

## **MINUTES OF THE ALDEN CITY COUNCIL MEETING – March 13, 2024**

The regular meeting of the Alden City council was called to order by Mayor Reyerson at 6:00pm. Roll call was read. Council Members present were Ms. VanEngelenburg, Mr. Reindal, Mr. Wichmann, Ms. Pederson, and Mayor Reyerson. City staff present were Jerome Wuerflein and Kim Knutson. Absent: Fire Chief Thunstedt. Others present were Barb Zeller, Becca Bryson, Jamie Christianson, and Don Savelkoul.

The Pledge of Allegiance was said.

Motion by Wichmann and seconded by VanEngelenburg to approve the minutes of the February 14, 2024 meeting as presented. Carried. After several requests from the community, we will begin publishing the minutes of the council meetings prior to the approval at the next meeting. This will allow for timelier notification to the community of the subjects discussed during the meetings. The minutes will be printed with a disclaimer stating that they are “Unofficial until approved”.

Motion by Pedersen and seconded by Reindal to approve the Treasurer’s Report as presented. Carried.

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

Fire Chief Thunstedt was not in attendance at the meeting but submitted a written report. He reported that there were 0 fire calls, 1 MVA, 1 Service call and 5 medical calls in February. The county meeting was held in Hollandale, but he was unable to attend due to training. Vehicle extrication training was held at T & W Towing on Feb 19<sup>th</sup>, and First Responders had medical training on Feb 21<sup>st</sup>. The new 5-year Fire contracts have been approved, and it includes a raise in the base rate from \$1000 to \$1500 per call. The mil rate will be adjusted starting next year. Alex Burris, Shane Farris, and Dan Larson have completed their EMR First responder training, which brings our total number of medical first responders to 14. Motion by VanEngelenburg and seconded by Reindal to approve the Fire report as presented. Carried.

Public Works Superintendent Wuerflein reported that they have finished trimming trees along the railroad tracks. He purchased a seeder so we can replant grass seed where needed. The new mower has come in at Arnold’s. He found that the lake outlet needs repair. The walls are broken and shifting. We have a quote for \$6800 to replace the structure. We will check with the DNR to see if we need permits to repair. Motion by Wichmann and seconded by VanEngelenburg to make the repairs to the Lake Outlet. Carried. Jerome, Jerry, and Heath met with Bolton Menk regarding RD and the water/sewer project. There is a good chance that we will not receive funding this year, and that would push the entire project back at least a year, and that may make the cost much higher than we are willing to spend. Everything is on hold until we hear back from RD. Motion by Wichmann and seconded by Pedersen to approve the Public Works Report as presented. Carried.

Correspondence received this month included an offer for a free Brass Quintet concert to the City of Alden, which has been passed along to Morin Lake Days. If this won’t work with the Morin Lake Days schedule, we may follow up with other organizations with the offer. We also received a complaint in the mail regarding 326 Euclid. We will send a letter to the homeowner regarding the property. We will also speak with our attorney and ask for a checklist on the process of condemning properties. We also received notice of the League of MN Cities Safety Loss workshops coming up in Rochester April 16<sup>th</sup>.

Don Savelkoul was present at the council meeting on behalf of Billy Ransom regarding the property at 324 W. Main Street. They are interested in selling the property, and wondering if the city is interested in purchasing. There was much discussion regarding that and a neighboring property. The city will consider purchasing after all issues are taken care of. The city will be sending a letter to the current resident regarding cleaning up the property.

Motion by Pedersen and seconded by Reindal that the city pursue the purchase of 308 W. Main Street once the pending issues regarding that property are resolved. Carried.

Motion by Pedersen and seconded by VanEngelenburg to accept the bid from Schraeder Enterprises for mowing the cemetery for 2024 & 2025. Carried.

Becca Bryson, on behalf of the Morin Lake Days Committee requested approval of the dates for Morin Lake Days as June 14 – 16, 2024. There will be Fireworks, a parade, and several other activities again this year, as well as other activities. Motion by VanEngelenburg and seconded by Wichmann to approve the above dates. Carried.

Motion by Pedersen and seconded by Wichmann to request a grant in the same amount as 2023 from the LeVerne Carlson Foundation for the Alden Cemetery, Morin Lake Days, and the Alden Museum. Kim will reach out to the Carlston Cemetery and the Fire Department to see if they would like the city to request grants on their behalf as well.

Election results for the Presidential Nomination Primary were reviewed. The City of Alden had 74 voters, which was a turnout of 19.32%. Vote count was as follows: Donald Trump – 50; Nikki Haley – 6; Joseph Biden – 14; Uncommitted – 4. Motion by Wichmann and seconded by Pedersen to certify the election results. Carried.

Discussion was had on the covenants for selling city owned lots. An example from the city of Albert Lea was reviewed, and the council liked their restrictions. We will come back to next month's meeting with all of our ideas ready, and then we can have our attorney draft the legal documents. The consequences for not fulfilling the covenant also need to be considered.

There was further discussion regarding the police position. It was decided that the first thing we need to do is get the job description ready, so we can set the tone for what we are looking for. Kim presented information to the council that she gathered from a conversation with Riverland's law enforcement program department, and she has reached out to NIACC to see if they have any different perspectives.

Discussion was had on the possibility of the city purchasing the Mayo Clinic Building. We have contacted the people who would be responsible for selling the building, and they would be willing to work with the city on the sale. Currently, there are 2 possible uses for the building, one is to move the museum into the building, and the other is to use it as a daycare.

Barb Zeller presented information to the council regarding a group that has been researching setting up a community daycare in Alden, and they are interested in acquiring the Clinic building to house the daycare. This would not be a city owned or run daycare, but the city would work to acquire the building on their behalf, and sale or rental agreements would be discussed at a later time.

Motion by VanEngelenburg and seconded by Reindal for Mayor Reyerson to contact Mayo Clinic and get the best price possible on the purchase of the building, not to exceed \$50,000. Carried.

It was brought to the city's attention that United Methodist Church has been being charged for garbage service since the 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter of 2021, but they are not receiving garbage service as a commercial account. They have been overbilled \$495.51. The city will refund that amount to the Church.

The city will place an ad in the Community Guide published by the Freeborn County Shopper, as we have done in the past.

Christopher Cannistraci addressed the council asking for information regarding the Adopt a Highway program. He was referred to the Freeborn County Highway Department.

Motion by Wichmann and seconded by Reindal to approve the bills and EFT's as presented. Bills presented for payment \$24,343.25, EFT's of \$4,258.64, and Payroll of \$7,818.22. Carried.

Further discussion was had on the 324 W. Main Street property and the earlier conversation with Mr. Savelkoul. The city will not move forward at this time but would be interested once the property has been cleaned up.

Motion by Wichmann and seconded by Reindal to adjourn at 7:59pm

Respectfully submitted,

Kim Knutson  
Clerk-Treasurer