

Fertile City Council Minutes April 10, 2023

The Fertile City Council held its regular meeting on Monday, April 10, 2023 at 6:30 p.m. at the Community Center. Present were Mayor Daniel Wilkens and Council members Mary Kiefert, Matthew Massmann, Amanda Bosman, and Todd Wise. Also present was City Administrator Lisa Liden, Public Works Director Kevin Nephew, Fair Meadow Nursing Home Administrator Angie Leiting, and Linda Widrig 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. After the Pledge, the Mayor and Council members posed for a new Council picture since Linda Widrig was in attendance and could take the photo.

For the agenda, Administrator Liden noted that two items had been added to the agenda that was included in the Council packets. Those items were a resolution approving Polk County's Hazard Mitigation Plan, and car show items. The agenda was approved as amended on a motion by Council member Massmann that was seconded by Council member Wise and carried.

There were no public comments.

The minutes from the last regular meeting and two special meetings were up for approval. Council member Kiefert noted that the minutes for the March 13th meeting had the correct meeting date in the header but not in the first paragraph. Administrator Liden noted that she copies and pastes the first few paragraphs of the previous meeting when she does the minutes and that she had inadvertently did not change the meeting date. She would make that correction.

The minutes of the March 13, 2023 meeting as corrected, and the minutes from the special meetings on February 24, 2023 and March 30, 2023 were approved on a motion by Council member Massmann that was seconded by Council member Kiefert 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 deposits Liden noted that there were no out of the ordinary deposits. Under the check listing Liden noted the check to the League of MN Cities Insurance Trust for the annual premium for property and liability insurance, the check to Short Elliott Hendrickson which was the final payment for the update to the airport layout plan. For the insurance, Liden noted that several of the City buildings had been appraised by the League and the new appraised values had been used for the property insurance premiums. This resulted in a much higher premium than the previous year. Council member Massmann asked about the check written to Dean Johnson and Liden explained that Johnson had been hired to help with moving snow piles in town so the check was for the truck and driver. The balance sheet, profit and loss, and budget to actual reports were also reviewed.

The Treasurer's Report and Bills were approved on a motion by Council member Kiefert that was seconded by Council member Bosman and was carried.

There was nothing to report for the airport or the City Engineer.

Fair Meadow Administrator Angie Leiting gave the report for Fair Meadow Nursing Home. The month of March began with 41 residents and ended with 39, operating at 89.24% capacity. Leiting noted that the occupancy rate was the lowest in a long time. They had also served 142 home delivered meals.

The profit and loss for the month of March showed a combined loss of over \$20,000 with the nursing home showing a loss of almost \$1,000 and the assisted living a loss of over \$19,000. Leiting noted that there were three payrolls during the month of March. The year-to-date profit and loss showed a combined profit of over \$94,500 with the nursing home showing a profit of over \$147,000 and the assisted living a loss of over \$53,000. For the budget to actual report, both income and expenses were either at or a little below the budgeted level.

Council member Massmann asked about assisted living and how many empty units there currently were. Leiting said that one person had recently moved in so there were now three empty units. Massmann asked about the check to Crookston Ambulance and Leiting explained that if a resident gets discharged from the hospital and is unable to be transported in a wheelchair that they had to come to the nursing home by ambulance. If the resident is receiving skilled nursing, then the nursing home has to pay for the ambulance. Discussion was held on contacting County EMS to see if arrangements could be made in the future for them to transport at no cost.

Next Leiting reported that Dr. Makarem had turned in his resignation as Medical Director of the nursing home so Leiting was in conversation with Altru to see who could replace him. Leiting said that it didn't look good for getting a replacement from Altru. Council member Massmann asked Leiting if she had contacted Riverview yet since that would be a good fit since there was a Riverview Clinic in town. Leiting stated that she had contacted Riverview when Dr. Ring had retired, and they were not able to help at that time. Massmann encouraged Leiting to reach out again.

Council member Massmann asked about whether there was a freeze on employees using sick time during the month of March that had been extended now through April. Leiting replied that sick time had not been frozen and that the freeze was just on paying out vacation hours. Council member Kiefert asked if there was a limit on cashing out vacation and Leiting replied that employees are able to cash out vacation up to two times per year for up to 40 hours each time for a total of 80 hours per year.

