

Fertile City Council Minutes January 13, 2020

The Fertile City Council held its regular meeting on Monday, January 13, 2020 at 6:30 p.m. at the Community Center. Present were: Mayor Daniel Wilkens, and Council members Todd Wise, and Stanton Wang. Also present were City Administrator Lisa Liden, Public Works Director Kevin Nephew, Fair Meadow Administrator Angie Leiting, City Engineer Alex Ranz, Twylla Altepeter from the Fertile Journal, and JR Dale.

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Wilkens at 6:30 and the start was delayed until a quorum was present. Council member Wise arrived at 6:36 and the meeting began with those present reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

Under agenda approval Mayor Wilkens noted that there were two letters that he had received that he would like to address in the announcements portion of the meeting. Administrator Liden asked to add a pay application for the airport lighting project under the airport. The agenda as amended was approved on a motion by Council member Wang that was seconded by Council member Wise and was carried.

There were no public comments.

The minutes of the December 9, 2019 were up for approval. Mayor Wilkens asked that a sentence be added at the end of the first paragraph on page 2 stating that he recommended approval of Barb Jensrud to the Fair Meadow Advisory Board.

Council member Wise made a motion to approve the minutes as amended. The motion was seconded by Council member Wang and was carried.

City Administrator Lisa Liden next gave a brief overview of the financial statements and the out of the ordinary bills paid in December. The Treasurer's Report and Bills were approved on a motion by Council member Wang that was seconded by Council member Wise and was carried.

Fair Meadow Administrator Angie Leiting gave her report to Council. She reported that the month of December began with 40 residents and ended with 39, operating at 91.55% capacity for the month. They had also served 250 home delivered meals. The profit and loss for the month of December showed a loss of just over \$8,100 with the nursing home reporting an income of just over \$4,000 and the assisted living a loss of slightly over \$12,000. The year to date profit and loss showed a loss of just over \$97,000 with the nursing home at a loss of over \$64,500 and the assisted living showing a loss of over \$32,000. Leiting noted that the loss was due to the three payroll periods in the month of November. In reviewing the budget to actual report Leiting noted that most of the actual numbers to date were on track with the budget.

Leiting went on to report that she was still in need of two more advisory board members and that she had reached out to a few more people to see if they would be interested in serving. Both Carol Swenby and Cynthia Hibbard had agreed to serve. Mayor Wilkens then asked how it was going with call ins and Leiting said that it was going better. Wilkens also inquired if anything could be done to make the assisted living more profitable. Leiting stated that with the increased regulations for assisted living facilities costs are increasing substantially so it's even more difficult to run at a profit. She noted, however, that the assisted living does help to keep the nursing home full since residents typically transfer to the nursing home when they need more care services.

Discussion returned to the advisory board and Mayor Wilkens recommended that Carol Swenby and Cynthia Hibbard be appointed to serve on the advisory board. A motion was made by Council member Wise to approve the appointments of Swenby and Hibbard to the board. The motion was seconded by Council member Wang and was carried.

The City Engineer's Report was given by Alex Ranz with Ulteig. Ranz reported that the meeting on the RV campground had gone well and that the option three plan seemed to be the best with a few modifications that were discussed at the meeting. The preliminary plan would be drawn up by the end of the week and sent on to Tim

Olson and Dan Grunhvd to share with the rest of the fair board when they attend the state convention over the weekend. Another item that was discussed at the campground meeting was the installation of a hydrant for the fairgrounds. The line would run west from the Culligan road to the fence south of the grandstands. Mayor Wilkens then gave an overview of the changes that the campground committee had made to the option three plans.

Ranz went on to report that the Safe Routes to School application had been submitted the previous week and that Administrator Liden had gotten quite a few support letters from community organizations. He said that the support letters help a great deal in getting approval.

Discussion was held on an issue with low water pressure at a residence on Nelson Ave. East. Kevin Nephew said he would look into the matter to make sure that there were no valves turned off in the area from the water project. Ranz ended his report by noting that the deadline for submitting water projects for funding was March 30th. He said that submitting a project doesn't commit the City but it's a good way to see where Fertile would fall on the list as far as grant funding under both the Drinking Water and Clean Water programs.

