

Fertile City Council Minutes

July 13, 2020

The Fertile City Council held its regular meeting on Monday, July 13, 2020 at 6:30 p.m. at the Community Center. Present were: Mayor Daniel Wilkens, and Council members Linda Widrig, Stanton Wang, and Todd Wise. Also present were City Administrator Lisa Liden, and Public Works Director Kevin Nephew. Present by telephone were Council member Matthew Massmann and Fair Meadow Nursing Home Administrator Angie Leiting. Also present in chambers were City Engineer Alex Ranz, Airport Engineer Dan Triller, and Twylla Altepeter from the Fertile Journal.

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

The agenda was approved as presented on a motion by Council member Massmann that was seconded by Council member Widrig and carried.

There were no public comments.

The minutes of the regular June 8, 2020 meeting and the June 29, 2020 special meeting were approved as presented on a motion by Council member Wang that was seconded by Council member Wise and carried.

Alex Ranz began the City Engineer's report by giving an update on the RV campground. Ranz stated that the campground was done and Sellin would be in town the following day to work on the punch list items from last summer and this summer. Ranz explained also that there was one small change made to the work on Blaine Street. There was a bad soft spot that required the placement of geo-grade before the road work could be completed. The State had inspected the campground the prior week and had measured everything to make sure that the lots were as shown in the submitted plans. The State approved the campground and the City could now apply for the permit.

Discussion was held on fencing for the campground regarding the type of fencing and where the fence should be located. Administrator Liden explained that the fence that bordered the alley to the north would have to be replaced from the eastern edge of the campground to McKinley Street so that fairgrounds access was limited to the McKinley street entrance for parking during the fair. Fencing would have to be put up on the east and south sides of the campground and the south end of Blaine Street as well. Discussion was also held on the opening date for the campground since people had already called to reserve spots. It was determined that the grass should be given some time to get established and that August 1st would be a good date to open.

Ranz then presented pay application #10 for Council approval in the amount of \$179,025.79. After a brief discussion of the matter, a motion was made by Council member Wise to approve payment on pay application #10. The motion was seconded by Council member Wang and was carried.

Mayor Wilkens then phoned Angie Leiting so she could give the Fair Meadow report. Leiting reported that the month of June began with 41 residents and ended with 40, operating at 96.42% of capacity. There were 258 home delivered meals served.

Leiting asked for Council approval on a roofing proposal from Skinner Roofing. She explained that their insurance was requiring that the roof be repaired and the quote from Skinner was for \$19,168. The Fair Meadow Foundation would be holding a golf tournament fundraiser in August and all the proceeds would go to the roof repair. Leiting was hoping that the tournament would bring in about \$15,000. In the interim, however, Leiting wanted approval to accept the quote from Skinner.

A motion was made by Council member Wise to approve the roof repair and accepting the quote from Skinner Roofing. The motion was seconded by Council member Widrig and was carried.

Leiting then went over the financial statements for June. She noted that the cash balance on the balance sheet still looked good and that the nursing home about broke even for the month with the nursing home showing an income of

\$1,147 and the assisted living showing a loss of \$1,299. The year to date profit and loss showed a combined profit of over \$565,000 with the nursing home at a profit of over \$680,000 and the assisted living showing a loss of about \$115,000.

Under the monthly COVID report Leiting noted that they still hadn't had any cases at the home and that currently three employees were in quarantine awaiting test results after potential exposure outside of work. The home was also now allowed to provide for resident and family outdoor visits with social distancing, masks, and screening prior to the visit. Residents could also participate in small group activities by following social distancing and mask guidelines and eat in the dining and activity rooms with one resident per table. Leiting reviewed the COVID related funding that the home had received as well as a grant for ipads and other equipment needed to provide telehealth services. She noted also that that \$20 hazard pay and increased call pay were still in effect.

Kevin Nephew, Public Works Director, gave his report to Council. He began by presenting a quote that he had received from Agassiz Asphalt for a couple of additional small paving jobs. The quote was for a mill and overlay on a section of Nelson Ave. NW for \$8,300 and a repair on McKinley where the road had been cut out for water and sewer work for \$1,200.

