

Fertile City Council Minutes December 10, 2018

The Fertile City Council held its regular meeting on Monday, December 10, 2018 at 6:30 p.m. at the Community Center. Present were: Mayor Daniel Wilkens, and Council members Stanton Wang, Linda Widrig, and Reid Jensrud. Also present were City Administrator Lisa Liden, Public Works Director Kevin Nephew, City Engineers Alex Ranz and Ron Kleinschmidt from Ulteig, Dan Triller from Short Elliott Hendrickson, and Twylla Altepeter from the Fertile Journal.

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Wilkens at 6:30. Council member Jensrud asked that the ice rink be added to the agenda under old business. A motion was made by Council member Jensrud, seconded by Council member Wang to approve the agenda as amended. Motion carried.

There were no public comments.

The approval of minutes was the first item up on the agenda. Mayor Wilkens noted that the word “of” needed to be added to the second to the last sentence on the second to last paragraph on page three. Administrator Liden noted the correction. A motion was then made by Council member Widrig to approve the minutes of the November 13, 2018 minutes as corrected. The motion was seconded by Council member Jensrud and was carried.

City Administrator Lisa Liden then gave a brief overview of the financial statements and the out of the ordinary bills paid in November. Liden noted that the check to Swenby was for the bid price on the dasher board footings and also the change orders for the concrete for the players’ boxes for the rink and also the footing for the sign on the north side of town. Liden noted also the checks that were for election judge pay and also food for the election judges. Mayor Wilkens then inquired about the checks that were marked as water refunds. Liden explained that when a water account is closed out that the deposit is generally applied to the final bill. Any checks issued to former water customers are for the balance of the deposit that remains.

The Treasurer’s Report and Bills was approved on a motion by Council member Widrig that was seconded by Council member Jensrud and was carried.

The City Engineer’s Report was the next item up on the agenda. The first item up for discussion was the report on the recommendations for the operation of the water treatment plant. Ron Kleinschmidt began by introducing himself to Council and explaining that he had been with Ulteig for six months and that prior to joining Ulteig he had worked in the industry for 35 years. He explained further that he had made a couple of visits to the plant and had also visited with Kevin Nephew about current operations.

Early on, Kleinschmidt had made the recommendation that a sample of the media be sent on to Tonka for testing. The testing had been completed, and it was determined that the media was still in good condition. He noted, however, that it should probably be replaced in about five years. He then gave a brief explanation on how the media and plant operate to get the iron particles out of the water.

Council member Wise then arrived at the meeting.

Kleinschmidt then explained that he and Brian Hiles had visited the treatment plant and had taken a thorough look at the plant and the various processes. He then went over the list of recommendations that they had included in a letter to Council. The first two recommendations were related to getting new testing equipment and setting up a dedicated area in the plant for performing daily tests on the water. The

next recommendations were to increase the low water backwash rate from the current rate of 45 gallons per minute to the minimum of 68 gallons per minute which Tonka recommended. Also recommended was calibration of the flow meters and cleaning of the aeration unit, detention tank, and clearwell at the plant as well as inspection and possible cleaning of the water tower. The final recommendations had to do with implementing forms where all of the test data is entered for tracking purposes.

The recommendations were then discussed and Kevin Nephew requested that an additional column be added to the forms to track the number of gallons between backwashes so that the iron levels could be tracked according to the number of gallons through the system since the last backwash. Ron also recommended including copies of the logs in the Council packets so that Council was aware of how the plant was operating and could better answer residents' questions.

After further discussion of implementation of the recommendations, a motion was made by Council member Jensrud to move forward on all of the recommendations. The motion was seconded by Council member Wise and was carried.

The next item up for consideration under the engineer's report was Change Order #3 for the water project. Alex Ranz explained that the original order and the subsequent change orders on the project were to cover the design, planning, and bidding and that Change Order #3 now covers the construction oversight part of the project since the bid had been accepted and the project is moving forward. Ranz also referred to Exhibit A with the change order noting that the scope of services is covered there. He also noted that the change order was an hourly estimate and that it could end up costing less depending on the progress of the project and whether or not they ran into any issues. Mayor Wilkens then noted that since it was an estimate that it could also come in higher than stated and that he certainly hoped the actual cost was lower than the estimate.

After further discussion of the matter, a motion was made by Council member Jensrud approving Change Order #3. The motion was seconded by Council member Widrig and was carried.

The next item up with the engineers was the contract and project documents with Sellin Brothers. A motion was made by Council member Jensrud, seconded by Council member Widrig authorizing the City Administrator to sign the project documents.

