

## **Fertile City Council Minutes November 9, 2020**

The Fertile City Council held its regular meeting on Monday, November 9, 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. Present by telephone was Fair Meadow Nursing Home Administrator Angie Leiting. Also present in chambers was Airport Engineer Dan Triller, City Engineer Alex Ranz, Mike Stennes with Agassiz Asphalt, 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 as presented was approved on a motion by Council member Massmann that was seconded by Council member Wang and was carried.

There were no public comments.

The minutes of the October 12, 2020 regular meeting and October 26, 2020 special meeting were approved as presented on a motion by Council member Wang that was seconded by Council member Massmann and was 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 October including checks for the airport paving project, the airport land acquisition project, and the Cares Act business grants. The monthly financials were also briefly reviewed as well as the budget to actual reports.

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

The first items to be addressed under department reports were regarding the airport. Airport Engineer Dan Triller gave his report to Council with the first item being Change Order #1 for the paving project. Triller explained that some additional electrical work was required for the turnaround addition to the runway project due to the runway electrical not being buried deep enough to accommodate the turnaround work. The additional cost totaled \$3,105.

The other item covered by the change order was to allow for a time extension on substantial completion. Triller explained that with cold weather setting in on October 20<sup>th</sup>, the contractor was unable to complete the asphalt work on the runway project while meeting specifications. The proposal in the change order was to extend substantial completion to June 1, 2021 and final completion to July 1, 2021. Triller noted that the contractor had prepared the runway for reopening for the winter months and any costs for additional work to prepare the runway for asphalt in the spring would be carried by the contractor. It was noted that the dates for substantial and final completion would need to be corrected to 2021 since the change order presented showed those dates for 2020.

A motion was made by Council member Wise to approve Change Order #1 as corrected. The motion was seconded by Council member Massmann and was carried.

The next airport item up for approval was pay application #2 for the paving project. Dan Triller briefly went over the application totaling \$122,107.30 for the amount due. A motion was made by Council

member Wang to approve payment on pay application #2 for the paving project. The motion was seconded by Council member Wise and was carried.

Dan Triller ended his report by giving a brief review of the progress report on other airport projects. He noted that the Airport Layout Plan update was going well and that the planner at MnDOT had to review and approve the updated plan. Triller also reported that the design work on reconstruction of the existing taxiway and apron including the taxi lane and apron expansion would be done over the winter after the planning study is more complete. The project would be advertised in May with a bid opening in June. He would also be working with MnDOT to see if the runway extension design could be added to the project.

City Engineer Alex Ranz gave his report to Council. He began by explaining that MN Public Facilities would like to work on closing out the 2020 loan but that it couldn't be closed out until the 2019 loan was closed out first. The only remaining item for closing out the 2019 project and loan was the sidewalk issue alongside the school. Ranz reported that he had been working on that matter with Sellin, the contractor on the project, and that Sellin had agreed to replace the entire sidewalk on the south side of Jefferson from Highway 32 to Second Street. Public Works Supervisor Kevin Nephew asked if the curb and gutter would be affected by the sidewalk work and Alex Ranz stated that it would not be. The sidewalk would be replaced as soon as school was finished in the spring.

This was followed by a brief discussion on the RV campground project and the sewer work that had been done on Blaine Street. Mayor Wilkens noted that he had heard positive feedback on both the campground and the improved sewer.

Kevin Nephew, Public Works Supervisor, was next to give his report to Council. Nephew noted that the warmer temperatures the previous week had allowed for one more complete round of street sweeping. He reported also that the pusher blade for the grader was in and that it was very big and "nice." He noted that it needed to be installed yet and that he would have to build skid plates for it.

Mayor Wilkens asked about cars parked on the street noting that they really interfere with snow removal. Kevin Nephew stated that it's not too big of an issue if you must go around them after one snowfall, but after two or three, the snow piled around vehicles starts to really narrow the street. Mayor Wilkens asked if an article could be put in the Journal letting residents know that they should avoid parking on the streets when snow was anticipated. The article should also remind residents that vehicles can only sit on a public street for 24 hours without being moved.

Discussion was held on putting notices on vehicle windshields if they are not moved in a timely manner and then having the vehicles towed if they are not moved by the following day. This was followed by a discussion of the street parking in front of Hillview Apartments and what possible parking options there would be to alleviate the situation. One suggestion was to contact the property owner of the lot behind Hillview's garages to see if they would allow parking on that lot.

A brief discussion was held on the possible purchase of a payloader and the benefits of having a front-end snow blower. An equipment committee meeting would be scheduled for the following week to look at what types of payloaders were available and to decide how much the City would be able to spend.

Mayor Wilkens then phoned Angie Leiting so she could give the Fair Meadow report. Leiting reported that the month of October began with 42 residents and ended with 40, operating at 95% of capacity. There were 173 home delivered meals served. Leiting reported that they were now testing weekly for Covid and that five residents had tested positive and one had died. There were currently seven staff out on quarantine. She reported also that they had received an infection control stimulus check from Health

and Human Services in the amount of \$16,518.17. Three more monthly payments for that were expected based on Fair Meadow's percentage of cases. The \$20 hazard pay per shift had also been reinstated and the staff on the east wing where there were Covid cases were getting \$70 per shift in hazard pay.

