

Fertile City Council Minutes

September 10, 2018

The Fertile City Council held its regular meeting on Monday, September 10, 2018 at 6:30 p.m. at the Community Center. Present were: Mayor Daniel Wilkens, and Council members Reid Jensrud, Stanton Wang and Todd Wise. Also present were City Administrator Lisa Liden, Fair Meadow Administrator Angie Leiting, Fair Meadow Director of Nursing Nicole Johnson, Kevin Nephew, Alex Ranz, Jon Larson, and Twylla Altepeter from the Fertile Journal.

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. by Mayor Wilkens. The agenda was approved on a motion by Council member Wise that was seconded by Council member Wang and carried.

There were no public comments.

The minutes of the August 13th regular meeting and the August 22nd special meeting were reviewed. Mayor Wilkens recommended adding the end times of both meetings and also to spell out what GMRPTC stood for in the August 22nd meeting. The minutes were approved as amended on a motion by Council member Jensrud that was seconded by Council member Wise and carried.

City Administrator Lisa Liden then gave a brief overview of the financial statements and also the out of the ordinary bills paid in August. The Treasurer's Report and Bills was approved on a motion by Council member Jensrud that was seconded by Council member Wang and was carried.

The City Engineer, Alex Ranz, then gave his report to Council. Ranz reported that the final plans for the water project had been dropped off about two weeks ago but that Kevin Nephew had pointed out another change that could be made to save money. The original final plans had called for the replacement of water and sewer lines on the last block of Albert Ave. NW and Nephew felt that those didn't need replacing since they were newer lines. Another change that needed to be made was the addition of a sewer line on Lincoln Ave. NW that would need replacement. As long as those changes were necessary, they were also able to add a few service lines that were overlooked in the final plans. The overall savings with the changes amounted to about \$54,000. The revised final plans had been drawn up and dropped off again at the City Office.

Ranz went on to let Council know that he had contacted the Public Facilities Authority (PFA) to discuss financing of the project and that he was able to secure an additional \$41,000 in grant money. With the addition of more funding, grants from PFA would cover \$641,000 of the project costs.

He then gave detail on the various phases of the project and how they were designed to accommodate the Polk County Fair and also the school year by scheduling the work in certain areas around high traffic times of the spring, summer, and fall. Ranz explained further that, if approved, the project would be advertised for three weeks with the bid opening scheduled for October 10th. Mayor Wilkens then inquired whether there would be any other major changes on the project or if the plans were now truly final. Ranz stated that there were no major changes that they could foresee at this point but that there would likely small changes as those were common in almost all projects of this size.

After further discussion of the matter, Council member Jensrud made the motion to approve the final plans and to advertise for bids on the project. The motion was seconded by Council member Wang and was carried.

Alex then went on to report on the Safe Routes to School grant program that he was looking into for sidewalk work in town. He reported that the State would be sending out a "parties of interest" letter early in October and then application materials in November. The application would be due in January and the City would be receiving assistance from the Northwest Regional Development Commission on determining which sidewalks should be done. This was followed by a discussion on the various sidewalks in town and which ones need to be done.

Council member Jensrud then asked about the school sidewalks and who would be responsible for paying for those. Ranz explained that the City would pay the cost share portion for all sidewalks that were done under the SRTS program and that the cost share was 80% grant and 20% paid by the City.

Fair Meadow Administrator Angie Leiting then gave her report to Council. The home started and ended the month of August with 42 residents and operated at 97.23% capacity. They also provided 415 home delivered meals. She reported also that the profit and loss wasn't as good as last month but that there was \$80,000 in Medicare payments that were pending approval. Mayor Wilkens then asked if the nursing home ever didn't get those amounts that were pending and Leiting replied that they were always paid.

Leiting then introduced Nicole Johnson the new Director of Nursing to the group. Johnson then went over some personnel policy changes that she would like for Council to approve. She explained that in her first 20 days at Fair Meadow that there were 71 open shifts that had to be filled plus 49 call-ins that resulted in shifts that needed to be filled. She realized right away that this needed to be addressed since the home was paying out a lot of call-in pay.

Johnson asked to change the personnel policy to address call-ins and the new policy would only allow for five call-ins during the calendar year with no consequences. After that point, each additional call-in would have increasing consequences up to the ninth call-in and that ninth one would result in termination. The policy would define unscheduled absences to allow for absences due to approved personal leaves, jury duty, work comp time, and approved physician approved absences.

