

Fertile City Council Meeting June 18, 2024

The Fertile City Council held its regular meeting on Tuesday, June 18, 2024 at 7:00 pm at the Community Center. The regular meeting to be held on June 10, 2024 had to be rescheduled due to lack of a quorum. 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 the Wander System and HVAC under the Fair Meadow Nursing Home and liquor license under new business. Council Member Massmann motioned to approve as amended and seconded by Council Member Bosman before the motion carried.

The council listened to public comments.

The minutes of the May 13, 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. Total receipts were \$43,074.50 and disbursements were \$96,743.46 with an ending bank balance of \$240,740.39 in the City Fund and \$127,495.78 in the Development Fund. Liden noted that there were no out of the ordinary receipts for the month of May. Disbursements included the payment for the new lawn mower to Valley Plains Equipment for \$17,844 and the annual workmen's compensation premium for \$11,501. The profit and loss budget to actual were reviewed. Council Member Massmann motioned to approve the report, Council Member Kiefert seconded the motion and motion carried.

Department reports started with the airport. Resolution 6-1-24 was presented for approval to give authorization to Mayor Wilkens and Administrator Liden to sign agreements for grant funding for the upgrade to the fuel system. MNDOT Aeronautics sent corrected documents with the funding from the state listed as 70% funding vs. the 95% that they presented to the City in error in previous documents. Council member Massmann motioned to approve the grant agreement with Council member Kiefert seconding the motion. Motion carried.

Council member Kiefer motioned to approve Resolution #6-1-24 Authorization to Execute MN Department of Transportation Grant Agreement for Airport Improvement and it was seconded by Massmann. Motion carried.

The City Engineer report was given with just a short update on the lead service line survey. Fertile had the third best response among the Moore Engineering clients in Minnesota with approximately 100 responses. The remaining water accounts that did not respond would be on the list for follow up in person. Those places will be contacted in the coming weeks.

The Fair Meadow report was brief. Interim Administrator Larson had reported to City Administrator Liden that the nursing home and assisted living were full and had wait lists for both sides. The air conditioning system was added to the agenda because it was no longer adequately operational. Quotes were received and the cost could be covered with some of the funds remaining in the facilities grant if Council approved. Council Member Massmann motioned to approve the replacement of that system using those grant funds. Council Bosman seconded the motion. Motion carried.

The Wander System had been added to the agenda due to increasing problems with the system. The door alarms were reportedly going off errantly more often than expected. The system was described as aged and somewhat outdated. Estimates for new systems were limited due to the narrow availability of companies offering that type of product. Interim Administrator Larson had reached out to the State to see if the facility grant funds could be used for this project since it relates to a physical need for alarms on doors, but it wasn't clear as it also related to resident care. It was asked of council to consider making the motion to approve replacement of the current system with the

new system if allowed under the State's guidelines for the use of those facility grant funds. Council Member Massmann made the motion to approve the purchase and installation of the new system, contingent upon the approval from the State for the use of the facility grant funds. Council member Kiefert seconded. Motion carried. A community member asked about some facility concerns with reported roof leaks and mold in the nursing home. Council and Administrator Liden directed those questions to Interim Administrator Larson and said they would follow up with the questions as well.

Under the public works report, Public Works Director Kevin Nephew said there wasn't much to report. They had worked for two days with the representative from Moore Engineering to locate and mark the water shut off valves in town. They had about half an hour's notice that the project would happen when it did so they did not get to all of them. He explained that they were able to locate about 70% of them. Landscape work, sidewalks, vegetation, and unknown placements made some harder to locate. When asked how/why they could be difficult to locate, he explained that one yard had added a large amount of fill along the berm for landscaping and gestured to show a depth of more than a foot. Nephew explained that they used a metal detector and also had to dig to find a number of the connections. He shared that they hoped to get the rest finished this summer, but it was dependent on timing and funds available since it was funded as part of the service line survey.

The public works department had been working on the usual county fair preparation such as street sweeping, painting the curbs and spraying weeds. It was asked of Council and Nephew by an audience member if Blaine St. could be closed off on the north end of the fairgrounds. All agreed to do so because the dead-end street often becomes dangerous as vehicles try to find parking and are unable to turn around to exit safely once the street is full. Nephew ended his report by noting that he had brought one of the trees that had been cut down at the Learning Center for the shop addition to be cut into planks for repairing the foot bridge over the river.