The final item on the engineers report was an update on the Safe Routes to School application. Ranz noted that he had forwarded the application on to both the School Superintendent and City Administrator for them to answer the various questions on the application. Ranz stated that Administrator Liden had provided a lot of assistance with the application. Mayor Wilkens then asked what the cost split would be for the work and Ranz noted that the State would pick up 80% of the costs. Council member Wang then inquired which streets would get new sidewalks under the program. Alex Ranz explained that they would work with Troy Schroeder and that he would do an on-site study to determine the routes that children typically take to school.

There were no reports for Fair Meadow Nursing Home since they had not yet closed out the month of November.

Kevin Nephew, Public Works Director, then gave his report to Council. He began by inquiring about the checks issued to Swenby and Fertile Sand and Gravel in November. Administrator Liden explained that the check to Swenby was for the dasher board footings with the additions of the concrete for the player's boxes and also the footing for the north sign. The check for Fertile Sand and Gravel was for the gravel in the interior of the skating rink. Liden explained further that the gravel that was part of the plans for the footings had been paid for by Swenby according to their actual bid.

Mayor Wilkens noted that the Christmas lights look really good. Nephew noted that the lights had been replaced with LED's on the downtown lights and that they were much brighter than the previous lights. Mayor Wilkens then inquired about the sanding of the streets in town and Nephew stated that Dan Lene had come in on Monday and had done all of the streets which used four loads of sand in the sand dog.

Council member Widrig then asked Kevin Nephew if it would make his job easier with the new testing that would be done at the treatment plant if he had a computer. A discussion was then held on Nephew's familiarity with Excel and other programs that would be used for Public Works. Administrator Liden stated that she and Terry Baumgartner could work with Nephew to get him started in Excel.

Nephew then asked to go over the new snow policy that was being proposed. Administrator Liden began by explaining that all of the added text was underlined in the snow policy. Since there was no copy of the current policy on either of the computers in the office she had started with the League of MN Cities Model Policy. The copy that was given to Council had additional language added by the Snow Removal Committee as well as new language that was in the League Model Policy. Liden then went through the policy and pointed out the additions made by committee and the additions made by the League.

Nephew then questioned the addition by the committee on making four passes on some streets since he was already doing three passes and that was quite adequate in his opinion. Mayor Wilkens suggested that the policy should perhaps just state that the streets would be cleared curb to curb rather than the number of passes to be made.

Council member Jensrud then pointed out the addition in regard to call pay and whether that was acceptable. Liden explained that she thought that was a good addition but that it would probably be more appropriate in the Personnel Policy rather than the Snow Removal Policy.

Discussion then turned to the recommendations made by Ulteig for the water treatment plant. Nephew said that he would get the new testing equipment ordered and would look at getting a work area arranged so that the new testing could begin on January 1st. Council member Jensrud then asked if Nephew would like to have a computer for logging the new test results and Nephew stated that it would be helpful. Discussion was then held on internet access in the maintenance shop and Administrator Liden explained that Nephew could use his cell phone as a hot spot since the City paid for unlimited internet access.

The Education Director's report for the Agassiz Environmental Learning Center was then briefly reviewed.

Council member Wang reported that the fire department has answered five calls in the month of November and that the calls were for vehicle fires, two medical assists and a shop fire. Wang reported also that they would be sending members to training in Mahanomen and that they were also preparing to return some items back to the State. Council member Jensrud then told Kevin Nephew that he should look at the old generators that the City had and that those could probably go back at the same time. Wang ended the report by noting that they had held their election and that all the officers had stayed the same except for the training officer.

Next up on the agenda under the airport was Dan Triller from Short Elliott Hendrickson (SEH). Triller introduced himself to Council and explained that he had worked with the City while he was an airport engineer at Ulteig. A few months earlier he had left Ulteig and was now with Short Elliot Hendrickson (SEH). He explained further that SEH had done the Airport Layout Plan for the Fertile a few years ago and that SEH was currently working on the zoning for the airport.

Triller then went on to explain that he had met with Mayor Wilkens and Administrator Liden on November 6th to go over the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) that was currently on file with MnDOT and to give recommendations on possible changes to it. He then went on to explain that he had been in conversations with Matthew Lebens at MnDOT Aeronautics about the State's new requirement for runways to be 75 feet wide. The City's runway is currently 60 feet wide and the addition of 15 feet in conjunction with the runway rehabilitation that was needed in a few years would significantly increase the cost of that project. Triller had learned from Lebens that under current Statute the widening wasn't necessarily a requirement and that he would look into the matter further.