The next policy change that Johnson recommended was to increase the call-in pay. The current call-in pay was a flat \$3 per hour rate regardless of which shift was covered or the skill level of the nursing staff. Johnson proposed increasing the call-in rate to \$5 for nursing assistants for day and PM shifts, \$6 for night shift, and \$7 for weekend shifts. The rate she recommended for call-in pay for LPN's and RN's was \$8 per hour for day and PM shifts, \$9 for night shift and \$10 for weekend shifts. Angie Leiting also noted that the call pay is less than what the home would have to pay for pool nursing and that Fair Meadows call pay is actually quite low in comparison.

City Administrator Liden then asked for clarification on the call policy and whether that would just be for nursing staff or if it would be applied to all departments. Leiting stated that the call ins was a big issue in nursing but that it would make sense to have that policy in place for all FMNH staff.

Angie Leiting then went over the next personnel policy changes which were in regard to paid time off which covers sick leave and vacation time. The current policy for paid time off is that all employees are eligible. Leiting recommended changing the policy so that staff has to work a minimum of 24 hours per week to be eligible. On separation from employment staff currently gets 100% of accumulated sick time paid out and Leiting would like to change the policy that employees need to be employed for 15 years to receive a 50% pay out on their accumulated sick leave.

Another change that Leiting recommended was to allow new staff to be eligible to use vacation after six months rather than the one year currently stated in the policy. The final change in paid time off policy was that employees have to be in good standing and give proper notice in order to have vacation paid out upon separation from employment.

After discussion of the policy changes, a motion was made by Council member Jensrud to approve all three personnel policy changes. The motion was seconded by Council member Wise and was carried.

The final nursing home matter to be addressed was continued participation in the Equitable Cost- Sharing for Publicly-Owned Nursing-Facilities (ECPN) program. Fair Meadow and the City currently participate in the program with the City paying \$4,568.11 per month to participate. The new rate for 2019 would be \$7,486 per month that would result in a good rate increase for Fair Meadow. After further discussion of the matter, a motion was made by Council member Jensrud to approve participation in the ECPN program for another year. The motion was seconded by Council member Wang and was carried.

Kevin Nephew, Director of Public Works, then gave his report to Council. He began by reporting that the valve that was not working properly had been replaced and the treatment plant was up and running again. He then went on to report on the water tests that he had run at the plant. He had tested the raw water directly out of the well and then at various stages after a backwash had been done. The results were real good for the first 200,000 gallons after a backwash which meant that the plant was working fine up to about that point. The results started to drop off at about 250,000 gallons, so they were now doing a flush and backwash at about 200,000 gallons rather than 250,000.

Nephew then reported that he had been in contact with Tonka and that they didn't really have the information on hand for the plant and that all they could say was that it all "runs off head pressure." Nephew explained that when the filter media gets clogged the pressure changes and it kicks the plant into a backwash. Tonka was unable to explain what that point of pressure was in relation to the gallons that were going through the media between backwashes.

Mayor Wilkens then asked for clarification on whether the discolored water was from the pipes or if it was from the plant operations. Nephew responded that it was likely due to a little bit of both. Nephew then stated that he would be receiving a sample kit to send some of the media to Tonka to be tested since they would be able to determine if it needed to be replaced yet or not. At the time the plant was built, Tonka said that the media should be good for roughly 20 years and that we were now about 12 years in operation. The cost to replace the media would be roughly \$30,000. Council member Jensrud then asked whether the clearwell could be part of the problem. Nephew stated that he had tested the water out of the clearwell and that the water was good.

The discussion then turned to flushing hydrants. Nephew explained that only about half of the hydrants had been flushed earlier before they had the problem with the valve at the plant and had to stop flushing. Council member Jensrud then asked if all the hydrants would be flushed again when they restarted the process. Nephew said that he would like to do the "usual" hydrants up to where they left off in the process and then flush all of them past that point. Council member Jensrud then explained that he had spoken with other cities in the area and that all those cities flush all of the hydrants and not just some of them or every other one. The reason they did all of them was so there was no water left standing for a long time in the lines to the hydrants that eventually leaches out into the mains.

After further discussion, Nephew said that they would start the process of the flushing over and that all the hydrants would be flushed. September 19th, 20th, and 21st were the dates set for the hydrant flushing and Administrator Liden stated that she would get a notice put in the Journal.

Nephew then reported that he had spoken with Chad Olson on the oak boards that he still had. Nephew had gone to look at the wood and determined that he had about 700 square that was cut and just needed to be tongue and grooved. There were another two stacks about 350 square that had not been edged and about 500 square still in the slab.

