

Fertile City Council Minutes January 8, 2018

The Fertile City Council held its regular meeting on Monday, January 8, 2018 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, Public Works Director Kevin Nephew, and Twylla Altepeter from the Fertile Journal. Other visitors were Advisory Board members Michelle Cote and Marla Swenson, Sara Iverson, Tammie Rademacher, Jenn Desrosier, Dani Nelson, Lynae Sather, Kim Carlson, Luther Halstengard, Joe Leiting, Terry Baumgartner, Dana Knutson, Trafton Munson, Brad Erickson, Lionel Sandness, Greg Mercil, and Marj Mercil.

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Wilkens and the agenda was approved on a motion by Council member Wise that was seconded by Council member Jensrud and was carried. This was followed by question on public comments and whether it would be better to make a comment or ask a question at this time or if it could wait until a particular agenda item was being discussed. Mayor Wilkens stated that the comment or question could wait until later.

Approval of the minutes of the December 11, 2017 meeting was the next item up on the agenda. Mayor Wilkens asked that the minutes be corrected to reflect the comment made by Angie Leiting that “everything is your fault” in regard to the current negative atmosphere at the nursing home. Wilkens asked also that Council member Jensrud’s response to Leiting’s comment also be added to the minutes.

A motion was made by Council member Wang to approve the December 11, 2017 minutes as corrected. The motion was seconded by Council member Widrig and was carried.

Administrator Lisa Liden then briefly reviewed the Treasurer’s Report and Bills. Liden went over the deposits and checks for the month of December as well as some line items on the budget to actual reports and balance sheet. Council member Widrig made a motion to approve the Treasurer’s Report and Bills as presented. The motion was seconded by Council member Wang and was carried.

The City Engineers were unable to attend the meeting, but Administrator Liden passed along to Council that surveying work would be starting in the next week for the plans for the water and sewer projects.

Public Works Director Kevin Nephew then gave his report to the Council. Nephew reported that things had been going good and they had been they had been busy plowing snow and removing snow piles. Nephew went on to explain that he would be cleaning the filters at the treatment plant later in the month and there shouldn’t be any impact on the water quality during the cleaning process. The whole process takes about three days and has to be done that fast since the plant is offline during that time and the water tower holds about three days worth of water. Council member Jensrud then asked what happens if it takes too long. Nephew explained that the plant can be bypassed if needed. Jensrud then asked to be informed before they begin in case there are any questions or issues.

This was followed by a discussion on the ice rink. Kevin Nephew stated that the rink at the old location was ready for skating and Administrator Liden explained that there had only been one applicant for the attendant position that had been advertised in the Journal. The discussion then turned to the new building and the rink at the new location in JD Mason Park. Council member Jensrud reported that the sheetrock was up on all the walls and ceilings, except for the bathrooms. He anticipated the building would be finished by February 1st and would like to have the ice rink flooded so it was ready to use. This was

followed by a discussion on timelines for the rink and what would be involved in getting the ice ready for skating. Given the fact that the skating season could end in early March and the building could possibly not be ready until Mid-February, it was decided to not pursue getting the ice ready at the new location.

Kevin Nephew then reported that he was almost done with the inventory list of unused items currently stored in the City shops. He stated that he was questioning whether or not to include two pieces of equipment on the list. The first item was the old International A and the second was the Massey Ferguson tractor. The Massey was currently only used to lift the wing for mounting on the grader since the hydraulics in the Massey are stronger than the hydraulics in the new Case tractor. This was followed by a discussion on the safety concerns of relying on the Case for lifting the wing and whether the Massey should be kept for that use. There was also discussion on the nursing home going through their items in storage and making a list of items to add for a potential public auction.

The next item up for discussion was car parking on the streets and whether that was interfering with snow removal. Kevin Nephew responded that it was usually not a problem. If a car sat too long in one location he was usually able to get in touch with the owners to have the car removed. Council member Widrig then asked whether or not the City does some clean up on highway 32 as well. One store owner had questioned whether the City was removing some of the snow at the curb and was questioning how large her billing from her snow removal service was for the month of December if the City was doing some of that work. Council member Jensrud also noted that he had heard several compliments on the City's fast removal of the snow piles in the downtown area this year.

Council member Wise then asked whether any progress had been made on getting the oak boards from Chad Olson's for the park building. Nephew explained that he had spoken with Olson about the matter but that he had not yet heard back from him. Mayor Wilkens explained that he had also spoken with Faye Olson about the matter and that she was wondering if there was a contract between the City and Chad for the work that was to be done. Wilkens had explained to her that originally Chad was to do all the work getting the boards ready for the building but that the City would have to get the boards finished elsewhere since he was no longer able to complete the job. Wilkens assured Faye Olson that the City would pay for the work that had already been completed.

Mayor Wilkens then asked Kevin Nephew if he had any idea how much the City would owe for the work that Olson had already completed. Nephew stated that the amount would be in the \$1,000 range but that he could talk to someone else to get a quote on how much they would charge per board foot of quarter sawed wood. Council member Wise then questioned whether Administrator Liden should talk to the City Attorney about the matter to speed things along. Mayor Wilkens then stated that he would talk to Faye Olson first before involving the attorney. Council member Jensrud then stated that Kyle Solie would like to put plywood on the ceiling in the outside shelter area to finish it off while we wait for the oak boards.

