

Fertile City Council Minutes July 8, 2019

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

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. by Mayor Wilkens. The agenda was amended to include Short Elliott Hendrickson (SEH) contracts under the Airport Committee and also the golf course objection to the watershed land purchase under Old Business. The agenda as amended was approved on a motion by Council member Wang that was seconded by Council member Widrig and carried.

There were no public comments.

The next item on the agenda was the approval of the minutes from the regular June meeting and two special meetings. Mayor Wilkens suggested adding in a sentence to the fifth paragraph of the June 10, 2019 minutes to include that the installed hydrant by TDS was also important in case of an anhydrous leak. Mayor Wilkens also pointed out that there was a typo to correct in the June 10th special meeting minutes in the third paragraph. John Deere “mowing” needed to be changed to “mower.”

The minutes as amended were approved on a motion by Council member Wang that was seconded by Council member Widrig and carried.

City Administrator Lisa Liden next gave a brief overview of the financial statements and the out of the ordinary bills paid in June. One of the disbursements discussed was the check for gravel which included many loads for Old Mill Road. This led to a discussion on the terms of the agreement with Garfield Township regarding the road and whether hauling in gravel was maintenance or not.

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.

The City Engineer, Alex Ranz, then gave his report. He began by presenting the monthly pay request for the water project which totaled \$409,383.36. Ranz noted that the project was going well. The sidewalks on East Jefferson were done and that the streets were now paved. The remaining sidewalk work would start after the Fair was over. Ranz went on to explain that Sellin would like to wait until next summer to put on the second lift on Jefferson Avenue. There were several soft spots and Sellin wanted to make sure that those areas would not sink again before adding the second lift. Mayor Wilkens asked if they anticipated the same issue on Garfield Avenue East and Ranz stated that they wouldn’t know until they were done digging on that street.

The pay request was approved on a motion by Council member Wang that was seconded by Council member Jensrud and carried.

Council member Wang then made a motion to approve the delay in completing the tarring on Jefferson Avenue until next summer. The motion was seconded by Council member Widrig. The motion was carried with Council member Jensrud abstaining.

This was followed by further discussion on the water project. Ranz explained that Sellin would be returning to town the first or second week of August to start on Garfield and County Road 1. Council member Jensrud also commented that Justin Johnson with Ulteig does a really good job managing the project.

Ranz went on to the matter of the old skating rink survey, reporting that the survey was done and that all corners had already been pinned. Mayor Wilkens then inquired about plans for the RV campground that would go in that location. Ranz replied that Ulteig could take care of the plans and the permitting and that a rough estimate of the cost was \$10,000 to \$12,000.

A motion was made by Council member Jensrud for Ulteig to proceed on the plans for the RV campground. The motion was seconded by Council member Wang and was carried.

Fair Meadow Nursing Home Administrator Angie Leiting gave her report to Council. She began by noting that she would be reporting on both May and June since she was absent for the June meeting. Fair Meadow began the month of May with 42 residents and ended the month with 41, operating at 97% occupancy. They had also served 298 home delivered meals.

Leiting went over the financials for May and noted that the profit and loss was the wrong report since she had accidentally sent last year's report. This year the P & L for May showed a \$175,000 loss due to there being three pay periods in May and also the fine for CMS was paid out.

Mayor Wilkens asked about the new Director of Nursing and how things were going. Leiting said that the State came in for their survey on the DON's third day on the job so that was a little stressful. Fortunately, Nicole, the former DON came back to help. Leiting reported that the survey results were good. Leiting asked about the audit for last year and whether or not Council wanted a presentation by Eide Bailly. It was decided that a presentation of the audited financials was unnecessary.

Leiting moved on to the reports for the month of June. They began the month with 41 residents and ended with 38 operating at 93.88% occupancy. They had also served 255 home delivered meals. Leiting then reviewed the financial statements for June. She noted that the cash balance at the end of the month was back up again after the low balance in May due to three pay periods. The profit and loss for June was \$138,000 profit which nicely offsets the loss shown in May. The year to date profit for both the nursing home and assisted living was \$125,528 with the home showing a profit of \$194,761 to offset the \$69,232 loss for the assisted living. The loss at the assisted living was primarily due to some units being empty for a few months.

Mayor Wilkens asked about the new RN position for the Assisted Living and what duties they would be responsible for. Leiting explained that they would be doing the admissions assessments, the admission paperwork and also the training for the assisted living.

