

## **Fertile City Council Minutes**

### **April 8, 2019**

The Fertile City Council held its regular meeting on Monday, April 8, 2019 at 6:30 p.m. at the Community Center. Present were: Mayor Daniel Wilkens, and Council members Linda Widrig, Todd Wise, Stanton Wang, and Reid Jensrud. Also present were City Administrator Lisa Liden, Fair Meadow Administrator Angie Leiting, Public Works Director Kevin Nephew, City Engineer Alex Ranz, Sheriff Jim Tadman, Chad Braun, and Twylla Altepeter from the Fertile Journal.

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Wilkens at 6:30.

A motion was made by Council member Jensrud, seconded by Council member Widrig to approve the agenda as presented. Motion carried.

Under Public Comments Sheriff Jim Tadman introduced himself to Council and asked if anyone had any questions or issues that they would like for his department to address. Mayor Wilkens commented that occasionally there are issues out at the Nature Center with motorized vehicles on the trails but that there aren't any real current issues to deal with. Tadman then explained that his department is working with the school and students and providing information on issues such as texting and driving. Mayor Wilkens commented that one concern involving the school is safety during dropping off and picking up students right off of Highway 32; he wishes there could be a different, safer location for that.

The first item up on the agenda was approval of the consent agenda. This included a permit application for 5K & 1K runs, car show items including sponsorship, street closings, and use of City property, as well as annual approval of fire department gaming. The consent agenda was approved on a motion made by Council member Jensrud that was seconded by Council member Wang and was carried.

The minutes of the February 11<sup>th</sup> meeting were then approved on a motion by Council member Jensrud that was seconded by Council member Widrig and was carried.

The next item up on the agenda was the Treasurer's Report and Bills. Administrator Liden went over the out of the ordinary receipts and bills for the month of February. A motion was made by Council member Widrig to approve the Treasurer's Report and Bills as presented. The motion was seconded by Council member Jensrud and was carried.

Alex Ranz then gave the Engineer's Report. The first item he addressed was the change order that had been submitted for the upcoming water project. Ranz explained that the original plans called for rehabbing just the top four feet of 24 sewer manholes but after discussing the matter with the subcontractor doing the manholes, it was determined that it would be best to seal the entire manhole rather than just the top four feet. Ranz explained also that the additional footage wouldn't have additional preparation costs as this was included in the original bid. The change order also included the costs of extensive repair work on three of the manholes as well as 24 chimney seals. Finally, the change order included a change in the construction schedule for the work on Jefferson Ave. East to begin during phase one and completed by fair time.

After a brief discussion of the matter, a motion was made by Council member Jensrud to approve Change Order #1. The motion was seconded by Council member Wang and was carried.

The next item discussed under the City Engineer report was a recommendation letter from Ulteig's water specialist regarding the use of fire hydrants. Administrator Liden explained that opening up random hydrants for training and filling trucks can stir the water up and cause discoloration in the area where the hydrants are opened up. To avoid the issue, the only hydrant that should be used by the department for non-emergency use was the hydrant by the water tower.

Council member Jensrud then asked Administrator Liden to make sure that Fire Chief Clark be given a copy of the recommendation letter. Liden stated that she already had a copy ready for Clark when he picked up some other paperwork she had for him. This was followed by discussion on the fire department contacting Kevin Nephew in advance when they were going to use the hydrant by the water tower since that set off the alarm in the tower. Council member Jensrud asked if it would be possible for himself and Council member Wang to get training on how to reset the alarm so that Nephew wouldn't have to come do that every time they pulled water from that hydrant. Jensrud also noted that with Dan Lene on the fire department that he would be able to shut off the alarm and reset it if need be.

The discussion on hydrant use continued with Kevin Nephew inquiring about using the fire department flow meter this spring when they flush hydrants. Nephew would like to check the flows again on several of the hydrants and then retest after the water project is complete. That will allow him to see how much improvement there is in the water flows as a result of the looping project. Council member Jensrud replied that the department still had the meter and that Nephew should be able to borrow it.

Fair Meadow Nursing Home Administrator Angie Leiting then gave her report to Council. She reported that they began the month of March with 40 residents and ended with 41 operating at 95.08% occupancy. They had also served 303 home delivered meals. Leiting noted that there was one unit empty at the Assisted Living.