As it was 7 p.m. and there was a Public Hearing on the agenda, the regular meeting was closed and the Public Hearing was opened. Administrator Liden explained that the Public Hearing was to review the inspection report on the JR Dale building. After review, Council would have to decide whether the building's current condition made it a hazardous building. If so, Council would have to decide whether the building should be razed and the time deadline for getting the building taken down. Administrator Liden then went over the inspection report and noted all the deficiencies that were explained in the report.

After discussion of the report Mayor Wilkens asked JR Dale, who was present at the meeting, if he had any comments or questions. Dale commented that he thought several parts of the report were inaccurate. He explained that one inaccuracy was that the west side of the building had not "collapsed" and had been partially torn down. Dale noted that he was concerned about demolition of the north side of the building that is only 16 inches from Vern Anderson's building. He was concerned that Anderson's building could collapse once the foundation on the north side is removed. Kevin Nephew explained that they would have to be careful when working on that side of the building and to just leave the basement wall in place on the north and to fill that end with dirt to hold the foundation up. Nephew also noted that all the basement walls could remain in place as long as the top four or five feet are removed.

Mayor Wilkens explained that the City has to follow a legal process in getting hazardous buildings taken care of. He stated that Council has been wanting JR Dale's building down for several years and that a deadline would have to be set for it to be removed. Wilkens also explained that the City would work with Dale on setting a reasonable date to accommodate spring road restrictions. This was followed by a discussion on timelines. When a July deadline was brought up, JR Dale stated that mid-July would be agreeable to him. Dale also noted that he also wants to tear down the old Garden Valley building that he owns across the street from his other building. He also asked when the City would be removing the tires from by his property from the old softball field by the airport stating he was concerned about a possible fire.

After further discussion on timelines, a motion was made by Council member Wise to close the Public Hearing and reconvene the Council meeting. The motion was seconded by Council member Wang and was carried.

Council member Wise then made a motion to approve Resolution #1-1-2020 a Resolution Ordering the Razing of a Hazardous Building Located at the Intersection of West Main Ave. and 2nd Street Northwest and setting a timeline of 180 days for the building to be removed, which would be July 15th. The motion was seconded by Council member Wang and was carried.

City Administrator Liden gave the Administrator's Report. The report was briefly reviewed and Liden explained that she was continuing her work with FEMA and the required paperwork for reimbursement of flood repair expenses and also for some flood mitigation work at the bridge.

Kevin Nephew, Public Works Director, gave his report to Council. Nephew began by explaining that he was looking at some options for adding a v-plow to the front of the new grader so it would work better for pushing snow. RDO would be coming down to look at where the hydraulic ports are and to see what else would be needed to add the plow. Nephew would have more information at the next meeting.

Discussion was then held on removing snow from the driveway ends located in alleys. Mayor Wilkens noted that a resident had asked him about his driveway since it was in the alley. The resident was usually able to remove the snow from the end of his driveway but due to health issues and when there are large snowfalls, he was not able to do so. Administrator Liden stated that there are very few alley driveways in town and that if the City is going to continue clearing driveway ends that the ones in alleys should be done as well. So far only three or four residents had inquired about getting their alley driveway ends done. It was determined that the City would clear the ones that had asked about having it done.

This was followed by discussion on snow removal after the last big storm. Council member Wise noted that the maintenance department did a great job and that the alleys look nice. He noted that some Mahnomens residents had asked how Fertile does snow removal in alleys since they were so wide and clear of snow.

Under the Learning Center Mayor Wilkens reported that their annual meeting would be held at 6:30 on January 15th. The board had been expanded earlier in the year to allow for 11 members, and they were now up to ten on the board. Officers would be elected at the meeting and Wendell Johnson would be stepping down as Chair but plans were in place for an excellent replacement.

The Fire Department had nothing to report since there were no calls in December.

