

MINUTES OF THE ALDEN CITY COUNCIL MEETING – June 14, 2023

The Alden City Council met in its regular session, June 14, 2023.

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Pro Tem Wichmann at 6:00pm, and he read roll call. Council members present were Ms. VanEngelenburg, Mr. Reindal, Mr. Wichmann, and Ms. Pedersen. Members absent: Mayor Reyerson. City staff present were Fire Chief Thunstedt, Public Works Superintendent Wuerflein, and Clerk-Treasurer Knutson. Others present: Ann Bryson on behalf of the Morin Lake Days Committee

Pledge of Allegiance was said.

Ann Bryson presented the plans for Morin Lake Days June 16-18, and the requests for assistance from the city. The bathrooms in the Beach house will stay open until 12:30 on Saturday. She also requested a donation of \$1200 to be used for the celebration. Motion by Reindal and seconded by VanEngelenburg to approve the donation. Carried.

Motion by VanEngelenburg and seconded by Reindal to approve the minutes from the May 10, 2023 meeting. Carried.

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

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

Fire Chief Thunstedt reported the county meeting was held in Clarks Grove last month. He was unable to attend, but Paul Weigel did attend and reported there was no new business. They are still waiting for the coverage map from the county. Chief Thunstedt applied for the MN DNR 50/50 Grant for this year and planned to use it for Hose Reel for the Grass Rig. The total cost would be \$4000, with the grant covering \$2000 and the city covering the other \$2000 if we are awarded the Grant. He also applied for a grant from the LeVerne Carlson Foundation to cover the cost of 12 new SCBA tanks, and that grant was approved. Payment has been received for the fire on 2nd Avenue. For Morin Lake Days, the fire department will take care of the parade line-up stakes and no parking signs along the parade route, fireworks, and Alex will follow the last runner on the Fun Run to ensure all finish the race safely. Motion by VanEngelenburg and seconded by Pederson to approve the Fire Report. Carried.

Public Works Superintendent Wuerflein reported that a fire hydrant was replaced on Washington Ave. They have been doing many locates, the majority are for WCTA. They dug out and repaired the storm tile by Scotte Lane. They will be digging up Morin Road by the catch basin in the future. Jerome has been in contact with Bolton-Menk and things are moving along with the project. Freeborn County is planning on doing some road work on Powers and Main in the next year or two, and we will be working with them on timing so the projects will work together. We will have a meeting with the USDA RD people on June 28th. Jerome proposed that with the American Tower at the pond coming down, it might be time to consider a 4th pond. Jerome and Alex will be spending Thursday and Friday getting things around town ready for Morin Lake Days. Discussion was had on job descriptions and expectations. New tires were put on the mower, and the tractor is at Arnold's to fix cruise control. Jerome will be taking vacation June 29 & 30, and the week of August 28th. Motion by VanEngelenburg and seconded by Reindal to approve Jerome's vacation request. Carried. The sludge judging survey is back, and the ponds need to be treated to reduce the amount of sludge at a cost of roughly \$4500 for the rest of this year. Motion by Reindal and seconded by VanEngelenburg to proceed with the treatment of the ponds.

Carried. Motion by Reindal and seconded by VanEngelenburg to approve the Public Works Report. Carried.

Clerk Knutson presented correspondence from the MN State Demographic Center estimating the population and number of households in the city of Alden. After some discussion, it was decided that the number is accurate and there is no need to challenge the numbers. A letter was also received from American Towers, who has a communications tower out by the Sanitary ponds. They are planning on taking the tower down in the coming months. This will result in a revenue loss of \$874.51 per month.

Motion by VanEngelenburg and seconded by Reindal to renew the service contract with the Albert Lea Police Department. The new agreement will be automatically renewed on the July 1st of each year. Carried.

Discussion was had on the nuisance letters that have been sent out and what the process/next step is. We will send a second letter, allowing them 15 additional days to get issues taken care of. We will add administrative fees as listed in the ordinance. In the future if a citizen makes a complaint, the clerk will send the initial letter right away, and does not need to bring to the council prior.

Juneteenth has been added as a State Holiday, and no official business can be done on that day. The city office will be closed. Jerome will be on call. It will also be added to the Personnel policy.

Motion by Pedersen and seconded by Reindal to approve the revised Key Agreement policy. Carried.

Discussion was had on the revised chicken ordinance. Motion by VanEngelenburg and seconded by Pedersen to adopt the Ordinance 91.2 Foul ordinance. Carried.

Motion by Reindal and seconded by VanEngelenburg to set the Public Hearing for adopting the new zoning map for July 12 at 6:00, the first part of the next Council meeting. Carried. Notice will be put in the Alden Advance, posted in our usual locations, and letters sent to property owners and neighbors within 350 feet of those properties affected.

Discussion was had on shared service and inaccessible water lines, and whether the city should dig them up to put curb stops where needed. The council agrees that we should go ahead and do that, and we may call in law enforcement for support if there are any issues.

Employee reviews were discussed. Kim will look on the City Clerk's website for examples of employee evaluations to be used. The city had a review they used but would like to see if there is a better way to do that.

Discussion was had on whether to vacate the alley north of Northpark. No action was taken.

Discussion was had on the Gambling revenue from the Alden Legion, and whether the 10% is being donated back for the betterment of the city. We can find the information on the Alcohol and Gambling website, so this is not an issue anymore.

Other topics of discussion were the agreements with Midco and American Towers, the Point-of-Sale Inspection Ordinance,

Carlson Foundation graciously donated to various organizations around town. Donations will be made to the Alden Fire Department, Morin Lake Days, Alden Museum, Alden Cemetery, and the Carlston Cemetery.

Discussion was had on the landscaping in front of the City Offices and various other places around town. The council will come to the next council meeting with ideas for updates for that and the welcome signs.

Motion by Reindal and seconded by VanEngelenburg to approve the bills totaling \$61,195.65, EFT payments totaling \$11,696.11, and payroll of \$9088.70. Carried.

Motion by Reindal and seconded by VanEngelenburg to Adjourn at 8:10. Carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Kim Knutson
Clerk-Treasurer