

Fertile City Council Minutes April 11, 2022

The Fertile City Council held its regular meeting on Monday, April 11, 2022 at 6:30 p.m. at the Community Center. Present were Mayor Daniel Wilkens, and Council members Todd Wise and Matthew Massmann. Also present were City Administrator Lisa Liden, Public Works Director Kevin Nephew, Fair Meadow Administrator Angie Leiting, City Engineer Jeffrey Ebsch, 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 Wise and was carried.

There were no public comments.

The minutes of the March 14, 2022 meeting were approved as presented on a motion by Council member Massmann, that 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 March. Under the check listing Liden noted the check to Fair Meadow for the American Recovery Act funds, the check to College Way Auto for the purchase of the new maintenance truck, and the checks that were written on behalf of the fire department.

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

Fair Meadow Administrator Angie Leiting gave the report for Fair Meadow Nursing Home. The month of March began with 39 residents and ended with 40, operating at 93.54% capacity. They had also served 199 home delivered meals. Leiting noted that the home's funds were looking good to cover the three payrolls in April.

In reviewing the profit and loss reports, Leiting reported that for the month of March there was a combined total profit of just over \$98,000 with the nursing home showing a profit of over \$94,500 and the assisted living showing a profit of over \$3,500. For the year-to-date profit and loss, the nursing home and assisted living showed a combined loss of over \$135,000 with over \$137,000 of the loss attributed to the nursing home. For the budget to actual comparison, income was at 51% compared to the budget at the 6-month period. Expenses were at 54% for the nursing home, and 53% for the assisted living primarily due to the bonuses that had been paid to staff with grant funds.

Leiting reported that the bonuses paid by the grant were now done and that the bonuses had been paid out over six payroll periods. As for Covid, the only positive case was a staff member who had tested positive over the weekend.

Discussion then turned to the fuel oil tank at the Nursing Home. Minnesota Pollution Control had said that the underground tank would need to be removed since it was out of date and didn't have the required leak detection that was now required. Leiting reported that the tank would cost \$55,000 to remove since it was the size of a semi-trailer. Kevin Nephew noted that when the school had converted to natural gas and no

longer needed fuel oil that they were able to fully empty their underground tank and fill it with sand rather than having it removed.

This was followed by a discussion on the various options including converting the boilers to natural gas if the tank had to be removed. Concern was also expressed about the fact that the tank was alongside the west wing and whether the removal could compromise the foundation of the building. It was decided that Leiting would contact Brian Clarke to see how the school resolved their tank issue and also to reach out to Pollution Control to set up a meeting if needed.

Mayor Wilkens asked Leiting about whether or not Fair Meadow was a provider for veterans. He had a friend who was needing care and he wanted to know if Fair Meadow was an option. Leiting explained that there were so many nursing home beds in Polk County that were for the care of veterans that Fair Meadow could only get paid for providing skilled nursing care and that there was a 100-day limit on that.

The City Engineer report was next on the agenda. Jeffery Ebsch with Moore Engineering began his report by presenting the master service agreement that had been emailed to Council. He explained that it was a standard agreement that most engineer firms use and that there was no monthly cost associated with Moore providing engineer services to the City. The agreement just spelled out the services that were provided and what each party was responsible for. Ebsch then briefly reviewed the task order that was the agreement that would be used for specific actual projects.

After discussion of the matter, a motion was made by Council member Massmann and seconded by Council member Wise to sign the agreement if legal counsel approves. The motion was carried with Mayor Wilkens voting nay.

Ebsch reported that he had met with Kevin Nephew earlier in the day and they had gone over the utility maps for the City. Ebsch would bring the maps back to his office and have them scanned before returning them. The maps would be used to develop the GIS mapping that would be done to show all the utilities on the City map. There was discussion also on setting up a Capital Improvement Plan for the City with Ebsch explaining that putting a project on the CIP doesn't commit the City to doing any projects within a set time frame.

Discussion was held on the time frame for submitting a water project to the Project Priority List (PPL) for possible State funding. Ebsch explained that the deadline for the PPL was May 8th and that if the City were interested in submitting a project that there was still time to do so. Submitting a project for the PPL was rather simple and could be done by the deadline if the City had an idea on the projects they would like to do. Administrator Liden explained that Kevin Nephew and Alex Ranz had worked up a list of potential projects which included some more smaller looping as well as upgrading to larger lines in a couple of locations. Liden stated that she would find the list and get a copy to Kevin Nephew and Jeffrey Ebsch for potentially listing on the PPL.

For the airport Administrator Liden reported that the City had been approved for a small project for a new card reader for the airport fuel system and Short Elliott Hendrickson would be assisting with that. Mayor Wilkens reported that when everything dries out from the spring thaw and continuing rain and snow that the airport would be resurveyed for any further tree obstructions and there would likely be a few that would need trimming.

Kevin Nephew, Public Works Supervisor, was next to give his report to Council. Nephew had contacted Brock White to see about purchasing materials and renting a melter to do some crack sealing on some City streets this year. The quote he received was for \$24,000 and the cost would be somewhat higher since he

would need two extra people to help with the project. He would also contact TDS to see about renting their air blower. Nephew then went over the streets that he would like to do.

After a brief discussion of the matter, a motion was made by Council member Massmann to approve proceeding with the crack sealing project. The motion was seconded by Council member Wise and was carried.

The next item on the agenda was the replacement of the fluorescent lights in the auditorium. Kevin Nephew explained that when they recently replaced some of the burned-out bulbs that there were four fixtures that needed new ballasts. He felt that rather than replacing those ballasts it would be better to look at replacing all of the lights with LEDs for better efficiency. The fixtures could also be raised higher up so they wouldn't be in the way for playing basketball. He had gotten quotes from both Downs and Mid Valley Electric which were then reviewed by Council. The quote from Downs was for soft white fixtures while the quote from Mid Valley was for fewer lights but they were a brighter shop-type light.

Council member Wise then asked about whether the City would be eligible for any rebates from Otter Tail for replacing the lights. Administrator Liden said that she would check into it. After further discussion it was decided to table the matter until it was determined that there were rebates available and also to give Downs and Mid Valley the opportunity to re-quote on the same type of lighting and raising the fixtures up.

Mayor Wilkens then asked if Kevin Nephew could check on getting the old camouflage truck listed with Resource Auctions rather than selling it on bids. Nephew said that he would check into the matter. Discussion was also held on the Nature Center van and whether or not that could be sold or if it should be repaired so that it could be used again for tours.

The City Administrator's report was briefly reviewed with Administrator Liden noting that she had spent a few days boxing up three years of records to be moved to another area for storage. The senior room closet had also been cleaned out so there was more room in there for storage but that further work would be done. Liden had also worked on paperwork and documentation for a couple of different grants that the City had received and had also filed paperwork with the State on the American Recovery Act funds that the City had received.

For the Learning Center it was reported that a Star Party had been held the previous Friday and that around 20 people had attended.

There was no fire department report.

The final agenda item to be addressed was the annual approval of fire department gaming for the pull tabs that were sold at the liquor establishments in town. Liden explained that this was an annual formality that Council had to approve the gaming. A motion was made by Council member Wise to approve fire department gaming at The Other Place, Side Street Bar and Grill, and Erickson's Smokehouse. The motion was seconded by Council member Massmann and was carried.

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 7:44 on a motion by Council member Wise.

Daniel Wilkens, Mayor

Lisa J. Liden, City Administrator