

Minutes are unofficial until approved at the next council meeting

MINUTES OF THE ALDEN CITY COUNCIL MEETING – December 11, 2024

The City of Alden Truth in Taxation meeting was called to order at 6:00 pm. 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, Public Works Superintendent Wuerflein, Maintenance Worker Burris, Chief of Police Glen Strom, Fire Chief Thunstedt and new Public Works Superintendent Ray Riedl. Others present were Parker Hemmingsen, Ben Rosol from Bolton & Menk, and attorney Ashley Olson.

The Pledge of Allegiance was said.

No members of the public were present with comments or questions regarding individual taxes. Printed copies of the proposed budget were available. The city has proposed raising the levy to \$300,000, which is a 9.68% increase. Mayor Reyerson called for questions three times. With no questions or comments, the Truth in Taxation meeting was closed at 6:06.

At 6:06, the Public Hearing regarding the Ordinance Amending Chapter 151 of the City Code regarding the Regulation of Cannabis and Hemp Businesses. The city worked with attorney Ashley Olson on the proposed ordinance. She explained the purpose of the ordinance and the details as to where these businesses can be set up. She also explained the licensing process, which will be done with the county. There were no questions or comments from the public. The public hearing was closed at 6:31pm.

The regular meeting of the Alden City Council was called to order at 6:31pm

Motion by VanEngelenburg and seconded by Reindal to approve the minutes of the November 13, 2024, meeting as presented. Carried.

The Treasurer's report for December does not include the 2nd half of property tax or the 2nd half of the LGA for 2024, as the balances on the report are as of November 30th and those funds will not be received until December. Motion by Wichmann and seconded by Pedersen to approve the Treasurer's Report as presented. Carried.

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

Fire Chief Thunstedt reported that they had 1 tractor fire call and 3 medical calls in the month of November 2024. The county meeting was held in Conger. State training dollars will be \$5830 in 2025, which is \$265 per firefighter. The program was presented by the Freeborn County K-9 unit. Consortium, training was held in Alden on November 20th, with the topic being field triage and OB emergencies. The Fire Department would like to thank The Clothes Closet in Wells for their donation of \$750 to the department, which will be put into the operating fund. There was a mix up with the Freeborn Mower Operation Round up grant request. Hopefully we will receive that next quarter. 2 firefighters submitted their notice of retirement at last night's meeting. Troy Newman is retiring with 28+ years of service, and Dave Hemmingsen is retiring with 35-36 years of service. Thank you to both for the many years of service to the department. The update on the new fire truck is that it should be delivered sometime in early spring. Motion by VanEngelenburg and seconded by Wichmann to approve the fire report as presented. Carried.

Public Works Superintendent Wuerflein reported that the snow fences on Euclid and Powers have been put up. Thin ice signs have been put around the lake. The Christmas decorations have been put up and we have heard many positive comments about them. They have started using winter bugs in the sewer ponds, which is an enzyme to treat sludge. Ben Rosal was here to talk to the council about a grant application for a storm water project. He feels it might be good for the city to apply for a planning grant, which covers

planning and the start of the design of the project. It would be a 90/10 split, with the city covering 10% of the cost. Motion was made by VanEngelenburg and seconded by Wichmann to have Bolton & Menk apply for the planning grant on behalf of the city. Carried. Mayor Reyerson asked Parker Hemmingsen if he would consider selling a portion of the hay ground property owned by the Hemmingsen's to the city for a potential storm water project. He will consider it. Motion by Wichmann and seconded by Reindal to approve the Public Works Report. Carried

Chief Strom reported that he is still waiting for the radio, body armor and helmet from the list of equipment that he ordered. He has spoken with the Alden Area Community Foundation regarding grant opportunities, and he will consider applying for the LeVerne Carlson Foundation grant in the spring. The squad car graphics have been installed. There is SWAT team training taking place tonight (December 11th), at the house on W. Main that is owned by the city. Motion by VanEngelenburg and seconded by Pedersen to approve the Police Report. Carried.

Motion by VanEngelenburg and seconded by Reindal to approve Resolution 2024-16 – Sale of 350 Euclid Property. The property is declared as excess property and will be sold to Kim Soost for the price of \$1000 with closing costs to be paid by the purchaser. Carried.

Motion by VanEngelenburg and seconded by Wichmann to pass the Ordinance amending Chapter 151 of the city code Regarding the Regulation of Cannabis and Hemp Businesses. Carried.

Motion by Pedersen and seconded VanEngelenburg to approve Resolution 2024-14 Approving the Summary publication of the Ordinance amending Chapter 151 of the city code Regarding the Regulation of Cannabis and Hemp Businesses. Carried.

Motion by Pedersen and seconded by Reindal to approve Resolution 2024-15 Delegating the Authority to Freeborn County to Register Certain Cannabis and Hemp Retail Businesses. Carried.

The 2025 Budget was reviewed and discussed. Motion by Reindal and seconded by Wichmann to approve the proposed budget. Voting yes: VanEngelenburg, Reindal, Wichmann, Reyerson. Voting no: Pedersen. Carried. Motion by Pedersen and seconded VanEngelenburg to move \$25,000 per year from the General Fund into the Equipment fund for the next 5 years, to help plan for the replacement of the payloader and/or other equipment. Carried.

Discussion was had on the proposed levy for 2025. Motion by VanEngelenburg and seconded by Pedersen to approve the proposed levy of \$300,000. Carried.

The personnel policy committee met on December 6th to go over updates to the policy. We have updated the employee benefits to be prorated for employees working 30 hours or more per week. The vacation will be changed from frontloading to the accrual basis. Vacation received at the first of the year is considered to have been earned the prior year, so to start 2025 remaining balances will be carried over, the vacation earned for last year will be added, and the accrual will begin for hours worked. Motion by Pedersen and seconded by Wichmann to approve the updated personnel policy. Carried.

Resolution 2024.17 Order to Raze a Hazardous Building at 326 Euclid St. was reviewed by the council. It included the Inspection Report and pictures of the issues with the building. The owner is willing to work with the city on repairing or removing the building, but the council would like the resolution in place to keep the process moving forward. Motion by Wichmann and seconded by Reindal to approve Resolution 2024.17. This will then be served in person to the owner on record, to begin the timeline. Carried.

Discussion was had on completing the employee reviews. Once completed, turn them in to Kim or Jerry. Jerry will then compile the information.

The council discussed removing the bushes around the Welcome to Alden signs. Motion by VanEngelenburg to remove the bushes. Carried.

Lake rock was also discussed. The council agreed that we would continue with rock around the lake. The city will be allowed to go pick up rock from local farmers with city equipment, if necessary.

Alex requested permission to purchase a new vacuum for City Hall. Jerome also recommended that we have the carpet cleaned at City Hall as well. The council gave the approval for the purchase.

Motion by VanEngelenburg and seconded by Wichmann to approve the bills and Electronic Fund Transfers as presented. Bills presented for payment \$24,591.41, EFT's of \$7,559.43, and Payroll of \$16,336.14. Carried.

Motion by Wichmann and seconded by Reindal to adjourn at 7:45 pm

Respectfully submitted,

Kim Knutson

Clerk-Treasurer