

## **Fertile City Council Minutes Special Meeting February 28, 2022**

The Fertile City Council held a special meeting on Monday, February 28, 2022 at 6 p.m. at the Community Center. Present were: Mayor Daniel Wilkens and Council members Todd Wise, Mary Kiefert, and Matthew Massmann. Also present was City Administrator Lisa Liden and Twylla Altepeter with the Fertile Journal. The purpose of the meeting was to interview the four engineer firms who had submitted proposals to serve as the City Engineer and also to review Fair Meadow's current financial status and discuss potential short-term remedies.

The meeting was called to order at 6 p.m. by Mayor Wilkens.

The first engineer firm to make a presentation was Moore Engineering. They began by noting that they had no formal presentation since they preferred sitting with City Council and holding a much less formal discussion on what Moore could offer the City as far as their services.

They began by giving a brief background of the company as well as the professional backgrounds of those that were present. They stated that Moore was built around municipal engineering and that serving small towns such as Fertile was the company's bread and butter. They also discussed their philosophy on having two engineers assigned to each City in order to ensure there would be no potential for interruption of services. A good discussion was held with Council asking many questions.

The next firm to give a presentation was Bolton & Menk. They began also by giving a brief history of their firm along with a Power Point presentation on their various divisions and how they specialize in municipalities. The firm has over 700 staff and work out of Minnesota, North Dakota, and Iowa. Discussion was held on the GIS mapping that they could do for the city. The mapping would start with the water and sewer mains as well as gate valves. Later on in the process, the curb stops for each water service could be added. Also discussed was the assistance that they could offer in finding funding for projects.

The third firm to present was Widseth and they also gave a Power Point presentation. Widseth stressed the fact that they were very familiar with the city since they had previously served as City Engineer for over fifty years and had been in charge of many projects in the past including the wastewater ponds, the water plant, and the industrial park. Widseth has offices in nine locations with the closest one in Crookston and another in East Grand Forks. The funding representative from Widseth was present and gave information on the various funding sources that she was familiar with and had a close working relationship with.

The final firm to give a presentation was Apex. The company was founded in 2010, has a staff of 90 professionals that work out of five offices with the closest one located in Fargo. Apex also was focused on serving smaller municipalities like Fertile. They made a point of noting that their municipal engineers are all "jacks of all trades" with expertise in several areas impacting cities. They gave background information on the main people in their firm that would be working with Fertile and they also discussed funding for projects and how all of their engineers

were well-versed in funding and had working relationships with all of the usual funding sources. They ended their presentation by discussing their approach to municipal services and how their engineers worked as an extension of City staff.

Once the presentations were done, Council discussed the pros and cons of each of the firms that presented. After discussion of each firm Council narrowed the choice to Moore Engineering and Apex. Administrator Liden was asked to contact two cities served by each of the firms to ask questions about the service that they provided. A special meeting would be held at 10 a.m. on Thursday, March 10, 2022 to make a final decision.

The second item on the agenda, the current financial situation of Fair Meadow Nursing Home, was the final item up for discussion. Administrator Liden reviewed the email that had been sent by Fair Meadow Administrator Angie Leiting. There were three payrolls coming up in April and Leiting was concerned about how low their cash account would get by the end of April. Leiting had asked about not making two of the four payments that were made to the City each month for the next three months to build up the cash reserves for the month of April. Administrator Liden also noted that the City still had the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds in the amount of \$44,696 and that the City had already earmarked those funds for the nursing home to cover their Covid costs. Liden noted also that the City would be receiving another equal payment this year to cover Covid costs.

After discussion of the matter, a motion was made by Council member Massmann to approve disbursing the ARPA funds to Fair Meadow and to also put on hold two of the debt payments that Fair Meadow makes to the City for the next three months. The motion was seconded by Council member Wise and was carried.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:37 p.m.

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Daniel Wilkens, Mayor

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Lisa J. Liden, City Administrator