Kevin Nephew, Public Works Director, gave his report to Council. The first item up for discussion was the curb and gutter work that Red River State Bank would like done on the north side of the bank. Nephew had obtained a quote from Classic Concrete who was in town for the water project and they gave a quote of \$40 per linear foot. Chris Swenby had provided a quote of \$87 per linear foot. Both quotes included removal of the existing curb and gutter.

A motion was made by Council member Wise, seconded by Council member Jensrud to accept the quote from Classic Concrete for the work. The motion was carried.

Kevin Nephew asked whether only the first part of the block on the south side should be done or if the entire south side of the block should be done from Highway 32 to Blaine Street. Alex Ranz said that he would go over with Kevin and look at the existing curb and gutter on the east end of the block to determine if that should be replaced as well.

After discussion of the matter, a motion was made by Council member Jensrud to replace the curb and gutter on the entire south side of the block if needed. The motion was seconded by Council member Wise and was carried.

Member Jensrud inquired about how long this work would last and if it would be better to mill the entire street. Alex Ranz stated that the work would extend the road life by five to ten years and Jensrud commented that ten years would be pushing it. Ranz said he would go with Kevin to look at the current condition of the streets to determine if a partial mill and overlay would be sufficient. Nephew was asked to get quotes on totally rebuilding the roads and for a special meeting to be called if necessary to accept the quotes and move forward with the work while Agassiz Asphalt was in town for the water project.

Nephew informed Council that the water tower cleaning was done and that there wasn't very much sediment at the bottom. Administrator Liden reported that the formal report on the cleaning and inspection had been received and that KLM was recommending some work that needs to be done on the tower. The cost of the work was estimated at \$325,000 and would need to be done in three to five years. Alex Ranz stated that he would look to see if there was any funding available for the water tower work.

Nephew reported that Electric Pump had been in to service the pump in the new lift station and that R & J Wastewater should be in town the end of July to do some sanitary sewer jetting.

Mayor Wilkens asked to address the matter that had been discussed last month regarding Kevin Nephew providing training to fire department members on how to turn off the water tower alarm when the department sets it off by filling trucks by the water tower. Administrator Liden explained that it was a problem to have unlicensed personnel in the treatment plant working on any of the equipment. Mayor Wilkens stated that he agreed it did pose a security concern having members of the fire department in the treatment plant working with the alarms.

Nephew reported that he was worried about the increased water use in town. The amount being pumped went up by 20 to 25% in the last month or so. He was concerned that there was a water leak somewhere and he was just waiting for it to come to the surface. He noted that he and Dan Lene had gone through town and popped the manhole covers to see if there was any water leaking into there but they had not seen anything unusual.

Council member Jensrud then brought up the matter of hydrant use during the fair and how the fire department would be doing things differently this year. The water that was needed for dock dogs would be pulled from the hydrant by the water tower and that Mentor and Beltrami fire departments would be helping. They estimated it would take 12 to 15 truck loads to fill the tank for dock dogs.

Mayor Wilkens then asked to move the airport report further up on the schedule so that Dan Triller could leave before the weather got bad. Triller reported that the bids for the lighting project were accepted in May and that the contract went to Neo Electric out of Madison Wisconsin. Neo Electric was currently working out the details of the project on their end and anticipated that construction would start and finish in the fall. As for the zoning, they were waiting for MnDOT's approval of the draft ordinance in order to proceed with scheduling the first public hearing. Mayor Wilkens noted that we were still waiting for official approval from the County on the draft ordinance but that the matter would be taken up at their next meeting.

Triller reported also that the State had given the green light to proceed with the runway final design and construction. He hoped to have the bids in hand in October so the grant could be written up with the State. Part of that grant would include the pre-work on the land acquisition. To proceed on both the runway project and the land acquisition pre-work, contracts with SEH were presented to Council for approval. Triller noted that the runway work was covered by an amendment to the prior contract for the preliminary runway design and that the land acquisition pre-work was a new contract.

After a brief discussion of the matter, a motion was made by Council member Wang to approve amendment #1 for the final runway design and construction. The motion was seconded by Council member Wise and was carried.

Council member Wise then made a motion to approve the contract with SEH for the land acquisition pre-work. The motion was seconded by Council member Wang and was carried.

