

MINUTES OF THE ALDEN CITY COUNCIL MEETING – January 8, 2025

The regular meeting of the Alden City Council was called to order at 6:03 pm. Roll call was read. Members present were Mr. Reindal, Mr. Wichmann, Ms. Pederson, and Mayor Reyerson. Ms. VanEngelenburg joined the meeting later. City staff present were City Clerk-Treasurer Knutson, Maintenance Worker Burris, Chief of Police Glen Strom, and Fire Chief Thunstedt. Others present were County Commissioner Nikki Eckstrom and Brenda from WCTA.

The Pledge of Allegiance was said.

City Clerk Knutson administered the Oath of Office to Mayor Reyerson, Council Member Wichmann, and later to Council member VanEngelenburg after she joined the meeting late.

Motion by Pedersen and seconded by Reindal to approve the minutes of the December 11, 2024, truth in taxation meeting, public hearing and regular council meeting as presented. Carried unanimously.

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

There was some discussion regarding the new vacation policy including changing to the accrual basis and the hours allowed to carry over. We will add the topic to next month's agenda if we would like to change. Motion by Wichmann and seconded by Reindal to approve the Hours report as presented. Carried unanimously.

Fire Chief Thunstedt reported that they had 1 mutual aid fire call, 1 false fire call, 1 MVA, and 1 medical call in the month of December 2024. There was no county meeting held in December due to the holidays. Jim applied for grant funds from Alden Area Community Foundation and from Nexus Cooperative to go towards the Lucas machine. He received word from the Community Foundation that the Fire Department will receive a \$1500 grant. The department did a walk through at Nexus, touring the building and storage area. Kim clarified that the PERA Contribution from the City will begin in 2025, and it will be an annual contribution. Motion by Pedersen and seconded by Reindal to approve the fire report as presented. Carried unanimously.

Public Works Maintenance Worker Burris presented the Public Works Report. He reported that a second set of thin ice signs have been installed on the lake due to the others sinking when it melted. They moved the lots for sale sign for the North Powers Addition because it was mistakenly installed on the county's right of way. They will be put back up when the weather is a little better. The shop repairs on the tractor snow blower are waiting for metal work. Motion by Pedersen and seconded by Reindal to approve the purchase of a welder for \$4200. Carried. Alex contacted Olson Excavating regarding the demolition of 308 W. Main Street. They were waiting for permits and should be able to move forward in the next month. MN Dept of Health called and will be doing an inspection at the water plant on Monday, January 13th at 11:00. We will contact Bolton & Menk to possibly be there for the inspection to answer questions as well. Alex has removed several street signs that were not necessary. Motion by Wichmann and seconded by Reindal to approve the Public Works Report. Carried unanimously.

Chief Strom reported that the Alden Area Community Foundation awarded the Police department a \$1500 grant. He also applied for a \$1000 grant from the MN Chiefs of Police Association. The SWAT team completed training at 308 W. Main Street last month and will be doing another training at the location this evening (January 8th). Motion by Pedersen and seconded by Reindal to approve the Police Report. Carried unanimously.

The annual audit will start the week of January 27th. The price is a little lower than last year.

We received a phone call from the MN Department of Health regarding the Lead level Exceedances letting us know that we were a few days late sending the Public Education Materials out to the residents, and that we are required to send another letter to all residents, informing them that we were out of compliance for a short period of time, but now are back in compliance.

Brenda from WCTA was at the meeting to present the city with a Certificate of Recognition for being a Smart Connected Community. This is due to the installation of fiber optic lines being installed by WCTA.

Resolution 2025.01 – Annual Assignments were discussed. Motion by Reindal and seconded by Wichmann to leave the annual assignments the same as last year, except replacing Wuerflein with Burris/Riedl. Carried unanimously.

Motion by Wichmann and seconded by Pedersen to approve Resolution 2025.02 - Allowing wire/Automated Bank Payments. Carried unanimously.

