

## **MINUTES OF THE ALDEN CITY COUNCIL MEETING – August 14, 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 Public Works Superintendent Wuerflein, Fire Chief Thunstedt, City Clerk-Treasurer Knutson, and Maintenance Worker Burris. Others present were Shirley Newman, Don Bryson, Cody Carlson, Derek Thorson, Jamie Christianson, and Kevin Reed. The Pledge of Allegiance was said.

Motion by VanEngelenburg and seconded by Wichmann to approve the minutes of the July 10, 2024, meeting as presented. Carried.

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

Discussion was had on Alex's overtime. The comp hours over 40 banked through last month have been paid to him, but he has since accumulated more hours that need to be paid out with council approval. Motion by Pedersen and seconded by VanEngelenburg to pay out the additional comp time hours. Carried. Motion by Pedersen and seconded by VanEngelenburg to approve the hours report. Carried.

Fire Chief Thunstedt reported that there were 0 fire calls and 4 medical calls in the month of July. The county meeting was held in Myrtle, where they discussed the flooding around the county. There was also discussion on how long to allow for payments of fire claims. Previously we had allowed 90 days for payments, but the state fire marshal recommended we only allow 30 days. The council agreed that 30 days would keep it consistent with our other billing. Jim did submit a comment letter to OSHA opposing the new fire brigade standards due to budget constraints. The new extrication tools have been delivered and will be on display during the Pork Chop and Sweet Corn feed on Saturday the 17th. There will be a training on August 22<sup>nd</sup>. We will be hosting the county meeting on Monday August 19<sup>th</sup> at 7:00pm. The Alden Fire Department placed 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> at the water wars in Frost on August 3<sup>rd</sup>. AFD women placed 1<sup>st</sup> in the women's water fight. Caleb Merkouris has applied to be a member of the Alden Fire Department. He is currently a member of the Conger Fire Department, so he has completed all the training necessary. Motion by VanEngelenburg and seconded by Pedersen to approve Caleb's membership to the department. Carried. Jim also asked the city to consider donating to the Fire Department Relief Association next year as they have in the past. They will take this into consideration. Motion by VanEngelenburg and seconded by Wichmann to approve the Fire Report as presented. Carried.

Public Works Superintendent reported that the tractor has been repaired and is now working fine. There was discussion regarding new call out systems for the lift station as an early warning point to residents of rain events. Options for new alert systems that we can access evenings and weekends will be investigated by Kim. Jerome presented some options for storm sewer updates to help with future rain events. There are possible grants available to cities to help pay for this. He will try to get some estimated costs for the different options to help us determine which direction to go. The council asked him to continue researching options. Jerome has been working with Alex to teach him how to fill out the monthly reports, but Alex will still need to get his certification. Motion by Pedersen and seconded by Reindal to approve the Public Works Report as presented. Carried.

The city has received a letter from Midco, notifying us that they would like to renew our Cable Communications Franchise which is set to expire February 11, 2025. This will be added to the agenda for next month.

Alden native Derek Thorson presented information to the council regarding his business that he would like to move from Colorado to Alden. He is interested in purchasing the property next to the boat landing to build his building, but he is open to other areas around town as well. They would like to begin building in the next 6 months. The council will take this into consideration and will remain in contact with Mr. Thorson.

Alden-Conger Superintendent Alan Berg was present at the meeting to introduce himself to the council. He also discussed the school's Emergency Management Plan. The evacuation location for the elementary students is the Old City Hall. This was more than likely put in place when there was daily activity in that building and the doors were unlocked during the day. Since the doors are no longer unlocked, the school would like a key for their emergency box to be able to access City Hall in the event of an emergency. Motion by VanEngelenburg and seconded by Wichmann to give a key to the school. Carried. Mr. Reindal asked if the school might be interested in police presence in the school if we do hire a police officer. Mr. Berg said they would be interested, and there may be grants available to the school to help pay for that. This will be discussed again as the new officer begins work.

The owner of 326 Euclid came to the city office prior to the meeting to ask for an extension on making the repairs to the house. She was advised that she should come to a council meeting to discuss it with the full council, but she was not in attendance at the meeting. The council feels that since she did not attend the meeting, we will move forward with the next steps in the process to have the house removed.

Cody Carlson attended the meeting, asking for more time to clean up the debris behind his building and the one next to it. Motion by Pedersen and seconded by Reindal to allow 60 days to complete the clean-up. Carried.

Kevin Reed attended the meeting to fill the council in on the plans for removing the Creamery Building. He is planning to have it taken down before winter. The council asked him to complete demolition within 90 days, and if there are any changes he should let the council know.

Discussion was had on employee raises. Reviews were done for each employee, and all met or exceeded expectations. Motion by Wichmann and seconded by VanEngelenburg to approve a 3% cost of living raise for all employees, along with step increases. Carried.

Discussion was had on the demolition of 308 W. Main Street. Motion by Reindal and seconded by VanEngelenburg to proceed with the demolition. Carried.

The Alden Museum has asked if they could have their mail delivered to the city's P.O. Box, rather than have their own P.O. Box. The clerk will let them know when they have mail, and they will pick it up at the city office. Motion by VanEngelenburg and seconded by Wichmann to allow the Museum to have their mail delivered to the city P.O. Box. Carried.

Public Works Superintendent Wuerflein has submitted a letter informing the council of his plan to retire at the end of the year. He has offered to continue helping with the Infrastructure Project if we elect to move forward with that. We will begin to look for a replacement, and will advertise in the Alden Advance, the Albert Lea Tribune, the Freeborn County Shopper, and the South Central News. Kim will put an ad together for approval at the next council meeting. We hope to do the hiring by the end of September. The council would like to thank Jerome for his years of service to the city. Motion by Reindal and seconded by Wichmann to accept Jerome's resignation with regrets. Carried.

The city received 2 applications for the Police Officer Position. Both candidates will be interviewed next Wednesday, August 21, at 6:00 and 6:30. Kim will call the candidates to schedule, and let the council know if those times don't work out. The full council will be on the interview committee.

Ms. VanEngelenburg asked about the trees to be planted in memory of Greg Hitchcock. Jerome and Alex will determine where we will plant new trees, and we will try to get them planted this fall.

There has been vandalism in the bathrooms at NorthPark and the Beach. Alex has checked into security cameras for both locations. We have a quote from Heartland Security. We will work with the new police officer for further direction. Currently the bathrooms are locked, unless there is something going on with the school or if someone has reserved the pavilion.

The ordinance committee will begin working on the Personnel Policy that was proposed by our attorney. We will meet on Thursday at 5:00, and the notice for that has already been posted in the usual locations, but the time needs to be changed from 4:00 to 5:00.

A question was asked by Shirley Newman regarding details of the new Police Officer position. There has been discussion on a squad car, but nothing has been finalized. Other details are to be worked out once the position is filled. The officer will be a part-time employee for now and will work up to 30 hours per week.

Jamie Christianson asked a question regarding the ideas for drainage that were discussed. The suggestion will be taken into consideration during the engineering phase. He also asked about the Midco franchise fee agreement and competition. We will be looking at the agreement next month.

Motion by VanEngelenburg and seconded by Wichmann to approve the bills and Electronic Fund Transfers as presented. Bills presented for payment \$183,968.31, EFT's of \$8,042.21, and Payroll of \$11,824.64. Carried.

Motion by Wichmann and seconded by VanEngelenburg to adjourn at 7:48pm

Respectfully submitted,

Kim Knutson  
Clerk-Treasurer