This was followed by a discussion on how much it would cost to finish the wood so that it could be used in the park building. Also discussed was getting price quotes on finishing the wood from at least two places. As for what to pay Olson for the work that he had already done on the wood, Council decided to stick by their original offer of \$1,200 that had been made months prior.

Council member Jensrud then went on to note some items that needed to be addressed at the park building. He stated that the softener needed to be filled, that the door knob on the women's restroom needed to be tightened, and that the wood on the cement slab to the north needed to be removed. Discussion was then held on when to shut down and drain the splash pad and it was determined that mid-September would be a good time to do that since there shouldn't be any more really hot days for it to be used. Council member Jensrud then told Nephew that he wanted the basketball hoops put up in the park right away. Nephew explained that he was waiting for someone to do the concrete for the hoops and that's why the installation had been delayed.

Discussion then turned to the old skating rink building and boards and whether or not the building should be offered for free on the condition that the buyer be responsible for removal of the building and all the rink boards. Mayor

Wilkens recommended that if we went that route it would be good to have a \$500 bond posted with its return contingent upon proper removal of the boards and site cleanup.

Mayor Wilkens then commented that he had noted several dead trees in town and that he would like to go out with Administrator Liden and get the trees marked and letters sent out for the trees to be removed. Mayor Wilkens then went on to ask Nephew about the City getting sand and salt from the County this year. He felt it was better to get it "fresh" from the county's salt shed rather than stockpiling our own out in the open where the salt could leach out of it. Nephew said that he would talk to the County about getting sand from them.

Council member Jensrud then made the motion for Nephew to get rid of the sand/salt pit behind the shop and also to get rid of the pile of bituminous by the pit. The motion was seconded by Council member Wang and was carried.

Mayor Wilkens then inquired about the date that had been previously set for Nephew to get his personal items moved out of the City shops. A motion was then made by Council member Jensrud to set a date by October 1st for Nephew to get his personal items out of the City shops. The motion was seconded by Council member Wang and was carried.

Council member Jensrud then stated that he had been hearing comments about all the junk that's located around the Garfield Avenue shop including the old benches that are stacked on the side of the building. Nephew stated that he would remove the benches and have them burned. Jensrud then inquired about the equipment located on the north side of the building and whether it was all used and necessary to have. Council member Jensrud then asked that all the equipment be lined up neatly rather than having it scattered randomly.

Discussion then turned to going over the inventory that Nephew had done earlier and doing a walkthrough of the shops to look at the items that could go on an auction. It was decided that Council members Jensrud and Wise would meet with Kevin Nephew that Thursday, September 13th to go through the shops to make a list and take pictures of the items to go on auction.

Administrator Liden then gave an overview of the Administrator's Report as well as an update on the status of the JR Dale building. Stephen Larson, the City Attorney had sent Dale a letter asking for him to sign a release to allow a structural engineer to inspect the premises. Dale had called Stephen Larson and stated that he wouldn't sign the release and that he wanted to have until October 31st to take care of tearing down the building. In light of how long it could take to follow the legal process on getting the building condemned, Liden asked Stephen Larson to contact Dale to let him know that if the building was not taken down by October 31st that the City would then continue with the legal processes necessary to have the building removed.

Mayor Wilkens then asked about the sign in front of the Community Center being replaced since the current sign still says that the police department is in the building. A motion was made by Council member Jensrud and seconded by Council member Wang to get the sign replaced as soon as possible.

Council member Jensrud then inquired about the new sidewalk at the Community Center and why it was not yet done. Liden explained that Aaron Swenby has been quite busy with bigger concrete jobs and that the sidewalk had not made it to the top of his list yet. Jensrud then recommended contacting someone else to do the sidewalk if they could get it done sooner. Council member Jensrud then made a motion for the sidewalk at the Community Center to be done by October 15th. The motion was seconded by Council member Wise and was carried.

Council member Jensrud then made the motion for the basketball hoops at the park to be up no later than September 21st. The motion was seconded by Council member Wang and was carried. Administrator Liden said that she would pass that deadline along to Kevin Nephew since he was no longer at the meeting.

The next item up for discussion was trail signs at the Learning Center. At the special joint meeting with the Learning Center Board on August 22nd it was determined that trail signage was the City's responsibility. Administrator Liden explained that one of the problems with getting signs made was that the current trail map did

not have all the trails marked on it. She explained further that the trails had all been mapped using GPS a few years ago and that the Learning Center had worked with Troy Schroeder and an instructor at UMC to get the GPS files converted to a format that could be used for developing a new map. Apparently nothing had come from that joint venture since the GPS files could not be converted to the proper format. A discussion then followed on what would be the fastest way to update the current map to include the trails that were missing. Since Wayne Goeken was very familiar with the trail system, it was decided to ask him for assistance for updating the map.

