MINUTES OF THE ALDEN CITY COUNCIL MEETING – January 14, 2026

A Public Hearing to receive input regarding a Conditional Use permit for the property at 192 W. Washington Ave. was called to order at 6:00 pm. Members present were Mr. Reindal, Mr. Wichmann, and Mayor Reyerson. Absent: Ms. VanEngelenburg and Ms. Pedersen. City staff were City Clerk Knutson, Fire Chief Thunstedt, and Public Works Employee Myrick. Others present were Shirley Newman, Alex Burris, Barb Zeller, Nick Hanke, Lisa Myrick. Derek Thorson later joined for the regular council meeting.

The Pledge of Allegiance was said. The purpose of the hearing was to receive input regarding a permit to allow the commercial property to be used as two residential apartments. This permit is in effect for the duration of the current ownership only, and the use would revert to commercial if and when the property is sold. Any subsequent owners would need to apply for a conditional use permit if the use is to continue as residential. The zoning will remain C1 – Commercial. Several questions were asked and answered about parking, taxing, garbage, etc. The property will receive a residential garbage cart. An idea was brought up to have an annual meeting to review whether the conditions in the permit are being met, but it was decided to just handle any issues as they arise. Since two members were absent, it was decided to wait to vote on the permit until more members are present. Motion by Wichmann and seconded by Reindal to close the public hearing at 6:14.

The Regular meeting of the Alden City Council was called to order at 6:14 pm by Mayor Reyerson.

Motion by Wichmann and seconded by Reindal to approve the minutes of December 10, 2025, regular council meeting as presented. Carried unanimously.

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

The Hours report was presented. It was pointed out that Scott has several hours of overtime each week due to him being the only public works employee at this time. Motion by Wichmann and seconded by Reindal to approve the hours report as presented. Carried unanimously.

Fire Chief Thunstedt reported that they had 1 false fire alarm call, 1 MVA, 1 assist traffic control, 1 Haz Mat and 2 medical calls in the month of December. There was no county chiefs meeting in December. The fire department received a donation from the Clothes Closet in Wells. A call breakdown for 2025 was presented. There was a total of 79 calls in 2025, which is average for the department. Motion by Reindal and seconded by Wichmann to approve the Fire Report. Carried unanimously.

Public Works employee Myrick reported that there were a total of 15 Gopher One Call locates in the month of December. Scott's medical card has been approved for his CDL, so he will be attending the classroom training next week. The plow truck has some issues with a cylinder, which was repaired last week. There was a water main break by the school on January 7th, which was repaired prior to school on January 8th. Scott will be off January 16 – 18. Scott was at an MPCA Smart Salting class on January 14th, has wastewater training on February 3-4, and water class on February 5th. Motion by Wichmann and seconded by Reindal to approve the Public Works Report. Carried unanimously.

Correspondence was received from the MN Department of Health regarding our last round of lead and copper testing. The city did not exceed the action level for lead or copper for this round of testing. We are required to do another round sometime January – June but will wait until March or April to do that, and they are asking us to find 3 more houses with lead service lines if possible. A letter was also received from Power on Midwest regarding plans to run high voltage transmission lines somewhere through

Southern Minnesota, but no specific routes have been identified yet. It's believed that all residents received this same letter.

Resolution 2026.01 - Annual Assignments for 2026 was presented. It was decided to table this until next month, when the whole council can be present for input.

Resolution 2026.02 – Resolution allowing wire/automated bank payments was presented. This allows EFT payments for all payroll taxes. Motion by Reindal and seconded by Wichmann to approve the resolution. Carried unanimously.

The council opted to table the 2026 Fee Schedule update and Resolution 2026.03 until the February meeting, when more members of the council are in attendance to discuss.

We received 2 quotes regarding health insurance proposals. One was from Intellicents, and the other was from the Public Employees Insurance Program (PEIP). After much discussion, it was decided that PEIP was a better plan for our employees. What the city contributes towards the employee's premium was proposed to be $1725 per month, but that is still in negotiation. Motion by Reindal and seconded by Wichmann to approve contracting with PEIP for the employees' health insurance. Carried unanimously.

The city has an ordinance with the former People's Natural Gas, now Minnesota Energy Resources, Inc., granting them a franchise to supply the city's natural gas. That franchise is set to expire in June of 2026. A representative has reached out to the city to renew the franchise for another 25 years. We will review the proposal and will set up the appropriate public hearings required to adopt a new ordinance renewing the franchise.

Clerk Knutson reviewed a communications app called TextMyGov that could be used to send Public Alert messages to the residents of the city. These would be used for things such as water main breaks, mosquito spraying, etc. Upon review of the proposal, it was determined that the cost was more than the city would like to spend on something like this. The council decided not to purchase this app.

A quote was received from Thate's Tree Service to have the two trees on the fenceline of the NorthPark softball field removed. The quote was much higher than was expected, so the council would like to discuss it at a joint powers meeting with the school board. A meeting is usually scheduled for February, so Kim will reach out to Superintendent Hanson to schedule a meeting.

The subject of the Creamery was scheduled to be discussed, but the owner was again not in attendance. We need to decide what to do if he continues to not respond to the request.

Derek Thorson was at the meeting to discuss the Chief of Police position that he interviewed for. He is very interested in the position, but had several questions that he wanted to discuss regarding expectations, benefits, equipment, etc. The council will consider items discussed, and will either schedule a special meeting to discuss, or will hopefully make a decision at that next council meeting.

Scott Myrick was offered and accepted the Public Works Superintendent position at $30.50 per hour. The pay raise will go into effect on the next paycheck. Motion by Wichmann and seconded by Reindal to approve hiring Scott Myrick as the Public Works Superintendent. Carried unanimously.

Motion by Wichmann and seconded by Reindal to change the city's insurance agent from Intego Insurance Agency to Americana Insurance Group. Carried Unanimously. Our insurance policy will remain with the League of MN Cities; this only changes the agent that we work with.

The Municipal Clerks and Finance Officers Association of MN (MCFOA) Conference will be held March 24-27 in Brooklyn Center. Motion by Wichmann and seconded by Reindal to approve Kim's attendance at the conference. Carried unanimously.

A resident asked about the recent letters everyone received concerning unknown service line materials. These letters refer only to the public side of the water main, not the private side. Residents do not need to take any action right now. The purpose of the letter was simply to inform residents that the material used on the public side is currently unknown and may contain lead. We hope to conduct testing in the future to identify the materials used in water mains throughout the town.

Scott asked how to dispose of the old laptop from the city shop, as he has his new desktop computer set up. He was referred to Freeborn County Environmental Services for disposal.

Motion by Wichmann and seconded by Reindal to approve the bills, Electronic Fund Transfers and accept donations. Bills presented for payment $116,526.67, EFTs of $9,707.34, and Payroll of $24,380.27. Carried unanimously.

Donations are accepted with appreciation for the Alden Fire Department from The Clothes Closet in Wells, and for Morin Lake Days by Steve Poeschl from the estate funds of Janet Poeschl in her memory. Carried unanimously.

Motion by Wichmann and seconded by Reindal to adjourn at 7:35. Carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Kim Knutson
Clerk-Treasurer