

## **MINUTES OF THE ALDEN CITY COUNCIL MEETING – December 10, 2025**

The City of Alden Truth in Taxation meeting was called to order at 6:00 pm. Members present were Ms. VanEngelenburg, Mr. Reindal, Mr. Wichmann, and Mayor Reyerson. Absent: Ms. Pedersen. City staff were City Clerk Knutson, Fire Chief Thunstedt, and Public Works Employee Myrick. Others present were Lisa Myrick, Jim & Judy Schwartz and Dean Bendickson.

The residents present were concerned about the increase in taxes. They were hoping that there would be a representative from the county at tonight's meeting, but there was not. The county, the city, and the school all raised levy's this year, and there were also increases in property valuations from the county. The city has proposed raising the 2026 levy to \$330,000, which is a 10% increase, or \$30,000 over last year's levy. This amount equals about half of the projected shortfall in the budget, with the rest being made up through reserves and spending cuts. No further questions were asked. Mr. Schwartz also commented that in his opinion, the person plowing the streets this year is doing a good job. The Truth in Taxation meeting was closed at 6:14.

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

Roll call was read. Members present were Ms. VanEngelenburg, Mr. Reindal, Mr. Wichmann, and Mayor Reyerson. Ms. Pedersen was absent. City staff were City Clerk Knutson, Fire Chief Thunstedt, and Public Works Employee Myrick. Others present were Lisa Myrick.

The Pledge of Allegiance was said.

Motion by VanEngelenburg and seconded by Reindal to approve the minutes of November 12, 2025, regular council meeting as presented. Carried unanimously. Motion by VanEngelenburg and seconded by Reindal to approve the minutes of the December 3, 2025, special meeting. Carried unanimously.

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

Clerk Knutson mentioned that she will be taking some time off in December to use up some of her vacation time. She will be gone on December 24, December 26, December 29<sup>th</sup>. Motion was made by VanEngelenburg 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 MVA, and 5 medical calls in the month of November. The county meeting was in Myrtle, where members of the MN BCA attended to discuss mandatory background checks for firefighters. New county firefighter IDs were received. The MN DNR 50/50 grant application was submitted for a new slip unit for grass fires. Seven members of the Alden Fire Department attended a live house fire burn training on November 23<sup>rd</sup>, hosted by the Wells Fire Department. A pumper and a tanker were provided by our department for the training. Medical Consortium training was held on November 19<sup>th</sup>. Chief Thunstedt and Paul Weigel took training on the new NERIS system. This will be used for incident reporting starting January 1, 2026. Jim wrote a letter of support on behalf of the fire department for the city's LRIP application. A question was asked about whether the city could share expenses with the air compressor with other towns. Jim reported that Conger Fire Department does use our compressor, and they pay for the maintenance every other time it is needed as needed. Motion by Wichmann and seconded by Reindal to approve the Fire Report. Carried unanimously.

Public Works employee Myrick reported that he attended a wastewater conference, where he received lots of good information. An employee with the MPCA met with Scott at the conference and will be coming to Alden to work with Scott on regulations to make sure the city is in compliance. She will then be down in 6 months or so, to do a full inspection. Street sweeping is done for the year, and Scott will call Elgin in the spring to fix the brushes. The mowers have been winterized and are in storage with battery maintainers on them. Scott's CDL school is temporarily on hold. He is hoping to be able to do that in January sometime. He is requesting a new computer, and printer/scanner for the shop. Motion by VanEngelenburg and seconded by Wichmann to approve the purchase of a new computer, printer/scanner for the shop. Carried unanimously. The Christmas decorations are up, thank you to Heath, Jerry, and Nellie. Scott asked what the city does with waste oil & filters. It was recommended that he check with Kevin at Lakeside Auto to see who he uses for that. Motion by VanEngelenburg and seconded by Reindal to approve the hiring of Joel Scott Myrick for the Public Works Superintendent position. Carried unanimously. A lengthy discussion was had about health insurance options and starting salary. The starting wage offer was \$29.00 per hour, with increases as he acquires more licenses. Scott asked if he could have some time to consider the offer. We will put the insurance on next month's agenda and try to find options to offer to all employees. Motion by VanEngelenburg and seconded by Reindal to approve the Public Works Report.

Correspondence was received from Freeborn County Auditor-Treasurer's office requesting notification of polling place location for next year. Our polling place will not change; it will remain Old City Hall, at 174 N. Broadway. The second correspondence was an email from the Freeborn County Building Inspector. He did a visual inspection of 326 Euclid and stated that in his opinion the property has been secured, and it can be taken off the hazardous structure list, although the owner should continue working on the property. We should also reach out to 171 N. Powers to have him submit a revised plan for his building renovations. The last piece of correspondence was from MN Unemployment notifying us that a past employee's unemployment claim was denied.

The property at 192 W. Washington has requested the council reconsider the rezoning of the property from commercial to residential. After some discussion, the council has decided to consider a Conditional Use Permit instead of the rezoning. The permit has certain restrictions on the property and only is in effect until ownership of the property changes. If the property is sold, it would revert back to commercial use. A public hearing will be held on January 14, 2026 prior to the council meeting. Notices will run in the paper, posted around town, and will be mailed directly to residents within 350 yards of the property.

The MN Department of Health is raising the water testing fees charged to the city to \$3.81 per connection per quarter. Motion by Reindal and seconded by VanEngelenburg to approve Resolution 2025-12, Resolution to increase 2026 Water Testing fees, which raises the water testing fee charged from \$1.60 to \$3.81 per connection per quarter. Carried unanimously.

The final 2026 budget was reviewed. The only changes made to the budget since passing the preliminary budget were updated salaries and projected health insurance expenses. Motion by Wichmann and seconded by Reindal to approve the revised 2026 budget. Carried unanimously.

Motion by VanEngelenburg and seconded by Reindal to approve the 2026 Final levy, with a 10% increase over last year. The 2026 levy will be \$330,000.00. Carried unanimously.

Employee evaluations were discussed. Each council member was provided with 2 copies of the evaluations, one for each of the current employees. They should be turned in prior to the next council meeting.

Discussion was had on the Chief of Police position. The candidate we have been negotiating with is still working out some details. He hopes to let us know by the end of the year.

Scott asked about possibly moving the International tractor from the city shop to the cold storage. That would make room for the squad car. The council agreed that would be a good idea.

Nexus called the city office to see if they could contract with us to do their salting and sanding in their parking lot. I told him I didn't think that was something that the city was able to do, but I would possibly get some names of companies that may be able to help. Kim will call them back with names mentioned.

The annual payroll for the Fire Department and Council Members will be processed this week.

The lead water sample test kits will be delivered to the three additional residents on Thursday, hoping to get them sent off to the lab for testing in the next few days.

Motion by Reindal and seconded by Wichmann to approve the bills and Electronic Fund Transfers. Bills presented for payment \$52,119.36, EFTs of \$6,275.44, and Payroll of \$9,368.97. Carried unanimously.

Motion by VanEngelenburg and seconded by Wichmann to approve with appreciation donations to the Alden Cemetery from Allan and Donna Schmidt, Bob and Shirley Newman, the family of Richard Borge, and Jackie Bauernfeind. Carried unanimously.

Motion by VanEngelenburg and seconded by Reindal to adjourn at 7:21. Carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Kim Knutson  
Clerk-Treasurer