

MINUTES OF THE ALDEN CITY COUNCIL MEETING – January 10, 2024

A public hearing was held for the purpose of receiving public input on proposed amendments to the current zoning map. The Public Hearing was opened at 6:00 pm by Mayor Reyerson, and roll call was read.

Council members present were Mayor Reyerson, Ms. VanEngelenburg, Mr. Reindal, Mr. Wichmann, and Ms. Pedersen. None were absent. The city staff present were Fire Chief Thunstedt, Public Works Superintendent Wuerflein, and Clerk-Treasurer Knutson. No other members of the public were present for input.

The Pledge of Allegiance was said.

The purpose of the Public Hearing is to receive input from the public regarding Ordinance 2023-4, Reclassification of parcels from Rural Residential and Agriculture district to R-1 Single Family Residential District. The proposed ordinance was read by Mayor Reyerson. The mayor called for input three times, as required. No members of the public were present to provide input. Wichmann motioned and VanEngelenburg seconded to adjourn the meeting at 6:03. Carried.

The Public Hearing was closed at 6:03pm

Mayor Reyerson called the regular meeting of the Alden City Council to order at 6:03. The same members were present at the regular council meeting.

Motion by VanEngelenburg and seconded by Wichmann to approve the minutes of the December 13, 2023 meeting as presented. Carried.

Motion by Wichmann and seconded by VanEngelenburg to approve the Treasurer's Report as presented. Carried.

Motion by Reindal and seconded by Wichmann to approve the Hours report as presented. Carried.

Fire Chief Thunstedt reported that there were 10 medical calls, 1 false alarm vehicle fire call, 1 MVA, and 1 false MVA call in December. Due to the holidays, there was no county meeting. The equipment being paid for with the Compeer Grant has been ordered. There is a lead time for the hose, but as long as the equipment has been ordered, it still qualifies for the grant. There was a total of 91 calls in 2023, which is the most in recent memory. Knutson asked if there could be a breakdown of the calls to the townships, and Jim will check into that. The rest of the Non-Smoking agreements have been turned in, and 3 additional firefighters have completed their physicals. The replacement of the overhead doors at the fire station is scheduled to begin on January 11th, and Alex will be taking the trucks to the city shop during that time. There was a large fire call in Albert Lea that the department assisted with on January 7th. There were some issues with the trucks after this call due to the cold weather, and they are scheduled to be repaired. A resignation letter was received from Katie Mead, and a leave of absence letter was received from Lucas VanEngelenburg. Both were approved at the fire department meeting this month. WCTA internet was installed at the fire station Monday afternoon. The service is provided to the Fire Department by WCTA as part of a grant and is no cost to the city, but there is an annual application required for the grant. Jim asked if we would consider allowing Alex to use the plow truck to clear a path for the fire trucks if they were to get called out in bad weather. Motion by VanEngelenburg and seconded by Reindal to allow use of the plow truck by a city employee to clear roads for the fire department if needed due to the weather. Carried. Motion by Wichmann and seconded by Reindal to approve the Fire Report as presented. Carried.

Wuerflein reported that he is planning to meet with Wyatt Ladwig to get prices on some building repair items around the city and will bring them to the next meeting for the council to discuss. They have been working on the sprayer to make it 3-point mounted boomless sprayer. The brakes on the payloader and the Case tractor have been repaired. The tractor has developed another issue, and they have brought it back to be checked out. The Lead Service line inventory project information should be coming soon. We will need to document all lead lines in the city, and they will eventually need to be replaced. During the weekly check it was determined that the furnace in the museum needs to be replaced at a cost of around \$3000. Discussion was had on possibly moving the museum to the former doctor's office building. Pedersen will investigate this option. The motion was made by VanEngelenburg and seconded by Reindal to accept the Public Works Report as presented. Carried.

The motion was made by VanEngelenburg and seconded by Reindal to allow Clerk Knutson to attend the MCFOA conference in March. Approved. She will make her own reservations.

There was a variance request from 201 Euclid Street to allow a chain link fence to be put in the front yard. There was some discussion on the subject, but the resident was not present at the meeting for input, so the issue was tabled until next month's meeting.

Scott Hemmingsen asked to be on the agenda again this month but was not able to attend the meeting. Kim talked to Scott, and we will split his water bill into 2 separate bills, one for each meter. The Water surcharge and Water testing fee will only be billed on one of the bills.