Triller then went on to explain that one addition that he would like to make to the CIP would be to start with a preliminary study on the current pavement as well as the soils under the runway in order to get better numbers on how much the runway rehabilitation/reconstruction would cost. Further discussion was then held on the zoning that was underway and whether or not the zoning would be done for the runway extension that was on the CIP and Layout Plan. Triller stated that the zoning would be done for the extension and then discussion was held on the acquisition of the acreage at the end of the runway and where that would fit into the CIP.

Dan Triller then went over the CIP that he had updated from the one he had prepared while employed at Ulteig. After reviewing the numbers, Council member Jensrud asked about the local share of \$150,000 over the next three years and whether or not Council would be able to explain that expense to residents. Mayor Wilkens responded that the airport was an asset that needed to be maintained in order to continue getting funding from the State. Otherwise the airport would be shut down.

Discussion was then held on how to move forward on updating the CIP for the airport and whether or not that would be done by SEH or Ulteig. Mayor Wilkens recommended calling a meeting with the Airport Commission to go over the information from SEH as well as to give Ulteig the opportunity to present their plans for the airport.

The Personnel Committee reported that they had met the week before and gone over employee evaluations and had made their recommendations on raises for 2019 as they were presented on the proposed budget in the packets.

The next item to be addressed under Old Business was the ice rink. Council member Jensrud reported that all the dasher boards were in place and fastened down but that they had run into issues with the rubber guards and fasteners for the glass. Given the cold temperatures and poor conditions outside, Council member Jensrud had decided to wait until summer to get the glass put up. Administrator Liden then reported that she had ordered netting that would go up around the rink by the building to protect the building from hockey pucks. A discussion was then held on flooding the rink and also maintaining the ice with either a homemade Zamboni or an Alaskan ice dragon. Jensrud then inquired about applicants for the rink attendant position and stated that he knew of someone who was interested in working the opening shift from 3:30 to 5:30 Monday through Friday which would allow for school aged workers to have some time between school and working at the rink.

Council member Jensrud then inquired about the possibility of renting out the building and rink for exclusive use. Mayor Wilkens stated that Council would have to think further about that.

Resolution #12-1-18 was the next item up on the agenda. Administrator Liden explained that State Statute now required cities and schools to pass a resolution each year designating their polling place for the upcoming year even if there were no elections currently on the calendar.

A motion was then made by Council member Jensrud, seconded by Council member Widrig to pass Resolution #12-1-18 A Resolution Designating Polling Places for 2019. The motion was carried.

Approval of tobacco licenses for 2019 was the next item up on the agenda. Administrator Liden explained that the four establishments that currently held licenses would need to renew them for 2019. A motion was then made by Council member Jensrud, seconded by Council member Widrig to approve tobacco licenses for Al & Laura's Foods, JT's Station, Northside Express, and The Other Place. The motion was carried.

The next item up on the agenda was the budget for 2019. Administrator Liden explained that the salaries for 2019 tie into the budget and she was requesting a special meeting for her evaluation and to review the Personnel Committee's recommendation on her salary increase. Until that meeting was held, Council should wait to approve the budget to avoid having to approve an amended budget if required.

Resolution #12-2-18 was the next item up on the agenda. Administrator Liden explained that the levy amount of \$207,000 was the same amount that was submitted and approved for the preliminary levy that was filed with the County. A motion was then made by Council member Jensrud to approve Resolution #12-2-18 City Clerk's Certificate of Final Tax Levy. The motion was seconded by Council member Wang and was carried.

A brief discussion was then held on the matter of employee evaluations and when they should be held each year. Administrator Liden commented that Council had decided in September that they would like to have a special meeting to evaluate both the City Administrator and Fair Meadow Administrator and that she had distributed the evaluation materials to Council in October but no meeting had been called for that purpose. Liden also explained that the other employee evaluations had been completed by her in early October.

A motion was then made by Council member Jensrud, seconded by Council member Wise to do employee evaluations in September. The motion was carried.

Discussion then turned to holding a special meeting for Administrator Liden's evaluation. The meeting was scheduled for December 17th and the agenda would include the evaluation, final budget approval, review of the snow removal policy, conducting a water rate study, and Section 125 Cafeteria Plans.

Alex Ranz then inquired about setting a date for the public meeting to go over the upcoming water project so the public could get more information. It was determined that the meeting could be held sometime in February.

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 8:56 p.m. on a motion by Council member Wise.