Discussion was had regarding the 2025 Fee Schedule. Clothing with the city logo was discussed. Copy fees were discussed but ultimately were left at the same rate as in previous years. Fax fees will be removed from the schedule as this service is no longer available, and the Rental House Inspection Fee will also be removed from the schedule.

Discussion was had on the Minnesota Basic Code Ordinance Adopting fees. Our current fee schedule remains in place until the official Ordinance is adopted. Information was given to the council regarding the ordinance, and we will hold a public hearing next month. There was also discussion about assessing fines for parking, etc.

Motion by VanEngelenburg and seconded by Reindal to sign the Landowner Permit for the Freeborn County Trail System. Carried unanimously. The Snowmobile trail goes through the city owned lots on N. Powers, and this permit releases the city from any liability regarding the trail on city owned property.

The roof over the garage attached to the old city hall is leaking, and the ceiling in both the garage and the old council chambers need to be fixed due to the leaking. Alex will get options and quotes and will bring them to the next meeting.

New pictures of the council and city staff were discussed for the website. We are missing several pictures of council members. We will remove all pictures and just have names until the pictures can be updated later this spring. We will also update the Fire Department picture with the new fire truck once it arrives.

Motion by VanEngelenburg and seconded by Pedersen to allow clerk Knutson to attend the MCFOA conference in Brooklyn Park. Carried unanimously.

The city will need to upgrade our postage meter with newer technology. There is an increase in the monthly fee of \$1.60 per month. Motion by Pedersen and seconded by VanEngelenburg to approve updating the postage meter. Carried unanimously.

A public alert system was discussed. We would like to have a system that would allow voice, text, and email messages to be sent out. We have a quote from one company and will look for other options before we commit.

Options for security cameras at the ponds and at NorthPark were discussed. Motion by Pedersen and seconded by Wichmann to purchase a camera for use in the pond area. Carried unanimously. The monitoring will be sent to Glen's phone, since that is a city owned cell phone. We will continue to look into options for cameras for NorthPark and the Beach.

County Commissioner Nikki Eckstrom mentioned that the certificate from WCTA will be good to use as part of our Hazard Mitigation Plan. Kim, Alex, Glen, and Nellie all participated in the Freeborn County Hazard Mitigation Plan meeting on January 7th. She recommended that we check into state grants for roof repairs to the fire station, as well as other projects. She recommended that we check into the rules for posting, etc for camera surveillance.

A proposal was given to all council members from Jerome regarding him doing work for the city after his retirement. He is willing to help us out with the Infrastructure Project once that begins, as well as helping us with the monthly water reporting, as none of our current employees have their water or wastewater licenses. There was much discussion by the council about the proposal. Motion by Reindal and seconded by Wichmann to pay whoever agrees to handle our water reporting \$50 per hour. Carried unanimously. The offer will be made to Jerome first, and if he declines, we will make the offer to others. Our staff can handle the testing, but the person doing the paperwork would need to come in periodically to verify the chemical level and adjust if needed.

The council was reminded to turn in their employee reviews, if they have not already.

VanEngelenburg asked that we make sure all employees have signed the Personnel Policy Manual acknowledgment.

Motion by VanEngelenburg and seconded by Pedersen to approve the bills and Electronic Fund Transfers as presented. Bills presented for payment \$96,298.14, EFT's of \$10,296.49, and Payroll of \$27,579.93. Carried unanimously.

Motion by Wichmann and seconded by VanEngelenburg to adjourn at 7:42 pm

Mayor Reyerson re-opened the meeting at 7:43 to discuss the abatement at 324 W. Main Street. Motion was made by Pedersen and seconded by Wichmann to not pursue collecting the fees due to legal reasons. Notice will be given to the attorney handling the issue. Carried unanimously.

Motion by Pedersen and seconded by Wichmann to adjourn the meeting again at 7:50

Respectfully submitted,

Kim Knutson

Clerk-Treasurer