building was not allowed. Liden also pointed out that the Community Center was also in the central business district and if there was ever a need in the future for expansion that the Code should be amended.

After further discussion of the matter, Council member Wang called for a Public Hearing on the matter on September 25th at 6:15 p.m. the motion was seconded by Council member Jensrud and was carried.

The City Administrator's report for the month of August was then reviewed. Liden noted that a great deal of time had been spent on the operational assessment of Fair Meadow as well as research on zoning issues.

For the Agassiz Environmental Learning Center, Mayor Wilkens noted that they were long overdue for a meeting and that one needed to be scheduled as soon as possible.

Council member Jensrud reported that the Fire Department had only had one call during the month of August and that it was a false alarm.

Under the Airport Commission, Mayor Wilkens reported that a meeting needed to be set up with MnDOT to update the capital improvement plan for the airport. He recommended getting three possible dates from MnDOT and then contacting Commission members to see which date would work the best.

Under the Personnel Committee, Council member Jensrud stated that since the Committee had met to go over applications for the open public works position that he had contacted the former employer of Candidate B and that based on that, he would like to strike that candidate from the list to be interviewed.

This was followed by a discussion on the interview process for the three remaining candidates. Mayor Wilkens then asked Liden to put together a list of potential interview questions to submit to the Personnel Committee for their final selection of questions. A Special meeting was called for September 26th with interviews to be held at 6, 7, and 8 p.m.

The next item up on the agenda was the annual certification of the Rural Service District. Administrator Liden stated that she had reviewed the parcels currently in the district and that there had been no changes to any of the parcels.

Council member Jensrud made the motion to certify the Rural Service District as listed with Polk County. The motion was seconded by Council member Wang and was carried.

The next item up on the agenda was grant funding that was available through the Fertile-Beltrami Community Fund. Liden explained that organizations had to be a non-profit to receive grant funding. It was possible, however, for organizations and businesses to apply for those grants if the City would serve as the flow-through for the funding. Liden explained, for instance, that the local daycares could not get funding on their own for educational toys but that the City could get a grant and disburse the grant funds to the daycares.

After a discussion on the approval process for these grants, Council member Wang made the motion for the City to apply for grant funding on behalf of businesses and other organizations. The motion was seconded by Council member Widrig and was carried.

The final item up on the agenda was the preliminary budget for 2018 and Resolution #9-1-17 which was the preliminary levy request. Administrator Liden gave a brief review of the budget and the few items that had been changed since the budget was presented the previous month. She stated that the budget wouldn't be finalized until December and that the levy amount could go down from the preliminary request but could not be increased.

After discussion of the matter, Council member Widrig made the motion to approve Resolution #9-1-17 City Clerk's Certificate of Proposed Tax Levy. The motion was seconded by Council member Wang and was carried.

Council member Jensrud then asked to address another matter regarding Fair Meadow. He stated that far too many issues were being brought directly to Council that should be brought to the appropriate nursing home staff instead. He felt that there needed to be a more clear process so that Angie was given the opportunity to address these matters. He recommended that any complaints or issues regarding the nursing home be redirected back to Fair Meadow. Any issues should be put in writing and then emailed to Angie.

This was followed by another brief discussion on the interviews for the open public works position and who should be involved in the interviews. It was understood that Administrator Liden would not be involved due to a relative being interviewed. It was decided also that Kevin Nephew would not be present for the interviews either.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Daniel Wilkens, Mayor

Lisa J. Liden, City Administrator