

## **MINUTES OF THE ALDEN CITY COUNCIL MEETING – October 9, 2024**

The regular meeting of the Alden City Council was called to order at 6:00pm. Roll call was read. Members present were Ms. VanEngelenburg, Mr. Reindal, Mr. Wichmann, Ms. Pederson, and Mayor Reyerson. City Staff present were City Clerk-Treasurer Knutson, Maintenance Worker Burris, and Chief of Police Glen Strom. Fire Chief Thunstedt joined the meeting later. Others present were County Commissioner Nicole Eckstrom, Heather Butler from the Crime Victims Crisis Center, Lori Nelson, Don Bryson, Shirley Newman, Frank & Anika Thompson.

The Pledge of Allegiance was said.

Motion by VanEngelenburg and seconded by Pedersen to approve the minutes of the September 11, 2024, meeting as presented. Carried.

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

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

Fire Chief Thunstedt's written report stated that there was 1 vehicle fire call and 8 medical calls in the month of September. The county meeting was held in Albert Lea and the information was on a new reporting system to file fire department reports. Jim applied for the Freeborn-Mower Operation Round Up funds and the Taylor Family Farms Foundation grant. Fire Prevention Week is October 6<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup>, and Operation EDITH will be held Wednesday, October 9 at 7:00 pm. Motion by Pedersen and seconded by VanEngelenburg to approve the written fire report. Carried.

Public Works Superintendent Wuerflein was not at the meeting, so he submitted his written report. Tuesday, October 8<sup>th</sup> there was a water main break on Washington Ave in the same location we have had issues in the past. Alex did a good job taking care of the issue. The written Public Works report stated that the West Main property was tested for asbestos. The cost was basically the same to have the whole house put into a licensed landfill as it was to have the asbestos removed and then taken down, so we are proceeding with the removal with the entire house being sent to the licensed landfill. The new Christmas tree decoration has been delivered, and there are brackets put up on North Star Road for decorations to be placed there this year. Jerome has been talking with Bolten & Menk about the infrastructure project and the storm water project grant applications. A design was presented for signs to post on the properties that the City has for sale. Motion by VanEngelenburg and seconded by Reindal to approve the signs to be made by Sparkling Image. Carried. There was a discussion regarding quotes for doors at the beach. We will table the discussion until Jerome can be part of the conversation. Motion by Wichmann and seconded by VanEngelenburg to approve the written Public Works Report. Carried.

The Alden Police Department is now legally recognized as a police department. Chief Strom has had several calls for service, and much of the equipment needed has been purchased. Discussion was had on applying for grants through the Alden Area Community Foundation and the Carlson Foundation to pay for some of the equipment still needed. He has adopted the policies required for the Police Department. Motion by Pedersen and seconded by VanEngelenburg for the city to accept the policies required by the POST board. Carried. There was discussion on the ordinance violations that we have been working on. Motion by VanEngelenburg and seconded by Reindal to approve the Police Report. Carried.

Lori Nelson from the Lions Club was present to discuss their plans for the updating around the Welcome to Alden signs. The quote for the landscaping is \$6800. Spirea bushes will be removed, bushes on the sides will be trimmed back, new pavers will be installed, and new rock. Would like to have the signs power washed, but the Lions don't have access to that so they wondered if the fire department or someone else could help with that. The Lions have applied for a grant to help pay for the project. If the grant is not

awarded to the Lions, the project would have to wait until next year. We will also work on keeping communication open between the Lions and the City. Motion by Pedersen and seconded by Wichmann to accept the Lions proposal to update the signs with gratitude. Carried.

Heather Butler from the Crime Victims Crisis Center was present at the meeting to discuss October being Domestic Violence Awareness month. She brought some yard signs, light bulbs, and a poster for the city to post to help raise awareness of Domestic Abuse.

Frank from Thompson Sanitation was present to ask the city to renew our contract for garbage removal for six more years. The proposal has a modest increase, and they have also eliminated the Fuel surcharge until gas goes above \$5 per gallon. Everything else would remain the same. Motion by Pedersen and seconded by VanEngelenburg to accept the contract with Thompson Sanitation. Carried.

The council received an estimate from Stone Werx to plant 6 trees around the lake and at NorthPark. Motion by Pedersen and seconded by VanEngelenburg to accept the bid from Stone Werx for planting trees. The money from the Greg Hitchcock memorial donations will be used for the trees, and the rest will be covered by the city.