City Administrator Lisa Liden gave her report to Council. She noted that she had spent many hours the previous month on the audit. This year the audit team was entirely new so more work was required in getting them up to speed on the City's finances and practices. She noted also that one of the audit team that had done the on-site work was no longer with Eide Bailly so all of his work had to be done over again which had resulted in many hours of work.

Council member Jensrud asked about progress on making arrangements for getting the glass up at the rink. He had a volunteer who would be willing and able to install the glass the first of August and the parts would need to be received by that time. Liden responded that she needed further information from Jensrud on the parts that were needed for the installation so those could be ordered. Jensrud said that he would get a sample of the needed part to Liden.

Then Council member Jensrud inquired about the auction sale of City equipment, and the status of the ice machine. Liden reported that she had been in contact with Oistad's on the auction but had not heard back from them yet with further information. She explained again about the ice machine and that it needed to be transported to southern Minnesota to have work done on it. She also explained that it may be possible to work out a trade on the machine for a newer, smaller one that would be ready to go and could be parked in the water plant.

Under the Learning Center, Mayor Wilkens reported that a committee had been formed to aid in the search for a new Education Director. A meeting with that committee still needed to be scheduled. He reported also that Jacob Mans was finalizing the Master Plan.

Council member Wang gave the fire department report and noted that they had six calls in June. Two calls were for grass fires, one was for a downed power line, one structure fire, one mutual aid call and one car accident. The department was still working on their application to conduct a house burn for training purposes.

Under Old Business, Mayor Wilkens addressed the matter of the golf course's objection to the watershed purchasing the land located directly north of the golf course clubhouse. He stated that he had received a letter from the Board of Directors of the golf course stating that they were opposed to the watershed building an office in that location. They were concerned that a building would block the view of the Fertile flowers and would have a negative impact on the view coming into town from the south. Wilkens reported that members of the golf course board had visited the watershed meeting earlier in July and voiced their objections as well. This resulted in the watershed rescinding their offer to purchase the property which was communicated to the City by email.

After further discussion of the matter a motion was made by Council member Wang to add the golf course letter and the watershed email rescinding their offer to purchase the property to the meeting minutes for closure on the matter. The motion was seconded by Council member Wise and was carried.

A request by Polk County EMS to close a portion of Albert Ave. East was the next item on the agenda. Administrator Liden explained that EMS was holding a pancake breakfast on Sunday, July 14th and they asked to close the first block of Albert Ave. E. during the breakfast so they could have emergency vehicles on display. Council member Jensrud made a motion to approve the street closure. The motion was seconded by Council member Wise and was carried.

The next item up on the agenda was the adoption of an agenda policy and also a public comment policy for Council meetings. Administrator Liden went over the samples that had been provided by the League of MN Cities. Liden stated that she preferred the example given for Round Lake which provided Council meeting guidelines. The longer public comment policy sample could be incorporated into the Round Lake sample so that one document would explain in more detail about how Council meetings are run and how the public can participate in meetings.

A motion was made by Council member Widrig to approve the Round Lake sample of Council meeting guidelines with the recommended expansion of the public comment section. The motion was seconded by Council member Wang and was carried.

A motion was made by Council member Wang, seconded by Council member Wise to approve the agenda policy provided on page 40 of the packets. The motion was carried.

Council member Jensrud asked about parking on Blaine Street during the fair. A couple of residents had asked if that last block that dead-ends on the fairgrounds could be barricaded and marked as “no parking” during the fair. It was difficult for residents on that block to get out of their own driveways with parking on both sides of the street during the fair. It was commented that it was difficult to get out of driveways on several blocks around the fairgrounds during the fair and also that it was likely that barricades would be ignored. Kevin Nephew asked about putting up no parking signs on just the west side of Blaine St. to help with the parking congestion on that street since it was a dead-end. It was determined that no parking signs would be put up on west side of the street.

Kevin Nephew inquired about a water service request that he had gotten from Mel Bohnenkamp. Mel would be putting in a new house in the housing subdivision located just outside City limits by St. Joseph’s Church. Bohnenkamp asked if a water main could be put up to his property line. If that area were to be further developed, that main could serve other houses in that subdivision. After looking at a map of the area and how many houses a main could potentially serve, it was determined that a new main would serve so few people out of City limits that it wasn’t economically feasible for the City to invest in a new main in that location.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:29 p.m. on a motion by Council member Jensrud.

Daniel Wilkens, Mayor

Lisa J. Liden, City Administrator