

Fertile City Council Meeting August 12, 2024

The Fertile City Council held its regular meeting on Tuesday, August 12, 2024 at 7:00 pm at the Community Center. Present were Mayor Daniel Wilkens and Council members Mary Kiefert, Matthew Massmann, Todd Wise, and Amanda Bosman. Also present were City Administrator Lisa Liden, Deputy City Administrator Stacy Erickson, Public Works Director Kevin Nephew, representatives from KRJB and The Fertile Journal and several members of the community.

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Wilkens at 7:00 p.m. and began with those present reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

There were no additions or corrections to the agenda. Council member Massmann made the motion to approve the agenda, seconded by Council member Bosman.

The public comment period was used by community members to ask questions of the Council, Mayor and staff. Mayor Wilkens reminded the audience that the comment period was not an interactive session and that the Council was there to listen and would not be responding to questions. It was stated that all questions be directed to the City office and in the form of data requests if appropriate.

Council minutes from the July 8, 2024 meeting were approved on a motion by Council member Kiefert and second by Council member Massmann.

The Treasurer's report was presented by City Administrator Liden. She highlighted the noteworthy receipts of Local Government Aid for \$169,949.00, Small City Assistance for \$17,895.50, Cable Franchise Fee of \$4,785.23, and the Airport M & O for \$2,054.77. The cash balance in checking at Red River State Bank was \$325,592.17. The Development Fund balance was \$130,763.78. Out of the ordinary expenses were noted as \$12,000 to Diversified Real Estate Services for the retainer for the appraisal of Fair Meadow Nursing Home, \$3,975.00 to Bond Trust Services Corp. for interest on bond debt for nursing home, \$16,915.00 to First Independent Bank, \$22,030.00, and \$8,120.00 to Northland Trust Services for bond payments. A payment of \$13,268.25 was made to Polk County Highway Department for calcium chloride and \$5,320.00 to Vector Disease Control for mosquito spraying.

The budget to actual profit and loss report was reviewed and each of the anomalies was noted relating to single, annual payments or unexpected expenses that were not anticipated. Council member Massmann motioned to approve the Treasurer's Report, seconded by Council member Kiefert.

Department reports were given, starting with the airport which had nothing to report. The City Engineer had no report.

Fair Meadow Nursing Home report started with the bank balance of \$721,476.00. Of that balance, there were designated funds of \$302,561.95 for the facility grant and \$60,980.00 for the retention grant, leaving an available cash balance of \$357,934.05. Under profit and loss, for June 2024, Fair Meadow had a net income of \$211,838.47, with a profit of \$210,897.91 for the nursing home and \$940.56 profit for the assisted living.

City Administrator Liden presented the quotes and a request for Council to authorize the replacement of the fuel oil water heater that was leaking. A short discussion was held on the options and if another fuel source system could be used. It was explained that the change in fuel sources would require significant additional work at an added cost and time investment that was not able to be done before the anticipated failure of the system already in place. The two quotes presented were for \$17,182.00 from Handyman's Hardware of St. Cloud and \$13,371.75 from WH2O of Golden Valley. Council member Massmann motioned to approve the purchase from WH2O for \$13,371.75 and Council member Bosman seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Public works report was given by Director Kevin Nephew. He discussed the sale of the old street sweeper and suggested it be sold on auction. Council agreed.

Next on his list was paving quotes for an area behind the nursing home, off of Bakken that was noted as being prone to flooding and insufficient drainage. The area was noted as being a 24x40 foot space. The quote presented was \$7,300 from Agassiz Asphalt. Discussion was held about extending that a bit more to reach to the edge of the nursing home shop to create a complete, level surface in front of that building. Nephew also requested permission to fill in some divots along Bakken at the same time. Nephew stated that he didn't expect those additions to cost more than a couple thousand dollars. Council member Bosman motioned to approve the 24x40 paving project with the additional request not to exceed a total cost of \$10,000 for the entirety of the projects. The motion was seconded by Council member Kiefert and passed.

The public works crew brought it to the attention of Council that there was a need for a dump box trailer. When working on projects that require the use of a trailer, personally owned equipment was being used. A short discussion was held on the various options and estimated cost. Council member Bosman made a motion to approve the purchase of a used trailer, once the funds from the sale of the street sweeper could be used. The motion was seconded by Council member Massmann and approved.

The radar speed sign had been placed on Washington Ave. by the County, but it was placed facing the wrong direction and was not working. City staff were directed to address the situation with the sheriff's office as soon as possible.

City Administrator Liden gave her report on the activities of the previous month. There were a number of calls to the office for complaints about stray animals, yards needing to be mowed and tree concerns. A tour to assess diseased trees was scheduled. She continued work with Fair Meadow, the primary election, and ongoing work with the airport and building projects. She noted that she was no longer primarily responsible for payroll at the nursing home.

The Agassiz Environmental Learning Center report was given by Deputy Administrator Erickson. She shared that the summer intern had completed her commitment and was headed back to college in Vermont. Fall events were mentioned as well as the various research partnerships that were in progress, especially the University of Minnesota Twin Cities campus.

The fire department had one call for a false alarm water rescue.

Under old business, the food shelf contract had been signed by all parties and no further action was

needed. The Community Center project was not yet done, the final punch list had not been made yet. For the Nature Center addition there was no progress or anything new to discuss due to the bids being too high to proceed.

Under new business, Administrator Liden presented a land acquisition grant request. In 2019 and 2020, an airport zoning project was completed that extended the safety zone at the northwest end of the runway. In 2020, two of the three portions of land were purchased and the owner of the third property declined at that time. That property owner indicated a current willingness to sell, and Short Elliott Hendrickson (SEH) drafted the documents on behalf of the City to proceed. Parcel 9 acquisition was presented in two parts. The pre-work for a cost of \$67,100 with a 95/5 split between MN DOT Office of Aeronautics and City of Fertile. The City cost would be \$3,355.00 of that total. The second part was for the purchase of the land for an estimated \$120,000 that would happen in approximately February of 2025, also with the 95/5 cost share.

Council member Kiefert made a motion to proceed with the project, and Council member Massmann seconded. Motion carried. Council member Massmann motioned to approve the contract with SEH and Council member Bosman seconded. Motion carried.

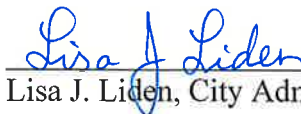
The master subscriber agreement was presented to Council for approval and to pass the necessary resolution. The agreement would allow the City Attorney to access the Minnesota Court Data Services on behalf of the City of Fertile when prosecuting crimes that occurred in Fertile. Council member Wise motioned to approve the agreement and pass resolution 8-1-2024, Council member Kiefert seconded. Motion carried and resolution passed.

Administrator Liden and Deputy Erickson shared about the upcoming need to change water billing software as the notice had been given that the current software was being phased out by the end of the year. The company that purchased UB Max, gWorks, was offering no onboarding costs to transition to their software, but the costs presented a significant increase in the subscription price over UB Max. Council member Massmann suggested that information be gathered from other potential vendors to bring back to the next meeting. Council and staff agreed.

Council member Massmann motioned to adjourn at 7:53pm. The motion was seconded by Council member Kiefert.



Daniel Wilkens, Mayor



Lisa J. Liden, City Administrator