The Midco Franchise renewal was discussed. The franchise is legally required for the cable companies to use the city's right of way to provide service to the city, and it is non-exclusive. Motion by Pedersen and seconded by VanEngelenburg to extend the Midco Franchise contract for another five years. Carried.

Fire Chief Thunstedt joined the meeting and expanded on some of the items in his report. The Freeborn Mower Operation Round up grant was applied for to purchase water movement equipment for the new fire truck. The latest update on the delivery of the new fire truck is just after the 1<sup>st</sup> of the year. The Taylor Family Farms Foundation Grant he applied for was for \$20,000 to purchase a Lucas CPR machine. There was a medical consortium meeting on Sept 18th, and there are a few who need to renew certification for next year. Applications are already in for that. A question was asked about the Fire Department being able to access houses with excess garbage around the outside in an emergency. There is no set regulation, but the department will use their own discretion if this situation arises. A question was also asked about the department having the ability to pressure wash the Welcome to Alden signs. They do not have a pressure washer to do that. Motion by VanEngelenburg and seconded by Reindal to approve the Fire Dept Report. Carried.

The South Central Drug Investigation Unit Membership meeting was postponed until next month, so the decision to become a member was tabled until the November meeting. We are waiting to see if there is pro-rated pricing for smaller cities.

A motion was made by Wichmann and seconded by VanEngelenburg that the city contribute \$4500 to the Fire Department PERA. Carried.

Motion by VanEngelenburg and seconded by Pedersen to appoint Annette Bruns, Linda Bryson, Donald Bryson, Marge Kuethe, Mary Stoneback, Tammy Williams, Shirley Newman, Gary Nelson, and Kay Marschalk as election judges, and appoint Donna Schmidt and Kim Knutson as Co-Head judges. The full resolution is on file in the city office.

Discussion was had on raising the sewer rates for 2025 in preparation for the proposed infrastructure project. Motion by VanEngelenburg and seconded by Wichmann to raise the rates \$2.00 per 1000 gallons in 2025. Carried.

A Budget was presented to the council incorporating the discussion from the Budget Workshop. Motion by VanEngelenburg and seconded by Reindal to approve the proposed Budget for 2025. Carried.

An update was provided on the 326 Euclid Property. The owner is interested in removing the house. The council would like to put a Resolution in place to ensure that the process continues to move forward. Motion by Pedersen and seconded by Wichmann to adopt the Order to Raze a Hazardous Building, Resolution No. 2024-10. Carried.

The Public Works Superintendent Position was discussed. Due to not enough applicants, the position will be reposted on Indeed and the League of MN Cities website. Pedersen is checking into the health insurance options.

Kim requested vacation November 14 – 18. Motion by VanEngelenburg and seconded by Reindal to approve the vacation request. Carried.

VanEngelenburg asked about running electricity to the Triangle for the new Christmas Tree decoration. Heath has a plan for how that will be accomplished.

VanEngelenburg asked for an update on the landscaping around the Rock Memorial by the lake, where the museum was planning on doing a project. Don Bryson reported that the museum put the project on hold. If another group comes to the council with a plan before the Museum has an opportunity to do anything, the museum is fine with the council allowing another group to do that.

Kim will add a credit card for Glen to the city's account and he will follow the city's credit card policy for its use.

Glen is eligible to be added to the city's USABLE Life, STD, and AD&D Insurance policy as long as his regular schedule is 30 hours per week.

There was a discussion on the fees for citations. Most fees for citations are set in state statute, but we will need to set fees for parking tickets and other ordinance violations.

County Commissioner Eckstrom reminded us that the Freeborn County Sheriff's Department is still looking for input from the communities over the next two months. Please reach out to the Emergency Management Director Rich Hall if you have input. She also recommended reaching out to Steve Carlson with Empowering MN and also Diamond Joes to check into grants for planting trees.

There was a discussion on the new Cannabis Laws and the county's plan for their ordinance.

Motion by Pedersen and seconded by Wichmann to approve the bills and Electronic Fund Transfers as presented. Bills presented for payment \$68,279.70, EFT's of \$9,123.60, and Payroll of \$11,341.13. Carried.

Motion by Pedersen and seconded by VanEngelenburg to adjourn at 7:18 pm

Respectfully submitted,

Kim Knutson

Clerk-Treasurer