After a brief discussion, a motion was made by Council member Wise to accept the quote from Agassiz Asphalt. The motion was seconded by Council member Wang and was carried.

Nephew then gave some information on a \$100,000 quote he had gotten from RDO Equipment in Grand Forks for a used loader. Mayor Wilkens stated that the city should wait on that for the time being to better assess the City's financial situation once all the other ongoing projects were complete.

The next item up under Public Works was the open position. Administrator Liden explained that there had been eight applicants for the position and that three of the candidates had been interviewed by herself and Nephew. After discussing the applicants, Liden and Nephew recommended that Chris Zimmel be hired for the position.

A motion was made by Council member Wise to hire Chris Zimmel for the Public Works position at a starting wage of \$20 per hour. The motion was seconded by Council member Massmann and was carried.

The work on the township road was then up for discussion. Council member Wang stated that the road looks really good and Council member Wise noted that its still a little soft but will just take time to set up.

Mayor Wilkens asked Nephew about the boulevard in front of Patty Broden's. That area had been dug up last summer for the new curb and gutter and it was still quite rough. Wilkens stated that it could use some more dirt and then grass should be seeded. Nephew said that he would spray to kill the weeds and then haul in some more dirt to level it out before reseeding. Mayor Wilkens noted also that the door at the north end of the rink was broken and would need to have new hinges welded on. Nephew commented that he had removed the door to prevent further damage until it can get properly repaired. Discussion was then held on the new water salesman at the fire hall.

The next item up for consideration was gravel bids for 2020. Liden explained that only one bid had been submitted and it was from JC & J trucking for \$10.75 per yard for screened gravel and \$12.75 per yard for Class 5. The bid was accepted on a motion by Council member Wang that was seconded by Council member Widrig and carried.

A brief discussion was held on the JR Dale building that the City had been trying to get removed for several years. The building was now gone and the ground had been leveled and seeded. Spraying for mosquitoes was also discussed and everyone agreed that they were bad again so arrangements should be made as soon as possible to get the City sprayed again.

Regarding the potential auction of unused City equipment, Mayor Wilkens reported that he had spoken with McMullen Auction and that he was waiting to hear back from them on cost. Wilkens also noted that signs were needed for the RV dump station and the water salesman.

Discussion was held on a name for the new RV campground. Administrator Liden explained that the permit could be applied for without a name and a name submitted later. After discussion of the matter, it was decided to hold a

contest to ask for the public's input on naming the park. Liden would work with Twylla Altepeter to get something in the Journal about the contest.

Airport matters were the next item up on the agenda. Dan Triller, Airport Engineer, reported that four bids had been submitted for the runway rehabilitation project. The low bid was submitted by Agassiz Asphalt for \$1,335,169.50. Triller then gave a brief explanation of the two contracts with Short Elliott Hendrickson that had been submitted for approval. The first contract, for \$94,400, was for construction services for the runway project and the second, for \$60,300, was for a building area planning study that would result in an updated Airport Layout Plan. The runway rehabilitation and the two SEH contracts totaled \$1,490,869.50 and were eligible for 95% funding from the State. Administrator Liden noted that Council would need to approve each item separately in addition to approving the grant from the State for the projects.

After discussion of the matter, Council member Wise made the motion to accept the low bid from Agassiz Asphalt for the runway project. The motion was seconded by Council member Wang and was carried.

A motion was made by Council member Wise to approve the construction services contract with SEH for \$94,400. The motion was seconded by Council member Massmann and was carried.

A motion was made by Council member Wise to approve the contract with SEH for the building area planning study for \$60,300. The motion was seconded by Council member Wang and was carried.

Finally, a motion was made by Council member Wise to approve the funding agreement with the State of Minnesota for funding the runway work and two contracts with SEH. The motion was seconded by Council member Massmann and was carried.

The final airport item for discussion was a grant funding offer from the State for fiscal year 2021. The projects for 2021 included an apron expansion design, land acquisition, design for reconstructing the taxiway and apron, and taxi lane and hangar site preparation design.

