

## **Fertile City Council Minutes December 14, 2020**

The Fertile City Council held its regular meeting on Monday, December 14, 2020 at 6:30 p.m. at the Community Center. Present were: Mayor Daniel Wilkens, and Council members Matthew Massmann, Stanton Wang, and Todd Wise. Also present were City Administrator Lisa Liden, and Public Works Director Kevin Nephew, Airport Engineer Dan Triller, and Twylla Altepeter from the Fertile Journal. City Engineer Alex Ranz was present by phone for his report.

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Wilkens at 6:30 p.m. and began with those present reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

Under agenda revisions, Council member Wang asked to add the skating rink to the agenda. The agenda as amended was approved on a motion by Council member Massmann that was seconded by Council member Wise and was carried.

There were no public comments.

The minutes of the November 9, 2020 regular meeting and November 23, 2020 equipment committee meeting were up for approval. Mayor Wilkens asked that further clarification of the timing of the design phase of the taxiway and apron project be amended to reflect that the planning and design would take place over the winter months. The minutes of the November 9, 2020 meeting as amended were approved on a motion by Council member Wise that was seconded by Council member Massmann and carried. The minutes of the November 23, 2020 equipment committee were approved as presented on a motion by Council member Wise that was seconded by Council member Wang and carried.

City Administrator Lisa Liden gave the Treasurer's Report. Liden went over the out of the ordinary deposits and checks for the month of November including checks for airport projects, engineer services, the purchase of a plow from RDO and the Cares Act distribution to Fair Meadow. The monthly financials were also briefly reviewed as well as the budget to actual reports.

The Treasurer's Report and Bills were approved on a motion by Council member Massmann that was seconded by Council member Wang and carried.

The first item to be addressed under department reports was the airport. Airport Engineer Dan Triller began his report to Council by explaining which existing asphalt areas would be rehabbed as part of the next airport project. The design phase would begin this winter if the State approved moving forward on the project. Mayor Wilkens stated that the planning committee had held two meetings to update the airport layout plan and that a third meeting would be held in February. It was during the planning meetings where it was determined which asphalt areas would be rehabbed and where additional asphalt would be put in for taxiways and expanding the apron. Triller reported also that he was hopeful that the environmental study for the runway expansion would get covered in the current State fiscal year.

Mayor Wilkens asked Dan Triller about extending the one taxiway for a party that is interested in building a T-hangar. Triller said that the design of the taxiway could be covered under the design contract. Triller ended his report by briefly reviewing the items in his monthly progress report. It was noted that he was still waiting to hear from the FAA on scheduling another flight check for the approaches now that all the obstructions had been cleared.

This was followed by a brief discussion on the Short Elliott Hendrickson contract that was presented for design of the taxiways and aprons. The contract totaled \$94,900 and Triller noted that Council could approve the contract pending State approval of the project. The motion to sign the contract pending State approval was made by Council member Wise. The motion was seconded by Council member Wang and was carried.

Under the Fire Department, Council member Wang reported that there had been only one call for mutual aid during November and that the department was looking at revising their current bylaws.

Kevin Nephew, Public Works Supervisor, was next to give his report to Council. He reported that they haven't had much snow removal to do yet but that they had sanded all the streets in town that day since they were quite slippery. Nephew reported that the rink had just been flooded for the first time that afternoon. Due to the warmer than average temperatures they were a little behind on getting the rink ready for skating. Nephew figured it would take about a week to get the flooding done.

This was followed by a discussion on opening the warming house. Administrator Liden explained that the warming house couldn't be open due to current State orders due to Covid. It would be possible to have it open for renting skates, but Liden felt it would be too hard to have it open for renting because then people would still congregate inside to warm up. Also, if the skates were rented out, they would have to be totally sanitized when they are returned. Discussion was held on getting signage up outside the south entrance to the building where the bathrooms are located letting people know that skates could not be worn inside the building. Kevin Nephew said that once the ice was ready that he could turn on the lights every day when he leaves work and then a rink employee could turn them off at 10 or 11 each night and clean up the bathrooms if necessary.

After discussion of the matter, a motion was made by Council member Massmann to follow the Governor's guidelines and executive orders about opening the warming house at the rink. The motion was seconded by Council member Wang and was carried.

A discussion was held on the potential purchase of a payloader for snow removal. Mayor Wilkens explained that the equipment committee had met and had come up with a list of features that a payloader should have so that it worked well for snow removal. Wilkens also felt that two or three equipment committee members should go look at payloaders that are currently available to see them first-hand. Discussion was held on who should accompany Mayor Wilkens and Kevin Nephew when they go to look at payloaders. Kevin Nephew noted that not all the payloaders he had information on from Case in Crookston were in Crookston. Some of them were in St. Cloud.

Financing the purchase of a payloader was the next item up for discussion. Mayor Wilkens explained that Administrator Liden had prepared a cash flow analysis for the coming 12 months and based on those numbers, the City's cash situation would be low in just one of the months if the City paid cash for the payloader. It was decided to look at some financing options for the purchase to avoid a potential cash shortage.

After further discussion of the matter, a motion was made by Council member Wise to authorize spending up to \$125,000 for a used payloader. The motion was seconded by Council member Wang and was carried.

This was followed by a discussion of a front-end mount snow blower to go on the payloader. Mayor Wilkens suggested hiring out the snow blowing for this winter to allow more time to look at options with a snow blower. Council member Massmann commented that the City shouldn't spend \$45,000 on a new unit and Kevin Nephew said that smaller used blowers could be purchased for around \$10,000 and they would have enough power to do what needed to be done.

