

MINUTES OF THE ALDEN CITY COUNCIL MEETING – March 8, 2023

The Alden City Council met in its regular session, March 8, 2023.

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Reyerson at 6:00pm, and he read roll call. Council members present were Mayor Reyerson, Ms. VanEngelenburg, Mr. Wichmann, and Ms. Pedersen. Members absent: Mr. Reindal. City staff present were Fire Chief Thunstedt, Public Works Superintendent Wuerflein, City Maintenance Alex Burris, and Clerk-Treasurer Kim Knutson. Others present were Donna Schmidt, Stephanie Haedt, and Nicole Eckstrom

Pledge of Allegiance was said.

Motion by VanEngelenburg and seconded by Wichmann to approve the minutes from the February 8, 2023 meeting. Carried.

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

Motion by VanEngelenburg and seconded by Reindal to approve the Hours report as presented. There was some discussion on the policy for Comp time, and when this should be paid out. This will be reviewed for the next meeting. Carried.

Fire Chief Thunstedt reported that the fire department had 1 house fire call, 1 motor vehicle fire call, and 1 medical call in the month of February. Paul Weigel attended the monthly meeting at the Freeborn County Government Center. Medical Consortium training was held on February 15th, and Chief Thunstedt attended the Command Training in Albert Lea on the 28th. The state fire reports were due Feb 28th, and have been submitted. The FA-1 state aid report was submitted in January. League of MN Cities Non-Smoking forms for AFD members have been filled out and submitted. Ice water rescue training will be held on Saturday March 11th with the Freeborn Fire department, and possibly some members of the Conger Fire department. The air compressor used to fill the air tanks developed a leak. It was repaired and is working for now, but is an older model, so parts are hard to find. Motion by Wichmann and seconded by VanEngelenburg to approve the Fire report. Carried.

Information was presented to the council regarding Gift Cards. The city is not allowed to give gifts of any kind to private citizens.

County Commissioner Nicole Eckstrom presented a Revised County Ditch Map. She also provided information on the Minnesota Broadband Line Extension Connection Program for areas lacking access to broadband or with speeds of less than 25/3Mbps. She informed the council that Spring load restrictions on Freeborn County Highways will begin on Friday, March 10. She also notified the council the new sheriff, Ryan Shea, will be hosting several meet & greets around the county. There will be one in Alden at Redeemer Lutheran Church on March 30th, from 9-10:00 am.

Donna Schmidt requested that the city approve having Morin Lake Days this year from June 16-18. A brief discussion followed about last year. There were a couple of small issues, and those have been resolved. The committee is hoping to be able to use the signs from Albert Lea again for marking that parade route. More details will follow as the date gets closer. Motion by VanEngelenburg and seconded by Wichmann to approve Morin Lake Days for 2023. Carried.

Donna updated that the Cemetery Project is complete. The Council thanks Donna for her help with this project.

The city attorney, Stephanie Haedt, presented a policy for handling Data Requests from the public. Citizens must request the data in writing. Due to the many complexities involved in what is public and what is private information, the city will request legal advice to make sure the data can be disclosed. We may take up to 10 business days to provide the information. There also will be a fee involved when

copies are requested, which will be determined at the time of the request based on the volume of the information requested and the fee schedule. Fees will be paid before the information is provided. The clerk will report to the council monthly any information requested. Motion made by Pedersen and seconded by VanEngelenburg to adopt the new data practice policy with amendments. Carried. A revised final policy will be available at the next council meeting, and will be passed by resolution at that time.

Ms. VanEngelenburg was able to retrieve data from the electronic speed limit sign on the south end of town detailing the date, time, and the number of speeders during each 15 minute interval in a 2 week period. The Council feels this information will be helpful in determining the best times to have patrols in town to monitor speed. We will reach out to the sheriff and see if he will be willing to come to a future council meeting to discuss.

Information on area grants through the Alden Area Community Foundation and the Southeastern MN initiative Fund's Paint the Town Grant was presented to the council for their consideration.

Discussion was had about a signature stamp for Mayor Reyerson. If we proceed with the stamp, we will have a policy in place on when the stamp can be used. This would only be used in instances when the mayor is unavailable. We will check into it further with the city attorney.

Alex asked if the city staff can charge the clothing allowance purchases to the city credit card rather than the employee paying upfront and being reimbursed. We will check with the city attorney on that issue as well.

Our auditors will be on site Wednesday and Thursday, March 15th and 16th. The following week, Clerk Knutson will be attending the MCFOA conference in St. Cloud. She will be out of the office Tuesday through Friday, March 21st -24th.

Superintendent Wuerflein reported that he would like to check into updating the city zoning map to match the MN Basic Codes. The difference is that the MN Basic Code has condensed the zones from the 10 categories to 7 categories, combining some of the previous codes. Motion by VanEngelenburg and seconded by Wichmann to update the City Zoning Map. Carried. The new tractor is at Arnold's and the accessories have been ordered. We had a couple of storm drains freeze up, and the city of Albert Lea jetted them for us. Bernie has taken down 2 trees on the west end of the lake. There was discussion on planting new trees to replace them. The new garbage cans have been installed, and the picnic tables will be once the weather allows. Jerome has been working on the MDH 10 year Well Head Protection Plan, and is ready to send it in. There are a few old issues that are ongoing, and they will be addressed if required. The wastewater permit application has been filled out. Jerome has been talking to Bolton-Menk about an infrastructure project, and there may be grant money available to help us with that. This is just a beginning discussion point right now. He would like to invite the engineers to the next council meeting to explore the options. Motion by Wichmann and seconded by VanEngelenburg to approve the Public Works Report. Carried.

Motion by VanEngelenburg and seconded by Pedersen to approve the City Bills and payroll expenses totaling \$139,752.52.

Motion by VanEngelenburg and seconded by Wichmann to Adjourn at 7:13. Carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Kim Knutson
Clerk-Treasurer