In reviewing the financial statement, Leiting noted that the profit and loss for March showed a combined profit of \$2,305 which reflected an \$18,829 profit for the nursing home and a \$16,525 loss for the assisted living. For the year to date profit and loss, the combined profit was \$212,048 with the home showing a \$247,753 profit and a \$35,705 loss for the assisted living.

When reviewing the check register for the month of March, Leiting noted that there were still a few payroll checks listed on the register due to the fact that there were a few employees that didn't have an account set up anywhere for direct deposit of payroll.

Council member Widrig then asked about the advertisement she had seen for a Social Worker at the nursing home. Leiting explained the circumstances for the previous Social Worker leaving her position and that the position had been filled quite quickly. The new Social Worker has over 27 years of experience and that she was getting along quite well with staff. Leiting also noted that staffing was still an ongoing concern and that it was difficult to fill open nursing positions, especially LPN's.

Kevin Nephew, Public Works Director, gave his report to Council and began by stating that he didn't have very much to report this month. Chad Braun then entered the meeting and inquired about the work that was going to be done on Jefferson Ave. West this summer and if it would be possible for Concordia Church to connect to the storm sewer for better drainage in the parking lot. Nephew explained that there is no storm sewer on Jefferson at this time. The water either drains to the east to

the sewer on Highway 32 or to the west to the sewer on Second Street. Nephew noted, however, that the drainage issue with the parking lot is mostly due to the snow piled at the curb that stops the water from reaching the street. He noted also that the elevations on the street will be changing with the project, and that drainage should be much better.

Mayor Wilkens then inquired about the condition of the hill on the Old Mill road. With the snow melt running down the road, there were huge gullies on the side that were quite deep. Nephew explained that he had graded it earlier that day and that it was better now.

Mayor Wilkens then moved on to the bill that had been presented by Dean Johnson for snow removal services. After a brief discussion of the matter, a motion was made by Council member Wise to pay Johnson's bill as presented. The motion was seconded by Council member Jensrud and was carried. Mayor Wilkens noted that next year it would be wise to advertise for bids on snow removal so the City can be ready if it becomes necessary to hire out some of the work again.

Mayor Wilkens then asked Kevin Nephew about an agenda item that would be discussed later involving the piece of property that the Sand Hill Watershed was possibly interested in acquiring. As for the availability of water and sewer at that location, Nephew said that City water was available but sewer was not.

Administrator Liden then gave the Administrator's Report highlighting her activities over the past month. Liden noted that she had worked with Lisa Burlage on the DNR grant application for the skating rink and that the grant had been submitted at the end of March. Liden also had spent some time preparing for the 2018 audit in addition to continued work with airport zoning and airport projects. Liden noted that she had also attended additional meetings during the month for the upcoming water project and airport zoning. Mayor Wilkens then inquired about progress on the JR Dale building and Liden explained that Dale had not signed the consent to have an engineer assess the property. It would now be necessary to get an Administrative Search Warrant from the Court to have the structural engineer do an inspection.

Under the Learning Center report, Mayor Wilkens reported that the nominating committee had come up with a list of potential additional Board members and the board now had two more directors. They were still looking to sign on two additional directors so he was going to speak to a couple more people that were on the list. He ended by reporting that the Board was still working on the Master Plan. They would be pushing hard to get the Plan submitted to the state to be eligible for the next funding cycle.

Under the Fire Department, Council member Wang reported that the department had only one call during the month of March and it was a mutual aid call that they responded to only to get called back five minutes later. He reported further that the department was busy getting all the equipment ready to respond to grass fires.

Under the Airport, Mayor Wilkens reported that the bids for the lighting project would be opened on April 30<sup>th</sup>. He reported also that the zoning process was moving forward and that a preliminary meeting had been held with Short Elliott Hendrickson, the Airport Engineers. He ended by reporting that the Flying Club is looking to start up again with regular meetings and possibly starting to hold the annual pancake breakfast at the airport.

The Personnel Committee had nothing to report.

