

Fertile City Council Meeting November 12, 2024

The Fertile City Council held its regular meeting on Tuesday, November 12, 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, 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.

Mayor Wilkens read a memo from City Administrator Liden and a resignation letter from Council member Wise. The memo indicated that Council needed to make a resolution accepting the resignation and to declare the vacancy of the Council seat. Resolution #11-1-2024 was read by Mayor Wilkens and was adopted on a motion from Council member Kiefert and seconded by Council member Bosman and a unanimous vote in favor.

The agenda was amended to table the Fire Department contract until the December meeting. It was approved with a motion from Council member Massmann to approve the minutes with the correction and a second by Council member Bosman.

There were no public comments.

Mayor Wilkens asked council if they had reviewed the minutes of the October 14, 2024 meeting and if they had any additions or corrections. It was noted by Council member Massmann that the miles on the street sweeper needed to be changed to hours. Council member Kiefert motioned to approve as amended and Council member Massmann seconded the motion. Motion carried.

The Treasurer's Report was presented by City Administrator Liden. The receipts included no out of the ordinary receipts, and EDA deposits of \$1,684. Liden noted that the second half of property taxes were expected later in the month and local government aid was expected in December. The cash balance at the end of August was \$160,455.41. There was a balance of \$165,195.12 in the EDA account. Checks of note were to the AELC for the quarterly payment of \$2,500; to the Fertile Fire Department for \$4,000 for their quarterly payment for fire protection services; to LPL Financial for \$34,429.42 for the Fire Department pension account; \$2,972.50 for J&R Wastewater for jetting and it was noted that there would be a larger bill coming. A check for \$11,124 to Grand Trailer Sales for the dump trailer for the maintenance department, a check for \$5,250 to Banyon Data Systems for the new water billing software, another for KLM Engineering for \$3,000 for the water tower cleaning and inspection and a check for \$2,889.37 to Christian Holdings LLC for the annual tax abatement. Liden highlighted the profit and loss details for each category, budget versus actual reports and due to a question asked of her before the meeting, she noted that the general fund amount under capital improvements- buildings of \$178,071.70 under expenses would be moved from the profit and loss and into assets due to the building project.

Council member Massmann motioned to approve the Treasurer's Report, seconded by Council member Kiefert. The motion was carried.

Under the airport, Administrator Liden noted that the State was working on the pre-work contact for the land acquisition and that there was no progress at that moment, it was all in the State's hands. Mayor Wilkens asked about the follow up from the inspection that had been done and the recommendations for

the removal of brush when the pictures showed long grass. Public works assistant Chris Zimmel had reached out to the State contact but had not received an answer yet.

There was no report for the City Engineer. Administrator Liden shared that there was a need for her to reach out to Mary Jane Shultz at the State of Minnesota to explore the likelihood of funding for the next year to determine the best course of action for the potential funding of the improvement project to continue the looping and replacement of undersized lines.

City Administrator Liden gave the Fair Meadow report in place of Interim Fair Meadow administrator Sandy Larson. The quotes for the grinder pumps were presented and discussed. Council member Massmann motioned to approve the quote from Minnesota Pump Works for \$16,015.09, it was seconded by Council member Bosman and the motion carried.

Occupancy was at 41 beds filled. The previous month was 97% occupancy and the Assisted Living was full.

Under the Fair Meadow Nursing Home financial reports \$329,384.63 was the available cash balance after accounting for the designated grant funds.

Council member Massmann shared that the advisory board had met, and it was learned that the meetings would be better attended in the evenings. The meeting was basically a chance to get to meet everyone because not everyone could be present.

Public Works Director Kevin Nephew addressed the council to request that one side of Elm Street, from the corner of Jefferson Avenue and south to the alley be designated as a seasonal no parking zone for winter months, beginning November 1 and continuing to March 31 each year. There had been difficulty getting street maintenance equipment through there when vehicles were parked on both sides, especially in the winter. Nephew said that in the future, if the situation changed with occupancy of the properties along there, the issue could be re-visited. The motion was made by Council member Bosman and seconded by Council member Bosman to approve the seasonal no parking zone; the motion carried to approve the designation.

Nephew went on to say that the leaves had been cleaned up around the City in preparation for winter. Administrator Liden shared that the Public Works Department had been researching the costs of a skid steer and she had been looking at leasing and financing options and the matter would be presented at the December meeting.

City Administrator Liden started her report sharing that she had been working with Interim Administrator Larson to get the Advisory Board meeting scheduled. She had worked on the financial reports, preparatory work for the elections. She described the financial work she had been doing at the nursing home, the quarterly reporting and audit team search. She continued with the work she had done with the contracts in progress with the City Attorney, and her continued work with Pemberton Law Firm. She went on to explain the extensive work with the Lead Service Line Inventory and required notification letters that had been time consuming and explained the various details involved and the difficulty with the spreadsheets sent by the State.

Mayor Wilkens shared that the Agassiz Environmental Learning Center would have a meeting on the 19th of November. Administrator Liden shared that there had been 1,005 guests for the Haunted Trail. Council member Massmann shared his praise of the Jack-O-Lantern Walk.

The Fire Department report was given by Council member Bosman. There was one call for mutual aid for a bale on fire, one for an ammonia leak, one auto accident, one medical assist, one propane leak and two tractor fires.

There was no old business, so the meeting progressed with the election canvassing. Resolution 11-2-24 was presented and Council member Massmann motioned to approve it, Council member Kiefert seconded it and the motion carried.

The Fire Department Contract was tabled to the December meeting because the attorney was still working on some language.


Resolution 11-3-2024 was presented by Administrator Liden and she explained that the property that the newest part of the Fire Department building was built on City property and that the land that it sits on was never transferred to Fire Department ownership. Research into council minutes from back as far as 2005 showed no record of the transfer either. Council member Massmann motioned to approve the quit claim deed and it was seconded by Council member Kiefert before passing unanimously. Council member Bosman motioned to approve Resolution 11-3-24 Authorizing the Sale or Disposal of Real Property. Council member Massmann seconded the motion and the motion carried.

The next item on the agenda was for the presentation of water bills to be assessed to taxes, some written off, and to have some bills ceased due to the condition of the properties in question with no future use likely for quite some time. She explained that some of the balances were out of the ordinary and explained the unusual circumstances that created those situations. Council member Kiefert motioned to certify the water bills to taxes, Council member Massmann seconded. Motion carried.

Council member Massmann motioned to cease billing to the Mertle Scully and Dale Sannes properties, Council member Kiefert seconded. Motion carried. There were two properties that were presented to be written off due to properties changing hands before the City was notified, and the burden of debt was not appropriate to transfer to new owners who improved the properties. Council member Kiefert motioned, Council member Bosman seconded; motion carried.

Council member Massmann motioned to adjourn the meeting at 7:39pm. Council member Kiefert seconded the motion. Meeting was adjourned.


Daniel Wilkens, Mayor


Lisa J. Liden, City Administrator