

Fertile City Council Minutes January 11, 2021

The Fertile City Council held its regular meeting on Monday, January 11, 2021 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, Public Works Director Kevin Nephew, City Engineer Alex Ranz, April Swenby, 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 meeting began with the swearing in of Mayor Daniel Wilkens and Council members Matthew Massmann and Stanton Wang.

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

Under Public Comments, April Swenby asked to address Council. She stated that she wanted to thank Council for opening the skating rink. Swenby said that parents appreciated the kids having the opportunity to skate and she was wondering if the warming house would be opening in the near future. Council member Wise commented that opening the rink was already on the agenda and Mayor Wilkens read a portion of the memo from the Council packets regarding opening the warming house. This was followed by a brief discussion on the precautions that would need to be taken due to Covid-19.

The minutes of the December 14, 2020 regular meeting were up for approval. Mayor Wilkens asked that at the end of the paragraph on page three regarding cameras at the Learning Center that the phrase "on less expensive systems" be struck. A motion was made by Council member Wang to approve the minutes as amended. The motion was seconded by Council member Wise 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 December noting that revenues were high in December after receiving both Local Government Aid and a property tax disbursement from the County. Liden also made note of the cash balance on the balance sheet and that the balance looked higher than normal now but there were debt payments of over \$167,000 due at the end of the month. 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 Wise and carried.

City Engineer Alex Ranz gave his report to Council. Ranz went over the Local Road Improvement Program information including the resolution that was in the Council packets. He explained further that Garfield Township had a similar resolution that they would be voting on at their meeting. City Council could vote to pass their resolution contingent upon the township approving their resolution. Ranz then went over some of the basic information on the project noting that Christian Street would

be 36' wide and there would be curb and gutter as well as storm sewer installed as part of the project. West Mill would be 28' wide with 24' of that paved and there would be ditches on either side.

Public Works Director Kevin Nephew noted that currently part of Christian Street is not owned by the City and is located on school property. Discussion was held on whether the road should be moved to the east so that it was entirely on City property or if the City should get an easement from the school. It was determined that it would be best to just shift the road to the east since there was ample space to do that.

After further discussion, a motion was made by Council member Wise to approve Resolution #1-2-21 to pursue Local Road Improvement Program funding for construction on Christian Street and West Mill Road contingent upon Garfield Township passing a resolution for construction on West Mill. The motion was seconded by Council member Massmann and was carried.

Alex Ranz then went over a couple of trail funding programs that were currently accepting applications. Both were for \$150,000 with a 25% match. One was a federal program and the other was through the State. The federal grant had an application deadline of February 26th and the State grant deadline is March 31st.

Mayor Wilkens asked about equipment grants for grooming the Nature Center trails. Ranz explained that there is a separate grant for that and that he had sent the information to Wayne Goeken. Goeken would be filling out the application for the Learning Center. This was followed by a discussion on the trails grants and possibly seeking funding to pave a stretch of trail at the Nature Center. Much of the discussion centered around which trail section would be best to pave and it was decided to get input from the Learning Center board on which trails would be best.

As part of the trail paving discussion, a brief discussion was also held regarding the river bank erosion where the river abuts the trail behind the campground area. Mayor Wilkens explained that the City had applied for funding years ago to help with erosion mitigation at that location, but that the project hadn't been funded at that time. A motion was made by Council member Wise to send a letter to the Sand Hill River Watershed District regarding the erosion issue and potential funding for mitigation. The motion was seconded by Council member Wang and was carried.

After further discussion of the trails grant opportunities a motion was made by Council member Wise to proceed with the federal trails grant application pending a decision by the Nature Center Board on which trail(s) would work best for paving. The motion was seconded by Council member Massmann and was carried.

Council member Wise then asked about the letter from Sellin about the sidewalk by the school. Wise was wondering about the language regarding City concessions on the heated part of the sidewalk. Ranz said that Sellin knew that they were responsible for the replacement of the entire sidewalk and that they had included that language in the hopes that the City would make some concessions on that section. This was followed by a discussion on the school sidewalk with Kevin Nephew noting that the heated section doesn't really have much pitting and maybe wouldn't need to be replaced. The sidewalk would be assessed more fully in the spring to determine whether that section would need to be replaced.

