

Fertile City Council Meeting

July 8, 2024

The Fertile City Council held its regular meeting on Tuesday, July 8, 2024 at 7:00 pm at the Community Center. Present were Mayor Daniel Wilkens and Council members Mary Kiefert, Matthew Massmann, 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.

The agenda was amended to add mobility access permits for the Learning Center. Council Member Massmann motioned to approve the agenda as amended and seconded by Council Member Kiefert. The motion carried.

The council listened to public comments and answered several questions from community members.

The minutes of the June 18, 2024 meeting were approved as presented on a motion by Council member Kiefert that was seconded by Council member Bosman and was carried.

Administrator Lisa Liden gave the Treasurer's Report. She noted that there was a state refund for staffing costs for the Presidential National Primary that was held in June. There was a payment made on the Community Center Project. The local government aid allotment was expected later in the month.

Department reports started with the airport. Administrator Liden updated the Council on the grant agreements with MN DOT Aeronautics for the replacement of the fuel payment system. All had been signed and Short Elliott Hendrickson, Inc., the engineer firm referred to as SEH for the City airport projects, was handling the contractor communications to get the project started. There was a brief discussion about how the system would work and if the local cards would still be able to be used. That was uncertain as the technology has changed significantly, but it was expected that all major credit cards could be used.

The City Engineer report was given with another short update on the lead service line survey. The door-to-door work was expected to happen that week. The hope was that there would be more results gathered for the survey before it was due to be reported to the state.

The Fair Meadow report was given by City Administrator Liden. The checking account balance as of May 31st, 2024 was \$519,840.15, but a portion of that was designated grant funding for the facilities grant and the employee retention grant. The profit and loss for the fiscal year showed a \$160,985.96 loss for the nursing home and a profit of \$51,236.61 for the assisted living, for a combined total of a loss of \$109,747.35. The facilities grant funds that were already on hand in the checking account would be used for the HVAC update that was in the works.

Under the public works report, Public Works Director Kevin Nephew shared about recent tasks such as painting the curbs, street sweeping and the annual things that are scheduled right before the fair for a fresh clean look for the community. Discussion was held about the traffic on Washington Avenue, both east and west and it was confirmed by several that high speeds were a common complaint. It was requested that City staff reach out to the Polk County Sheriff's Office for the placement of radar speed limit signs when they were available to try to deter some of the dangerous driving that had been witnessed. Mosquito spraying was scheduled for that evening.

Administrator Liden gave her report to Council. She continued work with FMNH, the work for the updated liquor license for Side Street, all the various permits and paperwork for the fair, and the continuation of work on the Community Center project.

The Agassiz Environmental Learning Center building addition was not able to make any progress due to the rejection of the bids that were all beyond the funds available.

The Fire Department report was given by Council member Bosman that there were calls for two car accidents, two false alarms, two grass fires, one anhydrous leak, one motor cycle accident. She also announced that the fire department would continue to sell their raffle tickets at the fair.

Under old business, the food shelf contract had been shared with the food shelf board and was waiting for signatures.

The Community Center project report was given. The contractors had been trouble shooting problems with the HVAC systems. A technician was called in from the manufacturer to make adjustments on the units themselves. The clinic thermostat was replaced because it was found to be faulty. The City Office zone of the building was still having issues with regulating the temperature for the entire zone. The punch list was making slow progress, and the mechanical room was still not available to use until the list was completed.

The Agassiz Environmental Learning Center had a good turnout for Summerfest. A representative was present from the Bell Museum to participate in dispersing science and nature kits free to visitors. Questions were asked about kayak rentals, and it was shared that there were a number of staffing and logistical issues making it not practical at the time.

Administrator Liden presented the data practices policies for council review. The public and personal data practices policies were drafted from the League of Minnesota Cities' model policies. The only edits were those to personalize to the City of Fertile, the appropriate staff names, and the proper rates for charges. There was a brief discussion on terminology and the definition of "reasonable". Community members had concerns about timing of responses and the requirement to retrieve their requested data in a timely manner. It was clarified that communication was key and that City staff could arrange accommodation if needed for delayed retrieval of requests.

The motion was made by Council member Massmann and seconded by Council member Kiefert to adopt the policies as presented with the consideration of accommodations when needed. Motion carried.

The last item under new business was a request for authorization of mobility access permits at the Agassiz Environmental Learning Center. Administrator Liden and Deputy Administrator Erickson shared that there had been some recent requests for the use of golf carts or UTVs for the purpose of assisting disabled individuals to get out and enjoy the space, but mobility was a barrier. After a short discussion of what options and obstacles exist, Council member Massmann made a motion to approve the permits and allow the AELC board to determine the details of eligibility and the process to acquire the permits. Council member Kiefert seconded the motion. Motion carried.

There were no announcements.

There being no further business, Council member Massmann motioned to adjourn at 7:39pm. The motion was seconded by Council member Bosman.



Daniel Wilkens, Mayor



Lisa J. Liden, City Administrator