Fair Meadow Administrator Angie Leiting then gave her report to Council. The month of December began with 42 residents and ended with 41, operating at 95% capacity for the month. They had also served 322 home delivered meals. The profit and loss for the home and assisted living combined showed a profit of \$3,795.42 for the month and the report for just the assisted living showed a profit of \$14,385.51 which meant that the nursing home had operated at a loss of \$10,590.09. Leiting also reported that the pending Medicaid payments had all been approved but that payment had not yet been received.

Mayor Wilkens then asked about getting separate profit and loss reports for both the nursing home and assisted living so that it would be easier to see the income or loss for each of them individually.

After a few questions by Council members on some of the checks for the previous month, Mayor Wilkens asked about whether the home had a credit card policy. Administrator Leiting explained that all purchases have to be approved and that the only people to have possession of cards were herself and Lionel Sandness.

Mayor Wilkens then inquired about the flex plan at the nursing home. Leiting explained that the money was deducted from the payroll checks so there was no expense for Fair Meadow. Wilkens then asked about the mid-month advances and questioned why three were given out on the first of the month and the remainder on the 12th. Leiting explained that two of the checks were to make up for vacation time that Brady Martz had missed on the last pay period.

When asked how things were progressing with the time clock, Leiting stated that everything was going well with the set up and that she and Jenn Desrosier would soon be going to training on the system. When asked about health insurance enrollments for 2018 Leiting explained that a total of 29 had signed up. A brief discussion was then held on further implementation plans. Leiting explained that the cuts she had brought before Council in December had been made except for the one where the employee was given a 30-day notice.

This was followed by a question on the Journal article on December's meeting. Sara Iverson questioned Mayor Wilkens comment about management not deserving raises. She stated that she thought the comment was unfair and she wanted to know what was meant by it. Mayor Wilkens explained that there had been some heated discussions on health insurance immediately followed by the discussion on raises. He explained that what he meant was that a 2% raise for CNA's wasn't much of a raise but that a 2% raise for management was "real money."

Administrator Leiting then commented that the statement in the Journal article about "pay equity" for CNA's was incorrect. She then referenced the Health Dimension's report that stated that the CNA average was above normal. Leiting also explained that the losses that were also referenced in the article were misleading since a large portion of the losses were just on paper and due to the large PERA liability entry that was now required.

The nursing home portion of the meeting ended with a discussion on the Personnel Committee and their meeting plans. It was decided that the committee would meet Wednesday, January 10th at 5:30 p.m.

The City Administrator's report was then given. A brief discussion was held on the lead and copper testing that the City had just received the report on. Kevin Nephew explained that the testing began about 15 years ago, and for the first year 20 households were chosen. Now every five years, ten of those original 20 locations are chosen for retesting.

When Administrator Leiting returned to Council Chambers after a brief absence, Mayor Wilkens gave her an opinion letter that was drafted by the City Attorney explaining the role of City Council regarding oversight of the nursing home as well as information on Minnesota being an employment at will state. After giving Leiting a moment to review the letter, Wilkens asked if the letter helped to answer the questions she had regarding the role of Council and Administration in regards to the operation of the nursing home. Leiting stated that she already knew that the Council was in charge and that she had been looking for the attorney's assistance in better defining the role of Administration, Council and the FMNH Advisory Board.

Under the Learning Center, City Administrator Liden noted that the Annual Meeting would be held on Wednesday, January 17th at 7 p.m.

Council member Jensrud then gave the Fire Department report. There had been no calls during the month of December and the department had responded to a total of 28 calls during 2017 which was fewer than the previous year. Jensrud noted that department members would be attending training in March and that there were sessions offered in Detroit Lakes, Alexandria, and Mankato. Jensrud ended by noting that a new fire fighter, John Rivera, had been hired.

Under the airport, Liden reported that she had gotten some new numbers for updating the CIP. The State had asked for the lighting costs to be listed separately from the numbers for the runway rehabilitation project.

The City Personnel Committee set a meeting date of January 17th at 9 a.m. to rewrite the benefits section of the Personnel Policy.

The next item on the agenda was Resolution #1-1-18 for annual appointments. Mayor Wilkens went through the various designations and there were few changes from the previous year. He then appointed Council member Widrig as Vice Mayor, Council members Widrig and himself as Nursing Home Liaisons and Council members Wise and Jensrud to the EDA Board. Council members Widrig and Jensrud were also appointed to the City Personnel Committee. A new appointment for 2018 was for the FMNH Personnel Committee and Council members Widrig and Wang and Advisory Board Member Michelle Cote were appointed for that committee.

After a brief review of the appointments, a motion was made by Council member Wise to approve Resolution #1-1-18 A Resolution of Annual Appointments and Designations for 2018. The motion was seconded by Council member Wang and was carried.

The annual decision on whether or not to waive the statutory limits for the City's liability insurance was the next item addressed. Administrator Liden explained what it meant to waive the statutory limits and gave an example situation of why some larger cities would wish to waive the limits. For Fertile, however, the statutory limits on liability should suffice to cover any incidents that may happen.

A motion was made by Council member Jensrud to not waive the statutory limits on liability insurance. The motion was seconded by Council member Wise and was carried.

The final item addressed on the agenda was scheduling a special meeting for the purpose of evaluating City Administrator Liden, FMNH Administrator Leiting, and Public Works Director Nephew. After looking at dates for all Council to be available, the special meeting was called for on Monday, January 15th and it was decided to schedule the evaluations at 6 p.m. for Nephew, 6:30 p.m. for Liden and 7 p.m. for Leiting.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:55 p.m. on a motion by Mayor Wilkens.