A discussion was held on the street pole that had recently been knocked down after being hit by a vehicle. Kevin Nephew reported that the pole had been replaced and Administrator Liden added that the damage would be paid for by the person's insurance. A general discussion was then held on looking at a plan to start replacing all the streetlights along highway 32.

The City's potential participation in the Local Road Improvement Program (LRIP) was discussed. Administrator Liden explained that the program would pay for road work such as paving on a City street and that the City's only cost would be the engineering costs. Getting Christian Street done that runs on the east side of the sports complex was discussed as well as the streets in Olmscheid's Addition and the road in the Industrial Park.

Mayor Wilkens called City Engineer Alex Ranz to give his monthly report. Ranz began by explaining that the City needed to close out the 2019 water improvement project so the loan paperwork could be finalized by MN Public Facilities. The only outstanding issue with the project was the defective sidewalk on the north side of the school. Ranz had been in contact with Sellin Brothers, the contractor for the water project and Sellin had agreed to replace the entire sidewalk once school was done in the spring. Ranz added that the City currently held \$55,000 in project funds in retainage and could hold part or all that amount until the sidewalk work was complete.

After discussion of the retainage and sidewalk work, a motion was made by Council member Wise to keep the entire retainage until the work was completed to the City's satisfaction. The motion was seconded by Council member Massmann and was carried.

Council member Wise then asked about the warranty on the sidewalk work. Ranz explained that the sidewalk would be covered by warranty for a full year after the work was complete.

This was followed by further discussion on the LRIP. Kevin Nephew asked Ranz if the road construction work paid by the program would include curb and gutter. Ranz replied that curb and gutter would be covered as well as storm sewer. Mayor Wilkens then asked if the City could apply for work on multiple streets and Ranz stated that they usually only picked one street in applying for the funding. Ranz said that applying for multiple streets could result in none of the streets being approved.

A motion was made by Council member Massmann to further explore participating in the LRIP for getting Christian Street paved. The motion was seconded by Council member Wang and was carried.

There was no verbal report given for Fair Meadow Nursing Home since Administrator Leiting was busy with the annual audit. The written Administrator's Report, Covid Report and monthly financials had been submitted and were included in the Council packets.

City Administrator Liden gave the Administrator's report. Liden noted that she had prepared a 12-month cash flow forecast for the Equipment Committee meeting and that she was glad she had done so. With all the new debt from the water projects it was good to get all the payments mapped out in advance to get a good picture for the next 12 months on where the City would be situated for cash. The City Administrator's Report was approved on a motion by Council member Wise that was seconded by Council member Massmann and was carried.

Under the Learning Center discussion was held on the quote from Garden Valley Technologies for a camera system. The quote was for \$4,741.50 and included 5 cameras, a recording system, a flat panel monitor and a battery backup. Administrator Liden noted that there would be an additional monthly charge for a dedicated wi-fi system for the cameras since the wi-fi currently at the Learning Center was public. Council member Massmann commented that it was a lot of money to spend when the only problems to date have been minor vandalism. The remaining Council members agreed with Massmann so the matter was tabled for a couple of months until further research could be done.

Mayor Wilkens reported that the Learning Center Board was currently discussing possible acquisition of some of the boundary areas where trails are located on private property. He reported also that there were currently openings for four board members to get the board to 11 members.

The next agenda item up for discussion was the budget for 2021. Administrator Liden reported that the only change from the preliminary budget that was presented in September was that the amounts for airport grants and airport projects had been increased to reflect the projects that MnDOT has identified for funding in the coming year. She noted also that the levy increase for 2021 was \$3,000 which represented a 2% increase over 2020.

After discussion of the final proposed budget, a motion was made by Council member Wise to approve the budget as presented. The motion was seconded by Council member Wang and was carried.

A motion was made by Council member Wise to approve Resolution #12-1-20 City Clerk's Certification of Final Tax Levy. The motion was seconded by Council member Wang and was carried.

The next item up for approval was Resolution #12-2-20. Administrator Liden explained that this was an annual resolution that needed to be passed in the event there was a need for a special City election or school election.

A motion was made by Council member Wang to approve Resolution #12-2-20 A Resolution Designating Polling Places for 202. The motion was seconded by Council member Wise and was carried.

Tobacco licenses was the next item up for discussion. There were four establishments that currently carried licenses and those same four wished to apply for licenses for 2021. Liden noted that Al & Laura's was being sold to Aaron Bakke and that he would like to continue the tobacco license for the grocery store.

A motion was made by Council member Massmann to approve tobacco licenses for JT's Station, Northside Express, Aaron's Grocery, and The Other Place. The motion was seconded by Council member Wang and was carried.

The final item to be addressed on the agenda was a proposed refund of part of the 2020 on-sale liquor license fees. Administrator Liden explained that some cities were either refunding all or a portion of the 2020 license fees and some were doing the same for the 2021 fees.

After discussion of the matter, a motion was made by Council member Massmann to waive the 2021 liquor on-sale license fee and Sunday license fee. The motion was seconded by Council member Wise and was carried.

Mayor Wilkens then asked to again address Brian Nephew's interest in filling the Council seat recently vacated by Linda Widrig. Wilkens noted that Nephew had texted him once again and wanted the matter brought to Council even though it had been discussed at the November meeting.

After discussion of the matter, a motion was made by Council member Wang to respectfully decline the appointment of Brian Nephew to the vacant Council seat. The motion was seconded by Council member Wise and was carried with Council member Massmann abstaining since he was unfamiliar with Brian Nephew.

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 8:05 on a motion by Council member Massmann.

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Daniel Wilkens, Mayor

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Lisa J. Liden, City Administrator