A motion was made by Council member Wise to accept the 2021 State fiscal year grant offer from the State. The motion was seconded by Council member Widrig and was carried.

Administrator Liden then gave her monthly report to Council. She reported that she was continuing her work with the auditors and that doing the audit remotely took a lot longer than doing the audit on site since it required scanning and emailing a lot of information. Liden had also completed the COVID Preparedness Plan and worked with the City Engineer and MN Public Facilities on a new loan for the 2020 additions to the water project. She had also reviewed the applications for the Public Works position and interviewed three candidates for the position.

Under the Learning Center report Mayor Wilkens reported that the AELC Board would be meeting on Wednesday. Discussion was held on how COVID concerns had impacted AELC operations including kayak rentals.

There was nothing to report for either the Fire Department or the Personnel Committee.

The first item up for discussion under old business was office and facility closures due to COVID 19. Administrator Liden expressed her wishes to keep the office closed to the public and for Terry Baumgartner to continue working from home. Liden noted that 90 to 95% of the normal foot traffic in the office was for dropping off water bill payments. Since payments could be made in the drop box on the door, it wasn't necessary for the office to be open for everyone. She explained further that anyone who needed to get in for other business could come in. As for Terry Baumgartner working from home, Liden explained that she felt it was risky to have both herself and Terry working in such close proximity to each other in the office since it increased the likelihood that both of them could get coronavirus at the same time. If they were both to become ill, the office would be totally shut down and water bills could not be run and payments processed.

As for facility rentals, Liden felt that it would be best to keep the community center closed for rentals since indoor gatherings larger than 10 people were still not allowed in Minnesota. Liden was also concerned about large family gatherings that could bring in visitors from out of the area that are potential hotspots for the virus. The community

center was also the work space for herself, library staff and Altru Clinic staff and she felt it was unwise to allow for potential contamination of the work place.

After discussion of the matter it was decided to maintain the status of the City office remaining closed to the public and the community center closed for rentals.

The next item up under old business was to set the rental rates for the new RV campground. Administrator Liden reviewed a chart that she had prepared and shared with Council showing the rental rates for other RV campgrounds in the area. The average daily rate for the area was \$22, the average weekly rate was \$155, and the average monthly rate was \$488. Discussion was held on the services offered at other RV campgrounds and the need to be competitive on rates yet charge enough to cover expenses.

After discussing various rate options, a motion was made by Council member Massmann to set the daily rate at \$25, the weekly rate at \$150, and the monthly rate at \$500. The motion was seconded by Council member Widrig and was carried.

Resolution #7-1-20 was the next item up for discussion. Administrator Liden explained that the resolution was necessary to authorize the issuance and sale of the note to finance the water main replacement on Blaine Street and the looping into the fairgrounds. The note was for 20 years at 1% interest in the amount of \$311,558.

A motion to approve Resolution #7-1-20, Resolution Authorizing the Issuance and Sale of a \$311,558 General Obligation Revenue Note, Series 2020B, and Providing for Its Payment, was made by Council member Wang and seconded by Council member Wise. The motion was carried.

The final item on the agenda was CARES act funding that the State of Minnesota had available for cities to cover COVID related costs. Administrator Liden said that the money was from the federal government and had to be spent on a limited number of approved items. Liden explained that the City's COVID related expenses were quite small but that the City could grant the money to Fair Meadow Nursing Home if they had enough COVID related expenses not already covered by previous funding that they had received. Liden had been in contact with Fair Meadow Administrator Leiting who had also consulted with their auditors and it appeared as though Fair Meadow still had many COVID costs that had not yet been reimbursed. Liden recommended, therefore, that most of the CARES act funding that Fertile was eligible for should be sent to Fair Meadow.

After discussion of the matter, a motion was made by Council member Wang to approve requesting Fertile's CARES act funding from the State. The motion was seconded by Council member Widrig and was carried.

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 8:31 p.m. on a motion by Council member Massmann.

Daniel Wilkens, Mayor

Lisa J. Liden, City Administrator