

Fertile City Council Minutes March 11, 2019

The Fertile City Council held its regular meeting on Monday, March 11, 2019 at 6:30 p.m. at the Community Center. Present were: Mayor Daniel Wilkens, and Council members Todd Wise, Stanton Wang, and Reid Jensrud. Also present were City Administrator Lisa Liden, Fair Meadow Administrator Angie Leiting, Public Works Director Kevin Nephew, and Twylla Altepeter from the Fertile Journal.

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Wilkens at 6:30. Mayor Wilkens asked to add an agenda item regarding collaboration services offered by the League of MN Cities. A motion was made by Council member Wise, seconded by Council member Jensrud to approve the agenda as amended. Motion carried.

There were no public comments.

The minutes of the February 11, 2019 meeting were the next item up on the agenda. Mayor Wilkens pointed out that there was a typo in the third paragraph of page two that needed to be corrected. Council member Jensrud asked for a correction to paragraph three on page four to remove the name of the resident who had submitted a letter to Council regarding the skating rink. The minutes as amended were approved on a motion that was made by Council member Jensrud, seconded by Council member Wise and was carried.

City Administrator Lisa Liden then gave a brief overview of the financial statements and the out of the ordinary bills paid in February. A motion was made by Council member Jensrud to approve the Treasurer's Report and Bills as presented. The motion was seconded by Council member Wise and was carried.

Fair Meadow Nursing Home Administrator Angie Leiting then gave her report to Council. She reported that they began the month of February with 42 residents and ended with 40 operating at 97.95% occupancy. They had also served 277 home delivered meals. Leiting noted that they were still down one bed in the nursing home but that they were expecting an admission later in the week. There were still three units empty at the Assisted Living.

On the balance sheet Leiting noted the cash balance was significantly higher than it had been in many years. Leiting then went over the profit and loss reports for the month of February and also for the current year to date. For the month of February, the nursing home and assisted living showed a combined profit of \$49,463 and the combined year to date profit was \$205,381.

Leiting then went over a cost estimate that she had received from Garden Valley for the installation of seven security cameras at the nursing home. The cost for the cameras, equipment, and installation would total \$5,251.75. Mayor Wilkens then inquired as to why Leiting felt the cameras were necessary. Leiting responded that many nursing homes have them and that they would be beneficial for monitoring the medication cart, both the entry areas, and also for monitoring staff and residents in the hallways to assist with any reported vulnerable adult cases. She noted that no cameras would be installed in resident rooms.

This was followed by a discussion on establishing a policy on the cameras addressing such items as who would have access to the system. Leiting responded that for now the only ones who would have access would be herself and the Director of Nursing.

After further discussion of the matter a motion was made by Council member Jensrud and seconded by Council member Wise to approve the installation of cameras at the Nursing Home. The motion was carried.

A discussion was then held on the drainage issues on the east side of the nursing home. Each spring when the snow melts, water tends to pool up in the back parking lot and by the back garages. Public Works Director Kevin Nephew explained that they have pumped the water out before and that the elevations don't work to hook up to the storm sewer in that area. Nephew said he would look into further options for solving the issue.

Kevin Nephew, Public Works Director, gave his report to Council and began by stating that he had spent most of the day at the airport moving snow. He reported that the runway lights were barely showing above the snow. Mayor Wilkens then asked about the repairs that were done on the Case tractor. Administrator Liden reported that the bill for the clutch was over \$7,200 and the bill for the work on the front end was over \$5,000. Nephew then asked about getting some cars towed that were in the way of snow removal and had been parked for quite some time. Two were parked on Garfield and one was on the west end of Lincoln Avenue. Administrator Liden said that she would contact the Sheriff's Office the next morning to have the owners contacted.

Council member Wang then asked Administrator Liden if she could print off some pricing information on some loader rental rates from Ziegler. The rate sheet was printed off and a brief discussion was held on the various options available and the sizes of the loaders and what would best suit the City's needs. This was followed by a discussion on the removal of snow piles in town and who is responsible for the various piles. Nephew then explained which piles the City normally removes and further discussion was held on drawing the line on which piles the City removes. Nephew stated that it wasn't right for the City to move some piles located on private property and not others. Mayor Wilkens asked Nephew to look into renting a loader and an additional truck or two as soon as possible to get the downtown snow piles removed ahead of the next storm that was predicted for later in the week.

A discussion was then held on clearing the snow out of the ends of the driveways. Nephew stated that it typically takes six to eight hours to clear the ends of the driveways. Liden explained that most residents understood about having to wait for driveways to be cleared but that some had complained about how long it was taking to get them cleared, especially when residents had to get out for doctor's appointments and such. With the blizzard that was predicted for later in the week, and in light of all the snow piles that needed to be removed yet, discussion was held on reevaluating snow removal priorities.

After further discussion of the matter, a motion was made by Council member Wise to place driveways at the lowest level of priority and to do them last. The motion was seconded by Council member Jensrud and was carried. Administrator Liden stated that she would contact Linda Widrig and get a notice out on Face book to let residents know.

Nephew ended his report by explaining that he was looking at purchasing a better jetter and hose system to steam out storm and sanitary sewers. He had looked at a system at the recent water conference and was waiting for cost information before making the purchase.