Council member Jensrud made a motion to contact Wayne Goeken to see if he would be willing to update that current trail map. The motion was seconded by Council member Wise and was carried.

Mayor Wilkens then inquired about the process and timing of employee evaluations. Council member Jensrud explained that Council evaluates the City Administrator and Fair Meadow Administrator and that those evaluations should be done soon.

A motion was made by Council member Jensrud to get evaluation forms and job descriptions to the Council for the City Administrator and the Fair Meadow Administrator so they can be completed and a special meeting scheduled for evaluations. The motion was seconded by Council member Wise and was carried with Council member Wang abstaining.

Council member Wang then gave the Fire Department report. He reported that the department had responded to four calls in August. One call was for a grass fire, one for an alarm at the school, another for a carbon monoxide alarm, and yet another for a semi rollover.

Under the Airport, Administrator Liden reported that the letters to invite the other jurisdictions to participate in the Joint Airport Zoning had been sent out to Garfield and Liberty Townships and Polk County. Once resolutions had been received from those jurisdictions, the first meeting of the Joint Airport Zoning Board would be scheduled.

There was nothing to report under the Personnel Committee.

The next item addressed on the agenda was the bids for the construction of dasher boards for the skating rink. Administrator Liden reported that no bids had been received. Discussion was held on continuing to look for used dasher boards to purchase as well as the possibility of putting up a temporary chain link fence around the rink.

Council member Jensrud made a motion to wait until the end of the week to see if any used boards become available and if not, to contact Dakota Fence to get information on temporary fencing. The motion was seconded by Council member Wang and was carried.

The next agenda item was the final report on the costs for the new park building. Administrator Liden explained that she had broken down the costs for the building by type of work and vendor who had done the work. Council member Wise then commented that the building cost substantially more than what he thought the cost would be and that he thought the total cost for Downs was quite high. Council member Wang responded that he thought the costs for plumbing, heating, and electric were right in line with what they should be. Based on his experience working for a general contractor, he explained that the costs for heating, plumbing, and electric usually cost about as much as the total for the site prep, concrete, and the construction of the building.

Council member Jensrud then commented that he would like to see some of the City's electric work go to other electricians and not just Downs all the time. Administrator Liden explained that Downs was usually called for electric work since they were familiar with all the City buildings, street lights, airport, and treatment plant. They were also always quick to respond whenever there was an issue. Liden said, however, that she would discuss the matter with Kevin Nephew and that they would try to use another electrician on occasion.

Further discussion was then held on the water treatment plant and whether it was operating the way it should be. Mayor Wilkens said that he would like to have Tonka come and take a look at the plant since they designed and built it. Then Council could meet with the Tonka rep to discuss the issues that the City was having with discolored

water. Council member Jensrud then made the motion for Administrator Liden to get in touch with Tonka to make arrangements for them to come visit. The motion was seconded by Council member Wang and was carried.

The 2019 preliminary budget and the levy resolution were the next items up for discussion. Administrator Liden pointed out that the levy included a 2.4% increase and that there had not been an increase for three years. Liden felt it was necessary to make small increases every few years to keep up with inflation. Council member Wise commented that it was better to increase the levy by a small amount every few years rather than waiting for several years before making a large increase. Liden reminded Council that this was just the preliminary levy and that the amount could be decreased but not increased before the final levy was set in December.

After further discussion, a motion was made by Council member Wise to approve Resolution #9-1-18 City Clerk's Certificate of Proposed Tax Levy in the amount of \$207,000 for 2019. The motion was seconded by Council member Wang and was carried with Mayor Wilkens voting against the increase.

A brief discussion was then held on the future use of the property where the old skating rink was located. One possibility that was discussed was to put in an RV campground since there was ready access to water, sewer, and electric at that site.

Council member Jensrud then asked about the City sign on the north side of town and why that wasn't up yet. Administrator Liden explained that the sign easement had not yet been signed and that the sign would need to be a replicate of the south side sign which still needed some slight changes now that the Home of the Sand Hills lettering had been removed.

Council member Wang then commented that some of the sidewalks in town were virtually impassable due to overhanging trees. Administrator Liden said that she would have Kevin and Dan go around and trim the trees that were overgrown.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:55 p.m.

Daniel Wilkens, Mayor

Lisa J. Liden, City Administrator