The airport report was next on the agenda and Dan Triller began by reviewing his written report that had been submitted to Council. Under zoning it was noted that the final forms were being gathered for submittal to MnDOT for approval. With the lighting project Triller explained that there were a few obstructions that were found on the 32 end of the runway so another FFA flight check would be necessary for approval. The obstructions were all trees that could easily be either trimmed or taken down in the spring. For the runway reconstruction it was reported that MnDOT had approved the turnaround design option for the runway 32 end so that would be added to the runway project design. As for land acquisition, meetings had been held with all property owners and some additional follow up questions were addressed with one owner. Finally, the Airport Capital Improvement Plan had been submitted to MnDOT for preliminary approval and once approved by the City and MnDOT it would be updated in the MnDOT system.

The next airport item to be addressed was the final pay application from NEO Electric for the lighting project. The final payment request was for \$5,242.89 and it was approved on a motion by Council member Wise that was seconded by Council member Wang and carried.

The contract amendment with Short Elliott Hendrickson for the design of the runway turnaround in the amount of \$19,700 was approved on a motion by Council member Wang, seconded by Council member Wise and carried.

The updated Capital Improvement Plan that was submitted to Council was approved on a motion by Council member Wang, seconded by Council member Wise and carried.

The next agenda item to be addressed was a correction/clarification to a previous alley vacation that was done in 2001. The area vacated at that time was not an alley but the original location of Ash Street as it was originally platted. A resolution was presented for approval that would clarify that the alley vacation was the vacation of Ash Street as platted. Administrator Liden explained that this would not change the property ownership that resulted from the original vacation.

A motion was made by Council member Wise to approve the Resolution Confirming and Clarifying Vacation of a portion of Ash Street, Elm Grove Second Addition to Fertile. The motion was seconded by Council member Wang and was carried.

Annual Appointments were then up for discussion. Mayor Wilkens began by explaining that there would be some changes in appointments due to the resignation of Council member Jensrud and some other factors. Wilkens began by asking Council members Wise and Wang if one of them would be interested in serving as Vice Mayor since Council member Widrig was not always readily available to serve in that capacity. Council member Wise declined and stated that Council member Wang should be appointed. Mayor Wilkens agreed with Wang serving as Vice Mayor.

For the Nursing Home Advisory Board, Council members Widrig and Wise were appointed. For the EDA, Council members Wise and Wang were selected. The City Personnel Committee would be comprised of Mayor Wilkens, Council member Widrig, Michelle Cote, April Grunhvd, and Administrator Liden. Council members Widrig and Wang, Michelle Cote and Administrator Liden would serve on the Fair Meadow Personnel Committee. Finally, Mayor Wilkens, Council member Wise, Michelle Cote and Administrator Liden would serve on the Fair Meadow Finance Committee. All other appointments were unchanged from the previous year.

A motion was made by Council member Wise to approve Resolution #1-2-2020 A Resolution of Annual Appointments and Designations for 2020. The motion was seconded by Council member Wang and was carried.

The annual decision on whether to waive the statutory limits for the City's liability insurance was the next item addressed. Administrator Liden briefly explained what it meant to waive the statutory limits. A motion was made by Council member Wise to not waive the statutory limits on liability insurance. The motion was seconded by Council member Wang and was carried.

The final items to be addressed were two letters that had been submitted to Mayor Wilkens. First, Mayor Wilkens read aloud a letter from Brian Nephew expressing his interest in filling the Council seat recently vacated by Reid Jensrud's resignation. After the letter was read and a brief discussion held, it was decided to not act on the letter and to wait and see if there were other parties interested in serving out the remainder of Jensrud's term.

The second letter was unsigned and expressed concern about a skating rink employee who was currently facing drug charges. This was followed by discussion on the current status of the employee's case with the court system. It was noted, however, that in the past it had been decided that Council would not act on unsigned letters of complaint, so no action was taken.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned on a motion by Council member Wise at 8:30 p.m.

Daniel Wilkens, Mayor

Lisa J. Liden, City Administrator