We received a request from an attorney handling the sale of the Hemmingsen Transfer property. They would like to split the property into 2 parcels. In order for the closing to proceed, they need the City of Alden to sign off on the original survey allowing the split. Motion by Pedersen and seconded by Wichmann to allow the parcel to be split. Carried.

We received a quote from WCTA to switch the phone and internet to their service. The expense would be significantly less than what we are currently paying. There is an early termination fee for Frontier, but we would recoup that fee within 2-3 months with the savings we would see. Motion by Wichmann and seconded by VanEngelenburg to switch the city internet and phone service to WCTA. Carried.

Employee job descriptions and review process were discussed at length. Pedersen, VanEngelenburg, and Knutson will work on cleaning up the job descriptions.

There was discussion on the new ESST law and vacation carryover limits. Approving the updated Personal Policy was tabled for another month.

Motion by VanEngelenburg and seconded by Wichmann to approve RESOLUTION 2024.01 – Annual Assignments for 2024. Carried. The full resolution will be on file at the Alden City Office. The assignments are as follows:

Mayor Pro-tem – Jeff Wichmann, Council Member

City Attorney – Peterson, Kolker, Haedt, and Benda, LTD

Official Newspaper – The Alden Advance

Official Depositories – Security Bank Minnesota; First Independent Bank – Russel MN; United Bankers Bank as the safe-keeping entity for the collateral signed by Security Bank Minnesota

COMMITTEES/DUTIES

Building/Zoning – Wichmann, Reyerson, Staff: Knutson, Wuerflein

Water/Sewer – Reyerson, Reindal, Staff: Knutson, Wuerflein

Streets & Alleys – Reyerson, Reindal, Staff: Wuerflein

Parks – Wichmann, VanEngelenburg, Staff: Wuerflein

Fire Marshal – Jim Thunstedt, Fire Chief

Joint Powers with Alden-Conger School – Reyerson, Reindal

Ordinance Review – Reyerson, Pedersen, Staff: Knutson, Wuerflein

Law Enforcement – VanEngelenburg, Pedersen

Weed Inspector – VanEngelenburg, Staff: Burriss

Authorized Signers of Official City Documents & Checks – Mayor (Reyerson), Acting Mayor (Wichmann), Clerk/Treasurer (Knutson)

Authorized to Perform Electronic Transfers – Mayor (Reyerson), Clerk/Treasurer (Knutson)

Council/Employee Liaisons – Clerk/Treasurer – Reyerson, Public Works – Wichmann

Personnel Committee – Pedersen, VanEngelenburg, Reyerson, Staff: Knutson

Motion by Wichmann and seconded by VanEngelenburg to approve Resolutions 2024.02 – 2024 Resolution Allowing Wire/Automated Bank Payments, and 2024.03 – Policy to Allow Payment Before Council Authorization. Carried. The full Resolutions will be on file in the Alden City Office.

Fees were reviewed for 2024. Changes to the Fee schedule are as follows:

- The city will no longer provide fax service. Our machine does not work, and we will not be purchasing a new one.
- New Service connection fees will be \$500 for water and \$500 for sewer.
- Election Judge pay will be raised to \$15 per hour
- Rental House Inspections will be removed from the fee schedule

Motion by Reindal and seconded by VanEngelenburg to approve changes to the Fee Schedule. Carried.

Motion by Pedersen and seconded Reindal to adopt Ordinance 2023-4, Ordinance approving reclassification of parcels from Rural Residential and Agriculture District to R-1 Single Family Residential District. Carried. The full Ordinance will be on file in the Alden City Office.

Discussion was had on snowplowing the sidewalks downtown. Mayor Reyerson has been doing the initial pass to clear, but it is up to the property owners to clean their own sidewalks.

Reindal talked with the owner of the old Creamery, and he does have plans to tear the building down this summer or fall. The city doesn't need to move forward with condemning the building at this time.

Motion by Wichmann and seconded by Reindal to approve the bills and EFT's as presented. Bills presented for payment \$111,080.03, EFT's of \$9,661.42, and Payroll of \$20,045.66.

Motion by VanEngelenburg and seconded by Wichmann to adjourn at 8:18pm

Respectfully submitted,

Kim Knutson
Clerk-Treasurer