Kevin Nephew, Public Works Supervisor, was next to give his report to Council. He said that there hadn't been much snow to plow but that they had been staying busy. Council member Wise asked

about the condition of the ice at the rink after the warmer temperatures. Nephew said that the north end of the rink had melted some and he would look into whether it needed to be flooded again once the temperatures dropped again. This was followed by a discussion on the ice machine and getting trained on how to operate it. Administrator Liden reported that Dan Gisvold was also interested in getting trained on operating the ice machine and that he had volunteered to help flood the rink when it needed to be done.

Mayor Wilkens asked about the payload information that he had sent by text about a loader that was available. This was followed by further discussion on getting a group together to go look at payloaders in the area that were available for sale.

Council then addressed the matter of opening the warming house at the skating rink. Discussion centered around enforcement of the mask mandate, limiting the number of people in the building at one time, and disinfecting of skating equipment after each use. It was decided to get the rink opened in time for the weekend and to limit capacity to 10 people in the building at one time. Rink staff would be responsible for sanitizing equipment after each use. It was also decided to not allow food or drink in the building since having food and drinks available made it more difficult to enforce the mask mandate.

City Administrator Lisa Liden gave a brief review of the Administrator's Report. Liden noted that she had finalized all the liquor license paperwork as well as the insurance renewals for both the liability/property and workmen's comp policies. She noted also that she had completed the annual levy and truth in taxation paperwork and forwarded it on to the State and county as required.

Under the Learning Center Mayor Wilkens reported that the annual meeting would be held on January 28th and that the Executive Committee would be meeting on January 12th.

For the Fire Department Council member Wang reported that the department had responded to four calls in December. There were two medical calls, one carbon monoxide call, and one car accident.

Under the airport it was reported that the Planning Committee would be meeting right before the February Council meeting to review the final layout plan update. Once approved by the Planning Committee it would be up for Council review and approval at the February meeting.

Under old business a discussion was held on opening the Community Center for public use now that the State's Covid restrictions had been partially lifted. Council agreed to open only the auditorium for public use with a limit of 25 for regular gatherings and a limit of 10 for dance or exercise groups. The senior room and kitchen would remain closed, no food or drink would be allowed and masks would be required.

Under new business the first item addressed was the purchase of a snowmobile for grooming cross-country ski trails. Administrator Liden had explained in her memo that the current sled was quite old and needed replacement. However, since it was learned earlier in the meeting that the Learning Center would be seeking grant funds to purchase trail grooming equipment, including a snowmobile, the purchase of a sled was tabled.

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.

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 Widrig and some other factors. Council member Wang was again appointed to serve as Vice-Mayor.

For the Nursing Home Advisory Board, Council members Massmann 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 Massmann, Michelle Cote, April Grunhovd, and Administrator Liden. Council members Massmann 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. For the Emergency Management Team, the Mayor and Vice-Mayor would serve in addition to Wolfe Clarke and Jason Haas from the Fire Department. At the recommendation of Council member Massmann, himself and Chad Braun were appointed to represent County EMS. All other appointments were unchanged from the previous year.

A motion was made by Council member Massmann to approve Resolution #1-1-21 A Resolution of Annual Appointments and Designations. The motion was seconded by Council member Wang and was carried.

Council member Massmann then asked about the upcoming meetings and items that needed to be addressed such as the golf cart ordinance and the zoning amendment to allow for the construction of a garage before the construction of a residence. Administrator Liden said the zoning amendment could be addressed in February so the process was complete well before spring and summer construction season. The golf cart ordinance could wait until March.

Mayor Wilkens then asked Council to be thinking of what they would like to put on a list of items and projects to address in the next year or two. The list could then be used to prioritize projects and figure out timelines for completion.

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 8:08 on a motion by Council member Massmann.

Daniel Wilkens, Mayor

Lisa J. Liden, City Administrator