Administrator Liden gave her report to Council and shared that she had been working with FMNH Interim Larson on the usual nursing home matters and cyclical reports and filings for both the City and the nursing home.

The Agassiz Environmental Learning Center had no report, but it was announced that Summerfest would be held on Sunday, June 23rd.

The Fire Department report was given by Council member Bosman that there were five grass fires, one carbon monoxide alarm call and one motor vehicle accident. The truck fund raffle had started as well.

Under old business, the food shelf contract had been completed with the assistance of the City Attorney office and was presented to council for approval. Council member Massmann motioned to approve the lease agreement and Council member Bosman seconded.

The Community Center project continued and Liden reported that the punch list had been created and the contractors were informed. It was hoped that the project would be completed by the end of June.

The Nature Center building addition bidding results were presented along with a memo that the bids should be rejected. Two bids were presented and both were substantially higher than the \$144,000 available through grant funding. Council member Kiefert made the motion to reject the bids, Council member Bosman seconded. Motion carried.

Under new business, Administrator Liden presented a letter from Eide Bailly with their notice to discontinue service to the City of Fertile and Fair Meadow Nursing Home. She shared a sample request for proposals (RFP) from another small city and requested that Council authorize Liden to send out the RFP to seek out a new audit firm for both entities. It was discussed that auditing firms are costing more and more and many small cities are struggling to find firms. Council member Massmann motioned to approve proceeding with the RFP process and Council member Bosman seconded. Motion carried.

Appointment of election judges was next on the agenda. Administrator Liden presented the roster of election judges for appointment. Deputy Administrator Erickson would serve as head election judge and two people needed to be appointed for the Healthcare Facility Judge positions. Kim Carlson and Stephanie Berhow were presented for

appointment as Healthcare Facility Judges. Patty Benbo, Valerie Leiser, Nick Neibauer Jr., Senora Pederson and Elaine Torpet were all presented for appointment as election judges. Council member Massmann motioned to approve the appointment of recommended judges; Council member Kiefert seconded. Motion carried. Administrator Liden then requested an increase in the pay that judges receive. Citing the increasing wages and competitive pay levels, she recommended an increase to \$17 per hour for judges and to continue the \$1.50 additional per hour above that for the head judge due to the additional responsibilities. The last increase for judges was to \$16 in 2022. Council member Kiefert made the motion to approve, Council member Massmann seconded. Motion carried.

The engagement letter for the appraisal of Fair Meadow Nursing Home was presented for approval. The appraisal would be for both the physical property as well as the operating business of the nursing home to determine value. Diversified Real Estate Services, Inc. was willing and qualified to provide the necessary services with an approximate turn-around time of about 6 weeks once all the necessary information had been gathered. The cost was presented as \$12,000, paid at the time of initiation of services. Administrator Liden presented the list of services and the information that was requested. Council member Massmann motioned to authorize Liden to sign the contract and proceed with the process. Council member Kiefert seconded the motion and the motion carried.

A Council meeting decorum policy had been drafted by the attorney and was presented by Administrator Liden for approval. The policy increased the public comment period time to 10 minutes, with no more than 5 minutes used by one participant. The motion was made by Council member Massmann and seconded by Council member Bosman before being approved.

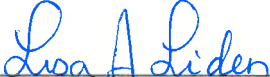
Administrator Liden shared a memo about community member requests for a dog park in the City of Fertile. Community members have suggested that there is a need for a fenced in space to allow dogs to run and play safely. In various discussions, it has been suggested that the minimum size should be no less than one acre. One request was for a piece of property at the Agassiz Environmental Learning Center, but there were no suitable spaces there. City staff assessed the available property owned by the City and had not found an adequate, usable space. The request was presented to the Council to brainstorm any options they could find. Council member Massmann motioned to table the discussion for another meeting to allow time to research and consider options.

The last item on the agenda was a liquor license request. Liz Valdez of the Side Street Bar and Grill had recently learned that there was an error on her license and it was still in her name, not the name of her LLC. The State of Minnesota required a new license with the correct information. Administrator Liden asked Council to approve the licenses for Sunday sales, On Sale, Off Sale, and 3.2 sales with the license holder name changed to "The Bar and Grill, LLC." Council member Kiefert motioned to approve; Council member Bosman seconded. Motion carried.

There were no announcements.

Council member Massmann motioned to adjourn at 8:08 pm.


Daniel Wilkens, Mayor


Lisa J. Liden, City Administrator