Kevin Nephew, Public Works Director, gave his report next. He began by reporting that they were hopefully done with snow removal for the year. The cleanup from the storm the previous week had gone well and by the time they were done moving snow, on many of the streets the residual snow and ice had melted away. Council member Massmann asked about the water leak by the nursing home and if there was anything new to report. Nephew explained that there had been another leak on the corner of Main Ave. E. and Blaine St. Once that was repaired, the gallons used per day dropped dramatically so he figured that the leak at Main Ave. was significant and the one by the nursing home was minor. Massmann next asked about whether the steamer was working well for opening up the storm sewers to handle all the snow melt. Nephew replied that they had been steaming sewers all day and it was working well.

Mayor Wilkens asked about the snow piles that were in the downtown area and whether they would be hauled away. Nephew replied that he hadn't gotten any reports on wet basements yet so he was hoping that the snow would melt slow enough to not cause any basement issues. Linda Widrig with the Journal commented that they were getting water in the basement at the Journal so Nephew said he would look at getting the pile behind the Journal moved the next day.

Nephew reported that he would be in Grand Rapids for three days for a water class that was required for his licensure. When he returned from that, if everything was thawed out nicely, they would look at repairing the leak by Fair Meadow. This was followed by a discussion on the licensing for water and sewer and which licenses Chris Zimmel currently had. Nephew reported that Zimmel had his class D license for both water and sewer. A class C license was required and Zimmel would have to work under someone licensed for two years to get the Class C.

Nephew reported next that they would be working with Hawkins to clean the filter beds at the water treatment plant once the nursing home water leak was repaired. The process would take three days to complete and the plant would be shut down for that time so he wanted to get that done before higher summer water use started.

City Administrator Lisa Liden gave her report to the Council. She reported that she had been working with David Drown Associates on the funding for the Community Center project and that the work on the annual audit would be beginning soon. Mayor Wilkens commented that the article that the Liden had written for the Journal on the Community Center project was good and it should clear up any misconceptions there were in the community about what the project involved. Liden commented that some people were under the impression that the project was for cosmetic interior items and that she hoped the article would help people realize that the

project was to address issues with vital facility operations like heating and cooling. This was followed by discussion on the special meetings that were required for the project funding. Council members Massmann and Kiefert noted that the honors banquet at the school was scheduled for May 22nd at 6 p.m. so they were wondering if it would be possible to moving the meeting time for that date forward to 5 or 5:30 p.m. so they could attend the meeting and the banquet.

For the Learning Center Administrator Liden noted that the Learning Center Board was currently working with Tim Denney on developing a strategic plan for the Nature Center.

There was no report for the Fire Department. Mayor Wilkens commented that Liden needed to work with the department on getting a monthly report submitted for the Council meeting.

Under new business, the first item addressed was a quote on replacing the sound system for the Council room that would allow for better recording of meetings. Liden noted that they had only received one quote so far for \$10,610. That system would include new microphones plus a new sound mixer and recording device as well as a new amplifier. Given the cost of the complete system, Liden explained that they were looking at other options using the current system that could record something digitally rather than cassette tapes. Mayor Wilkens asked that she keep exploring other options.

The next item on the agenda was the annual approval for fire department gaming at the Smokehouse, Side Street Bar and Grill, and The Other Place. A motion was made by Council member Massmann to approve the gaming at those establishments. The motion was seconded by Council member Wise and was carried.

Resolution #4-1-23 was up for consideration next. Administrator Liden explained that Polk County had recently completed an update of the County's Hazard Mitigation Plan. The resolution was for the City to accept that plan. A motion was made by Council member Wise to approve Resolution #4-1-23 Adoption of the Polk County All-Hazard Mitigation Plan. The motion was seconded by Council member Bosman and was carried.

The final item on the agenda was the approval of several items related to the Car Show which was scheduled for June 10th. The car show items included the City's donation of cash for the event, the closure of two streets, the use of Cannon Park for activities and the use of the City lot behind Encore and Thrifty White. Administrator Liden explained that the City usually donated \$500 towards the event and that this year the committee was requesting \$750. She noted that the sponsorship amount from businesses had been raised from \$125 to \$150 as well. The cost of all the activities like Games to Go, the porta-potties and the music had all increased over the past few years so that the committee was no longer even breaking even on the event.

A motion was made by Council member Bosman to approve the car show committee requests. The motion was seconded by Council member Wise and was carried.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:20 pm on a motion by Council member Massmann.



Daniel Wilkens, Mayor


Lisa J. Liden, City Administrator