The first item to be addressed under old business was the water rate options that had been presented to Council in March. Administrator Liden stated again that she preferred options number three and five since they had a lower availability rate. Liden felt it was important to have a lower availability charge since the new rate structure would no longer allow 2,500 “free” gallons per month. Option five had a slightly higher usage rate than option three, so Liden preferred that one since it allowed for a little better financial cushion to make the payments on the debt. Council member Widrig added that she also preferred option five and that the additional 75 cents per 1,000 gallons under that option shouldn’t be a budget breaker for the average household.

After further discussion of the matter, a motion was made by Council member Jensrud to go with option #5 for the new water and sewer rates. The motion was seconded by Council member Widrig and was carried.

As part of the water rate matter, discussion was then held on when to start with the new rates. Administrator Liden noted that the first payments on the debt would be coming due in about February of 2020. It would be prudent to make the new rates effective in July or August so that the funds would be available to make the first payments.

After a brief discussion of the matter, a motion was made by Council member Jensrud to make the new water rates effective August 1<sup>st</sup>. The motion was seconded by Council member Widrig and was carried.

A brief discussion was then held on the public meeting on snow removal that Mayor Wilkens had scheduled for April 11<sup>th</sup>. It would be an open forum for the public to come and give input on the snow removal policy and to ask questions or make complaints if need be. While full Council attendance was not required for the meeting, Administrator Liden would post it as a Council meeting in case a quorum showed up.

The next item up on the agenda was Resolution #4-1-19 authorizing the debt to cover the sewer portion of the upcoming water project. A motion was made by Council member Jensrud to approve Resolution #4-1-19 authorizing the issuance, sale, and delivery of a \$484,000 General Obligation Utility Revenue Note. The motion was seconded by Council member Wise and was carried.

A resident’s letter requesting a four-way stop on the corner of Elm Street and Jefferson was the next item up for discussion. Administrator explained that there were two daycares located within one block in that area and that some cars were travel quite fast down Jefferson Avenue in particular. This was a concern during pick up and drop off times and also when the children were going for walks. This led to discussion also on the parking situation in front of the old Catholic church. During weekends when crafters were using the church and vehicles were parked on both sides of the street, the street was narrowed to one lane. Discussion was held on possibly making the west side of Elm Street a no parking zone. Mayor Wilkens stated that he would like to have a public meeting regarding the no parking zone to get further input from residents in that area of town.

A motion was then made by Council member Jensrud to put a four way stop at the corner of Elm Street and Jefferson. The motion was seconded by Council member Wang and was carried.

The next agenda item up for discussion was the Sand Hill Watershed's possible interest in a parcel of City property located on the south side of town off of Highway 32. Mayor Wilkens explained that the Watershed needs to either build an addition at their current location to allow for handicap access or build a new building. April Swenby, the Watershed Administrator was just doing some preliminary checking on possible alternative locations and costs to see if it was more feasible to add on at their current location or to build new. One concern expressed was in regard to the flowers on the north portion of the City property and whether or not a building would obstruct the view of the flowers. Council member Jensrud stated that he would like to see some sort of site plan showing where the building would be located on the lot and the size of the building. Mayor Wilkens stated that he would let Swenby know that the City selling a portion of the lot was a possibility and that the City would like more information on the building.

The next item up for discussion was the access road to the sewer ponds. Mayor Wilkens explained that he had been looking into the matter with Liberty Township to determine how the north end of 130<sup>th</sup> Ave. SW had been closed as a township road and if it had been closed following the proper processes. Administrator Liden stated that in order to work any further on gaining a formal easement or access to the lagoons using 130<sup>th</sup> Ave. SW that Council should make a motion to pursue the matter legally.

After further discussion of the matter, a motion was made by Council member Jensrud to pursue the matter further and enlist the assistance of the City Attorney as needed. The motion was seconded by Council member Wise and was carried.

Under announcements, Mayor Wilkens explained that he had been in contact with the League of Minnesota Cities regarding some training for Council. League collaboration staff will be in the area from June 10<sup>th</sup> through the 12<sup>th</sup> so a training meeting was tentatively scheduled for the evening of June 11<sup>th</sup>. Pamela Whitmore with the League would like to make contact with all Council and staff to find out the areas in which training was most needed. Mayor Wilkens asked Administrator Liden to sent Ms. Whitmore the contact information she needed.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8 p.m. on a motion by Council member Jensrud that was seconded by Council member Wang.