Leiting went over the financials for the month of October. The profit and loss showed a combined loss of over \$255,000 for the nursing home and assisted living. The nursing home loss was about \$237,000 and the assisted living showed a loss of \$18,750. For the budget to actual report, for the month of October the revenues were slightly less than budgeted and the expenses were about 3 percentage points higher than budgeted for both the nursing home and the assisted living.

Council member Massmann asked about the Covid testing and whether the testing could be done in-house. Leiting replied that the home had an antigen test but that it couldn't be used for the serial testing that was required by the State. Leiting also noted that the testing cost had gone up from \$62 per test to \$78 per test. Council member Massmann asked if Leiting had explored any other labs than the Mayo and Leiting said that she could look at that again but that she was aware that many of the other labs are charging about \$100 per test.

City Administrator Lisa Liden gave her report to Council. She reported that in addition to her regular monthly reporting that she had completed the required quarterly payroll and sales tax reports in October. Liden had also worked on election preparations and assisted with the general election held on November 3<sup>rd</sup>. She had spent a substantial amount of time reviewing and compiling the financial information submitted by businesses for the Small Business Cares Act grants. Liden was continuing work with the airport engineers on the runway project, submitting up to date NOTAMs on the runway conditions, and filing credit applications with MnDOT for reimbursement on three of the ongoing airport projects.

Under the Learning Center, Mayor Wilkens reported that a Board meeting was scheduled for the coming Thursday.

Council member Wang gave the Fire Department report and reported that there were four calls during the month of October. One was for a deer collision that required the department to open the vehicle door, another was for a car rollover, and there was a grass fire and a grain dryer fire.

Under the Airport, Mayor Wilkens reported that the ground work had been completed for Larry Walters' hangar and that construction on it would begin in the spring. Walters had hoped to get the slab poured for the hangar this fall, but with the early freezing temperatures, that would not be possible.

The first item addressed under old business was the office and facility closures due to Covid. Administrator Liden reported that she had opened the office to the public in mid-October and that while the office door remained closed, it was unlocked. She explained that there had been quite a few instances of residents coming in to the office unmasked to drop off their water bill payment and that she was concerned about that, especially given the fact that there is a drop box on the office door. Council told Liden to lock the office door again.

The next item under old business was the final spending report for the CARES Act funds that the City had received. Administrator Liden reviewed the report including the most recent expenditures and it was noted that there was just under \$1,500 left of the funds. Liden recommended that the amount be rounded up to \$1,500 to be sent to Fair Meadow Nursing Home.

After a brief discussion of the report, a motion was made by Council member Wise to approve the final expenditures of the CARES Act funds, including another \$1,500 to Fair Meadow, and the final report. The motion was seconded by Council member Wang and was carried.

The first item under new business was Resolution #11-1-20, the Election Canvass Resolution for the General Election that was held on November 3<sup>rd</sup>. The vote totals were reported for the Mayoral election as well as the results for the two Council seats that were on the ballot.

After a discussion of the vote totals, a motion was made by Council member Wise to approve Resolution #11-1-20, Resolution Approving the Canvass of the Municipal General Election. The motion was seconded by Council member Wang and was carried.

The next item up on the agenda was the recent resignation submitted by Council member Widrig. A motion was made by Council member Wise to accept Widrig's resignation from Council. The motion was seconded by Council member Massmann and was carried.

A motion was then made by Council member Massmann to declare an open Council seat to be filled later. The motion was seconded by Council member Wang and was carried.

Administrator Liden reported that Brian Nephew had called the office to indicate his interest in filling Linda Widrig's vacant Council seat. The matter was discussed and Mayor Wilkens declined to appoint Brian Nephew after most of the Council indicated that they did not wish to serve on Council with Nephew.

The final item addressed was Mark Sandness' request for a building variance to build a garage on his residential lot more than one year in advance of building the residence. Administrator Liden explained that she had discussed the matter with the City Attorney and that a variance could not be granted for doing that. Variances are normally only allowed for dimensional variances such as setback requirements.

If Council were interested in allowing the garage to be built well ahead of the residence, the Zoning Code could be amended to allow for that as a conditional use. Attorney Stephen Larson also recommended that the Code language require the submittal of a development agreement and the penalties for not complying with the agreement. Liden explained that she had discussed the matter with Mark Sandness and since he would not be able to pour the slab for his garage due to the cold temperatures, the matter could wait until closer to spring.

After discussion, a motion was made by Council member Massmann to move forward on the zoning amendment this winter. The motion was seconded by Council member Wise and was carried.

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 7:55 on a motion by Council member Wang.

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Daniel Wilkens, Mayor

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Lisa J. Liden, City Administrator