Mayor Wilkens then went over the Engineer letter regarding the operation of the water treatment plant. Wilkens noted that a meeting had been held with Kevin Nephew, Council Member Widrig, himself, and Administrator Liden to discuss the concerns that the water specialist from Ulteig had raised about the testing and operation of the treatment plant. Mayor Wilkens said that the meeting had gone very well and

that Kevin Nephew had given very reasonable explanations on why he has deviated from the recommendations that Ulteig had made.

Council member Wise then inquired about the fluoride testing and what the State requirement was. Nephew explained that for cities of less than 3,200 population that weekly tests were required and also daily monitoring. Nephew stated that he does test weekly and that he records the amount of fluoride that went out into the system on a daily basis.

The next item up on the agenda was the City Administrator's Report and Administrator Liden gave a brief overview of her activities since the last meeting. Council member Jensrud then inquired about the DNR grant application for the skating rink. Liden explained that she had been in contact with the grant writer, Lisa Burlage, and the application would be completed once Burlage returned from vacation. The application would be fairly straightforward this year since it just needed updating from last year's application. Liden noted also that they may include the cost of a new slab for the basketball court in the application. After changing the orientation of the court to a north/south direction, there was a lip between the two slabs. A new slab would solve that issue in addition to the problems with water pooling on the north slab.

The Agassiz Learning Center report was the next item on the agenda. Mayor Wilkens noted that Wayne Goeken was working with someone in Bemidji to hopefully get the Learning Center ski trails added to the grant in aid program through the State. If the ski trails were added to the program then funding would be available to assist with grooming costs.

Mayor Wilkens also reported that the Learning Center Nominating Committee had met and had chosen four individuals to approach about joining the Learning Center Board of Directors. They had also chosen two alternates should any of those four decline the offer. Wilkens would be calling the four individuals to see if they would be interested in serving. Wilkens also went over the terms of office for the current directors and explained that of the four new Board members, two would be selected for two year terms and the other two for three year terms. That way the terms for the entire board would be staggered appropriately.

Council member Wang then gave the Fire Department report. Wang reported that the department had responded to two calls in February and that one was for a rollover and the other was for a carbon monoxide check. It was also reported that eight department members had attended fire training offered through Moorhead Tech and that it was a very good training session that offered new information.

Under the Airport, Mayor Wilkens reported that the airport zoning process was underway and that email addresses were needed for two of the Zoning Board appointees. Once email addresses were obtained for the entire Zoning Board, a Doodle Poll would be sent out to get a date selected for the first meeting.

The next item up on the agenda under Old Business was the rink closing policy. Council members Wise and Jensrud had met to come up with a recommendation for Council and their recommendation was for the rink to close at -15 temperature or -30 wind chill. Discussion was then held on how to determine the actual wind chill given the fact that the reported numbers for that are usually obtained from locations 20 or more miles away from Fertile. Administrator Liden explained that there can be some slight variation in wind chill numbers depending on the website or phone app that's used and that the best way to address the wind chill factor would be to close if there's a wind chill warning issued by the National Weather Service.

After further discussion of the matter, a motion was made by Council member Wise to close the rink if a wind chill warning is issued by the National Weather Service. The motion was seconded by Council member Jensrud and was carried.

The next item to be addressed under old business was security cameras for the Community Center and City Shop. Mayor Wilkens briefly went over the memo on establishing a formal policy on security cameras and who would have access to viewing footage. The memo also addressed who would have access to the live stream option under the system currently in place at the park building and any new cameras that could be installed. Wilkens also recommended coming up with a policy that would serve both the City and Fair Meadow Nursing Home. Administrator Liden said that she would work on getting a policy written up and reviewed by the City Attorney.

Under New Business, the next item to be addressed was the new water rate options determined by the recently completed rate study. Administrator Liden explained that four of the options were determined by the rate study and that the final option was one that she had made based on one of the other options with just a slightly higher usage rate. According to the calculations that were done, all of the options would provide sufficient revenue to fund the new debt that the City was taking on for the water project this summer. Liden then briefly went over the spreadsheet that she had prepared showing what the water/sewer bills would be under various levels of usage using all five of the options. Liden also noted again that the new rate structure would not have a base rate allowing for a minimum use of 2,500 gallons. All of the rate options would charge for usage starting with the first gallon of water used. Liden ended by recommending that Council look over the various options and that the matter be taken up at the April meeting.

The last item to be addressed under new business was collaboration services offered through the League of MN Cities. Mayor Wilkens explained that the League had recently scheduled a meeting in Red Lake Falls that had to be cancelled due to weather. One of the items that would have been discussed at the meeting was a new service that the League now offers free of charge to member Cities. With the service, the League would contact everyone on Council and City staff to determine if there were any areas that needed to be addressed or if there were issues with the proper functioning of Council. Based on those interviews, the League would then visit the City and give targeted training to address any issues or problems. Wilkens ended by stating that he would like to take advantage of the free service since it would make everyone better at their jobs and allow for more efficient operations.

After a brief discussion of the matter, a motion was made by Council member Wang to contact the League of MN Cities to set up training through their collaboration services. The motion was seconded by Council member Jensrud and was carried.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:32 p.m. on a motion by Council member Jensrud.

Daniel Wilkens, Mayor

Lisa J. Liden, City Administrator