

## **MINUTES OF THE ALDEN CITY COUNCIL MEETING – April 10, 2024**

The regular meeting of the Alden City council was called to order by Mayor Pro-tem Wichmann at 6:00pm. Roll call was read. Council Members present were Ms. VanEngelenburg, Mr. Reindal, Mr. Wichmann, and Ms. Pederson. Absent was Mayor Reyerson. City staff present were Fire Chief Thunstedt, Public Works Supervisor Jerome Wuerflein and Clerk-Treasurer Kim Knutson. Others present were Ben Rosal from Bolten-Menk, County Commissioner Nicole Eckstrom, Steve Newman, Jamie Christiansen, and Becca Bryson.

The Pledge of Allegiance was said.

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

Motion by Pedersen and seconded by VanEngelenburg 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 there were 0 fire calls, 1 Motor Vehicle Accident (MVA), and 1 medical call in March. The county meeting was held in London where the State Fire Marshall reported the new OSHA regulations that are proposed are extremely restrictive and will cause many issues if passed. The council would like to stay informed on the status, so that we can send letters if needed. Commissioner Eckstrom voiced her support of the department regarding the OSHA issue and said to let her know if there's anything the commissioners can do to help. The fire department roster is in process for training dollars for the next fiscal year. Overhead doors openers have been installed. The department has put together a second "first in bag" with items needed to triage in case of multiple calls at one time or multiple patients at one scene. The Alden Fire Department was awarded a \$2500 grant from CFS, and Land O' Lakes awarded them a matching grant of \$2500 for equipment purchases. Jim also submitted a request to the LeVerne Carlson Foundation requesting funds for extrication equipment. Discussion was had on whether Kim should be an ex-officio member of the Fire Relief Association. This was part of the job description for the clerk in the past. Jim thought that might have been put in place when the Relief Association handled their own retirement funds, but now they are part of PERA so that is not the case anymore. Jim also updated on the status of the new fire truck. We will possibly take possession of it this fall, and then we will have some minor updates needed to customize for our department. Hoping it will be in service at the start of next year. Motion by VanEngelenburg and seconded by Reindal to approve the Fire report as presented. Carried.

Public Works Superintendent Wuerflein reported that they met with the DNR regarding the lake outfall repairs. We will need a permit for that, so it may take a little longer than thought. Jerome met with Ben Rosal from Bolten-Menk regarding the Lead Service Line Inventory Project. Ben was present to give more information and answer questions on the project. The first step will be to send letters to residents to have them send in pictures of their service in their home. If they are not able to send in pictures of their service, we will have to go into the homes to see the service coming in. We are hoping to get those letters sent out next week. The mower for the ponds has been delivered. The transmission on the truck is making noises. Jerome has had it serviced but is concerned it may need to be replaced in the near future. Motion by VanEngelenburg and seconded by Reindal to approve the Public Works Report as presented. Carried.

The Local Road Improvement Program grant application was denied by MNDOT. We are encouraged to keep trying for the grant.

Mayo ambulance sent a letter updating the city on their new protocol for lights and siren use. The lights and sirens will only be used for medical emergencies involving certain time-sensitive symptoms.

Steve Newman was present on behalf of the Alden Legion. They applied to renew their liquor license and would like to renew the Combination On and Off-Premise license, but have elected not to renew the Sunday license. The application has been submitted to the Sheriff's department for the required background check. Motion by VanEngelenburg and seconded by Pedersen to approve the liquor license renewal pending a successful background check. Carried.

Becca Bryson was present on behalf of the Morin Lake Days Committee providing an update on celebration plans. The Fire Department is setting up the parade route, assisting with two water stops and a follower for the Fun Run, and manning the fireworks. They also are planning to have the water tournament on Sunday, June 16<sup>th</sup> in the afternoon.

Discussion was had on the flowerpots around the lake for this year. Mary Chicos dropped off information regarding a discussion she had with Mayor Reyerson regarding a plan to have all the flowers matching, but still have members of the community volunteer to adopt a flowerpot to take care of. Decision was tabled until next month meeting.

Discussion was had on the updated Job Descriptions. The items discussed were spending limits prior to council approval should be \$2000, purchasing processes for Maintenance Worker position needs to be put in place, minimum qualifications on experience should say "preferred" not "required", attending safety training classes. The job descriptions will be tabled until the next meeting. The employee evaluation was discussed. Motion by VanEngelenburg and seconded by Reindal to approve the employee Performance Appraisal with 1 correction to spelling. Carried.

Discussion was had on the covenants for selling city owned lots. A draft was presented to the council and some revisions were made. Kim will retype the covenant and present it to the council for approval at the next meeting. We will then have our attorney review and draft the legal documents.

Discussion on the Police Position was tabled until the next meeting.

An update was given on the Mayo Building. Mayo rejected our offer and suggested a counteroffer. Discussions have begun between Mayo Clinic and Southeastern Minnesota Initiative Fund, and the city may be left out of the process.

Discussion was had on status of properties with outstanding complaints. A letter will be sent to 326 Euclid beginning the process. A letter has been sent to 324 W. Main Street allowing 14 days to clean up the property. The 14 days ends on April 12, so we will begin the process with the Albert Lea Police Department for clean up next week. Heath will reach out to the owner of the Creamery building to get an update on the status of that building.

Motion by VanEngelenburg and seconded by Reindal to approve a vacation request for Kim Knutson July 17 – 19, 2024. Carried.

The city received a call from Leah Jacobson, the former owner of 280 Euclid regarding the money being held in escrow from the fire at that house. She no longer has any control over the property, as was sold a few years back. We will compile a total of expenses to the city on behalf of the property by the next council meeting and will deduct that from the escrow amount and return the remaining balance to Mrs. Jacobson.

County Commissioner Eckstrom reported that she has contact information regarding a person who works through the U of M Extension in Albert Lea who helps to facilitate grants. He doesn't write grants but can help us find where to apply, if that was something the city would be interested in. She also listed other local and state grants that we can tap into.

Comments were given by Jamie Christianson during the public comments period regarding the job descriptions, and he also asked questions regarding the Lead Service Line Inventory.

Motion by VanEngelenburg and seconded by Pedersen to approve the bills and Electronic Fund Transfers as presented. Bills presented for payment \$80,961.93, EFT's of \$9,840.36, and Payroll of \$7,818.22. Carried.

Motion by VanEngelenburg and seconded by Pedersen to adjourn at 7:47pm

Respectfully submitted,

Kim Knutson  
Clerk-Treasurer