

October 12, 2023

COUNCIL PROCEEDINGS

6:00 p.m.

Mayor Robert Gross called the regular monthly meeting of the Common Council of the City of Alma to order.

Pledge of Allegiance was said.

Clerk Linda Torgerson took roll call with the following members present: Mayor Robert Gross, Richard Champeny, Larry Grisen, Monica Moham, Larry Farl, Loren Mueller, Gary Jepsen, and David Earney.

Moham seconded by Farl to approve the September 14, 2023 Council Proceedings as presented. All members voting yes.

Motion by Jepsen seconded by Farl to approve the September 2023 Financial Report as presented. All members voting yes.

Motion by Farl seconded by Moham to approve the September 2023 Treasurer's Report as presented. All members voting yes.

Citizens comments. None.

UTILITIES COMMITTEE

Chairman Larry Grisen informed the Council that the committee had met on October 10, 2023. The committee had received a revised sewer rate increase from Mark Davy of Davy Engineering. The committee went over the rate increase in great detail. The rate increase is approximately 84% which was the lowest scenario for the sewer rate increase.

The sewer department has borrowed from the General Fund over the years and the rate increase does provide payback to the General Fund over a number of years. Current and in the near future sewer department costs including replacing Lift Station #4 and Lift Station #5, repairs to Lift Station #2 and chemical treatment for phosphorus control are costly repairs and upgrades needed.

Motion by Jepsen seconded by Farl to amend the City of Alma's Sewer Ordinance, Appendix A, to reflect the new charges that will be in effect March 1, 2024. All members voting yes.

Grisen informed the Council that the Public Service Commission, who regulates water rates, approved a water rate increase of 8% that will begin December 1, 2023.

The committee then discussed the discontinuation of snow/ice removal of the Town of Nelson's portion of Badland Road. The cost to run the trucks and plows, provide salt and sand for the Town of Nelson's portion of Badland Road is not equitable in return for the Town doing the

roadside mowing of our portion of Badland Road, Grisen stated. The discontinuance of the snow removal would begin immediately Grisen commented. Further discussion was held. The Mayor will send a letter to the Town of Nelson informing them of the Council's decision.

Motion by Champeny seconded by Mueller to discontinue snow/ice removal and treatment for the portion of Badland Road that is in the Town of Nelson, effective immediately. All members voting yes.

Motion by Farl seconded by Moham to approve the Utilities Committee report as presented. All members voting yes.

FINANCE/TAX & LICENSE/ZONING COMMITTEE

Chairperson Gary Jepsen informed the Council that the committee had two meetings. The first one was October 4, 2023 at which time the committee dealt with employee health insurance, wages, and budgets for 2024. Jepsen stated that the committee made a motion to stay with the current plan and insurance company (Quartz-Platinum POS) for the city employees that qualify for health insurance. The committee further decided that those employees receiving health insurance will get a 1.85% raise and those not receiving the health insurance receive a 3.7% raise.

Clerk Torgerson questioned the raise for Bernard Bartz who receives health insurance and pays 20% of his premium. Discussion was held.

Motion by Jepsen seconded by Earney to approve keeping the City's current health insurance plan and company, Quartz-Platinum POS for 2024 and give all employees not covered by the health insurance program and the library employees a 3.7% raise, fully insured employees receive a 1.85% raise and Bernard Bartz to receive a 3% raise. All members voting yes by roll call vote.

Gary Jepsen informed the Council that a building inspector possibility is being explored. The Village of Pepin contacted the City of Alma regarding a joint building inspector.

Motion by Champeny seconded by Farl to approve the October 4, 2023 Finance/Tax & License/Zoning committee report as presented. All members voting yes.

Chairman Jepsen informed the Council that the committee met this morning, October 12, 2023.

Motion by Jepsen seconded by Farl to approve an Operator License to Carl Aitkenhead. All members voting yes.

Motion by Moham seconded by Farl to grant a Temporary Class B Picnic Beer/Wine License to Enhance Alma. All members voting yes.

Jepsen stated that Shawnee Estates was discussed and asked Attorney Seifert if a contract could be drawn up allowing someone to pay the reduced price for the lots, however, put in a stipulation

that if they do not build in a 2 year period they would be assessed \$500 per year a home is not built.

Attorney Seifert stated, yes this would be possible. Seifert further stated that the Council should not establish this as a policy because everyone is different. Seifert stated that if the prospective buyers and the City come up with numbers, he could draw up a contract.

Mayor Gross stated that he has received complaints regarding the coal pile that was placed close to South Landing. Residents are complaining that when the wind comes from the south, their vehicles are getting covered with coal dust. The coal dust travels throughout the City at times.

Motion by Champeny seconded by Mueller to approve the October 12, 2023 Finance report as presented. All members voting yes.

SERVICES COMMITTEE

Chairman Rick Champeny informed the Council that the committee had met on October 2, 2023. The committee acted upon advertising for a Chief of Police with applications due Nov. 10, 2023.

Parking fines were discussed. The committee made a motion to increase the \$50 to \$200 for handicap parking violations. An ordinance amendment will need to be drafted for Council action.

Champeny reported that Fire Chief Tom Brakke informed the committee that the department will be receiving a \$10,000.00 grant for Jaws of Life equipment.

City property conditions were discussed, cemetery lot prices and the City's contribution to Wings Over Alma was discussed.

Motion by Jepsen seconded by Farl to approve the Services committee report for Oct 2, 2023 as presented. All members voting yes.

PARKS AND RECREATION COMMITTEE

Chairman Larry Farl informed the Council that the committee had met on Oct. 2, 2023.

The committee prepared the 2024 budgets.

The committee approved the expenditure of up to \$3500 for playground equipment from the City of Mondovi that was out on bids.

Motion by Champeny seconded by Moham to approve the Oct. 2, 2023 Parks and Recreation committee as presented. All members voting yes.

FIRE DEPARTMENT LIAISON

David Earney stated that the Fire Department is working on two grants. One is for \$10,000 for Jaws of Life and the other is a DNR grant.

Upcoming meetings:

- October 16, 2023 at 8:30-----Utilities Committee
- October 16, 2023 at 10:30 a.m.-----Parks and Recreation
- November 16, 2023 at 8:30 a.m.-----Finance/Tax & License/Zoning
- November 16, 2023 at 5:30 p.m.-----Public Hearing for the 2024 budget
- November 16, 2023 at 6:00 p.m.-----Council

Motion by Champeny seconded by Mueller to adjourn. All members voting yes.