

Fertile City Council Minutes
Special Meeting
March 26, 2020

The Fertile City Council held a special meeting on Thursday, March 26, 2020 at 4 p.m. at the Community Center. Present by teleconference were: Mayor Daniel Wilkens, Council members Stanton Wang, Todd Wise, and Linda Widrig. Also present were City Administrator Lisa Liden, Fair Meadow Administrator Angie Leiting, and Michelle Cote who serves on both Fair Meadow's Personnel and Finance Committees. The purpose of the meeting was to review compensation, scheduling, and operational matters at Fair Meadow Nursing Home due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Daniel Wilkens at 4:02 p.m.

Mayor Wilkens asked those present if they had received the memo from Angie Leiting regarding her requests and everyone confirmed they had reviewed it. Angie Leiting then gave an update on Fair Meadow regarding the COVID-19 situation by stating that currently no residents had coronavirus but with the recent positive test in Mahnomen the virus was getting closer to home.

Leiting explained that all employees are eligible for Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) compensation due to the pandemic and that she felt she needed to offer employees further incentives to make Fair Meadow's compensation more attractive than FMLA pay. She stated that many homes in the area are offering incentive pay and that there was grant funding available for the first eight weeks of pandemic operations to cover additional staff costs plus the costs of pandemic related supplies and equipment. Leiting had applied for the grant in the amount of \$96,908 which would cover the incentives that she would like to offer staff as well as the cost of some additional supplies and iPads for the residents to Facetime with family.

Mayor Wilkens asked if the nursing home was currently locked down for visitors. Angie Leiting replied that it's been closed to visitors for two weeks now. The only visitors that were currently allowed were the adult family of two residents who were on hospice care. A brief discussion was held on how long those visitors should be allowed in the building. Angie Leiting added that all staff are screened when they come in the building and their temperatures are taken. Anyone with a temperature is not allowed to work.

After further discussion on the visitors allowed in for hospice residents, Mayor Wilkens directed attention back to the requests that Leiting had made regarding incentive pay, additional staff hours, and additional incentives for staff to care for residents with COVID-19.

Leiting's first request was to increase staff hours as needed for nursing, rehab nursing, activity, and housekeeping. With the facility in lock down there has been no communal dining or activity so more staff were needed to assist with feeding and assist with more one on one activities. Additional hours were needed for housekeeping to wipe down all surfaces daily. Once there is a case in-house, even more time will be needed for cleaning and sanitizing.

Leiting's second request was to provide for incentives for employees that work all their scheduled shifts in each pay period. This would encourage staff to continue working rather than taking FMLA leave and would also hopefully eliminate some of the call-ins. The incentive that Leiting proposed offering was \$100 per pay period for each employee who shows up for every

scheduled shift. If 75% of the staff earned the incentive, the cost would be approximately \$15,000 per month.

Council member Wise commented that he felt that the amount of the incentive was too low especially once there was a case in-house. Discussion was then held on what the incentive should be and whether it should be a flat rate, a percentage of pay, or an amount per shift. Discussion was also held on whether the nursing home could afford a higher incentive and if the nursing home could temporarily discontinue some of the payments that they are making to the City.

After discussion of the matter, a motion was made by Council member Widrig to approve an incentive of \$20 per shift for each scheduled shift for all employees who work all their scheduled shifts in a pay period. The motion was seconded by Council member Wang and was carried.

The next item up for discussion was increasing the rates for call-in pay. Leiting requested that all the call pay rates be increased \$5 per hour for all staff in all departments who either stay late to cover shifts or pick up added shifts.

A motion was made by Council member Widrig, seconded by Council member Wang, to increase the call pay rates by \$5 per hour.

The final matter up for discussion was bonuses for nursing staff providing care to any residents who get coronavirus. Leiting explained that direct care staff would work 12 hours shifts to minimize the number of staff who are exposed to the virus. Two people, a CNA and a TMA, would be needed for each shift. Leiting noted that she had put up a sign in sheet to see if she could get volunteers for the dedicated care of infected residents and she already had almost enough staff willing to fill those shifts if the time comes. Leiting would like to offer a bonus of \$100 per shift for the nursing staff that would provide direct care to infected residents.

After discussion of the matter, a motion was made by Council member Widrig, and seconded by Council member Wise to pay a bonus of \$100 per shift for staff providing direct care to residents infected with COVID-19. The motion was carried.

Discussion was then held on preparations that the nursing home had been making to deal with a potential in-house case of coronavirus. Leiting explained that they were well stocked on Personal Protective Equipment for the short term anyway. The home had 900 masks and 250 gowns in stock as well as ample amounts of gloves and shoe covers. Additional training had also been provided to staff on infection control measures.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:59 p.m. by Council member Wise.

Daniel Wilkens, Mayor

Lisa J. Liden, City Administrator