

Fertile City Council Minutes January 9, 2023

The Fertile City Council held its regular meeting on Monday, January 9, 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 Nicole Rivera with 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 Todd Wise, Mary Kiefert, and Amanda Bosman.

The agenda was approved with the addition of discussion on the skating rink under Public Works 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 December 12, 2022 meeting were approved as presented on a motion by Council member Kiefert that was seconded by Council member Bosman 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. Under the deposits Liden noted the deposits for local government aid, property taxes, and the payment from St. Joseph's for the water line to the church. Under the check listing Liden noted the check to Christian Holdings for their tax abatement and the check to Fertile Building Center for materials for the work that was done in the shop. 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 Massmann that was seconded by Council member Wise and was carried.

Under the Airport, Mayor Wilkens and Administrator Liden reported on the phone meeting with Short Elliott Hendrickson (SEH) regarding the capital improvement plan for the airport. The next step for the CIP process would be a meeting with the State.

There was nothing to report under the City Engineer.

Fair Meadow Administrator Angie Leiting gave the report for Fair Meadow Nursing Home. The month of December began with 39 residents and ended with 39, operating at 92.62% capacity. They had also served 169 home delivered meals.

The profit and loss for the month of December showed a combined profit of a little over \$10,000 with the nursing home showing a profit of almost \$27,000 and the assisted living a loss of over \$16,000. The year-to-date profit and loss showed a combined profit of just over \$140,000 with the nursing home showing a profit of over \$159,000 and the assisted living a loss of just under \$19,000. For the budget to actual report, both income and expenses were at the budgeted level.

The next item up for discussion were possible increases to both the rent and care packages for the Assisted Living. With added costs due to increased State regulations, the assisted living was losing money. Angie Leiting had looked at the rates at area facilities and with a 10% increase in rent, Fertile's rates would still be lower than the facilities she had checked. A 10% rent increase would raise monthly revenues by \$2,170 based on full occupancy. Leiting then reviewed a chart with information on the rates that current occupants paid for each unit as well as the care packages that occupants were enrolled in.

Council member Massmann expressed concern about at what "price point do we start to scare people off." Leiting reiterated that the rent was still lower than area facilities. Discussion was held on the different care levels and also on ala carte services. Angie Leiting also asked about adding a maintenance charge for when nursing home maintenance staff are asked to assist with non-facility matters such as installing a television or microwave or fixing resident's personal items.

After much discussion of the matter, a motion was made by Council member Wise to increase both the care packages and rent by 10% and to add a maintenance charge to the ala carte items at \$54 per hour. The motion was seconded by Council member Massmann and was carried.

Kevin Nephew, Public Works Director, gave his report next. Nephew commented that they have been busy moving snow piles and had moved 115 truckloads of snow. He also reported that the State would be coming in Tuesday night/Wednesday morning to pull the snow off the edges of Highway 32.

Mayor Wilkens made a comment about how nice all the holiday lights looked through town and how much nicer they are than the ones he had seen in other neighboring towns. Nephew noted that they had gotten all the lights switched over to LED so they were more cost effective than the previous lights.

Mayor Wilkens asked about when the water tower had gone dry a couple weeks prior and what had gone wrong. Kevin Nephew explained that there had been a power outage on the west side of town and the communication between the tower and water plant had shut down so the water plant didn't know that the water tower needed water. Apparently, the battery backup at the water tower wasn't working, so Nephew had replaced it.

The next item up for discussion was the skating rink and the issues with both hockey and open skating happening at the same time. After discussion it was determined that since it was unsafe to have open skating and hockey occurring at the same time, time slots would be designated for hockey only with no open skating allowed. During the remaining time slots, no hockey would be allowed while there was open skating.

The City Administrator's report was then briefly reviewed with Administrator Liden reporting that the Flying Club was applying for an EDA loan for the rebuild of the Club's plane, paperwork had been completed for the City Engineer to apply for state funds for the water projects that had not been funded the previous year, and many phone calls had been fielded regarding snow removal questions and complaints.

For the Learning Center it was reported that Winterfest would be held on February 5th with free ski and snow shoe rentals as well as free horse wagon rides. For the shop addition, it was reported that they were still waiting on the rafters to begin construction.

There were no reports for the Fire Department or the City Personnel Committee.

Under new business, the first item addressed was the annual appointments. The committee appointments for 2022 were reviewed and appointments were changed for the EDA and the City Personnel Committee so Council member Bosman was given committee assignments.

After discussion of annual appointments, a motion was made by Council member Massmann to approve Resolution #1-1-23 A Resolution of Annual Appointments and Designations for 2023. The motion was seconded by Council member Wise and was carried.

The final item on the agenda was the annual decision regarding the waiver of statutory limits on the City's insurance. Administrator Liden explained that there was a set limit on what the City's insurance would pay in the event of an accident or injury. If Council chose, that limit could be waived but that a higher premium would be charged. Liden explained further that since the City was rather small and didn't have any City operations, such as a City bus line, which could require higher liability limits, the statutory limit should suffice for any potential claims.

A motion was made by Council member Wise and seconded by Council member Bosman to not waive the statutory limits on the City's insurance. The motion was carried.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:33 p.m. on a motion by Council member Massmann.

Daniel Wilkens, Mayor

Lisa J. Liden, City Administrator