

Dec. 12, 2024

PUBLIC HEARING

5:30 p.m.

Mayor Richard Champeny opened the public hearing to the public hearing regarding Ordinance #24-07 Room Tax.

No testimony was received for or against the ordinance.

Mayor Richard Champeny closed the public hearing.

Dec. 12, 2024

COUNCIL PROCEEDINGS

6:00 p.m.

Mayor Richard Champeny 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 Richard Champeny, Davie Meier, Larry Grisen, Randy Brommer, Loren Mueller, Gary Jepsen, and David Earney. Absent: Larry Grisen and Larry Farl.

Motion by Earney seconded by Meier to approve the November 14, 2024 Public Hearing minutes regarding Ordinance #24-09 Farm animals. All members voting yes.

Motion by Earney seconded by Jepsen to approve the November 14, 2024 Public Hearing minutes regarding the 2025 Budget as presented. All members voting yes.

Motion by Brommer seconded by Earney to approve the November 14, 2024 Council Proceeding minutes as presented. All members voting yes.

Motion by Jepsen seconded by Earney to approve the November 2024 Financial report as presented. All members voting yes by roll call vote.

Motion by Grisen seconded by Earney to approve the November 2024 Treasurer's Report as presented. All members voting yes.

Citizens comments.

Jerri Schreiber, taxpayer, inquired about the Library Grant for the new 4.25-million-dollar library to be located on the school property. Schreiber expressed concerns about the City of Alma's current financial problems and the City's upcoming expenditures of the new library, the purchase of the Riverland Energy property and the existing buildings that the city owns. She stated that there will be future costs of maintaining the new library, the Riverland building and the existing city hall and library. She stated that the new library is proposed to have a community center that will compete with businesses and organizations that provide those services. She inquired if the City has done a sustainability cost analysis study and recommended that the City proceed with caution.

SERVICES COMMITTEE

Chairperson Loren Mueller went over the committee minutes of December 3, 2024.

He informed the council that he picked up the cat houses for the feral cats, built by the school shop students, were placed where needed by himself and Tim Lewellyn (Animal Friends of Alma).

The committee, due to the increased costs of garbage and recycling, recommended increasing the City garbage bags from \$3.25 to \$3.50 per bag.

Motion by Earney seconded by Mueller to increase the cost of the City garbage bags to \$3.50 each effective January 1, 2025. All members voting yes.

Motion by Jepsen seconded by Meier to approve the Services Committee report as presented. All members voting yes.

UTILITIES COMMITTEE

Chairperson Larry Grisen went over the committee minutes of December 9, 2024.

Grisen informed the Council that the following actions were taken by the committee:

- The City Clerk and City Attorney will work on a policy for requests from residents for reduced sewer bills when an unknown leak occurs, such as frozen pipes, etc.
- An ordinance amendment requiring all twin homes, duplexes, etc. to be required to have separate sewer laterals is being developed.
- Letters to homeowners on North 2nd Street, on the east side from Walnut to 501 N. 2nd Street regarding a survey being conducted by the city to determine ownership of the retaining wall in need of repair/replacement.

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

FINANCE/TAX & LICENSE/ZONING COMMITTEE

Chairperson Gary Jepsen went over the committee minutes of December 9, 2024.

Motion by Meier seconded by Jepsen to adopt Ordinance #24-07 Room Tax Ordinance amendment. All members voting yes by roll call vote.

Jepsen gave an update on the Broadband to the industrial lots and Shawnee Estates. Jepsen stated that the cost to bring the broadband to the industrial lots only would cost \$15,000.00 with the following commitments: CCT-\$7,500, buyers of the industrial lot for the USDA building-\$5,000 and \$2,500 from the City.

Jepsen presented Addendum A to the Law Enforcement contract with Buffalo County. Jepsen stated that he requested the addendum so that the City does not pay for law enforcement from the County in the absence of city coverage due to internal transfer, termination, departure, or any other cause for which services to the City of Alma are suspended until services are resumed. Any services provided during a partial time period shall be billed to the city on a prorated basis.

Motion by Mueller seconded by Brommer to approve Addendum A of the Law Enforcement Contract with Buffalo County Sheriff Office. All members voting yes by roll call vote.

Jepsen stated that the start equipment needed for the Sheriff's Department will be \$38,700.00 of which is available from the city's police capital outlay account.

Motion by Grisen seconded by Meier to approve the amount of \$38,700.00 from the city's capital outlay account for the start-up equipment needed by the Sheriff's Department. All members voting yes by roll call vote.

Jepsen informed the Council that the Library Building Committee met last evening and approved the mayor signing the contract with FEH Architects for the new library.

Grisen inquired about the previously reported at \$2100 to \$6,000 to \$9,000.00 for the bookkeeping. Jepsen stated that the architect will be fulfilling the grant administration duties.

Mueller inquired about the sale of Lot #17 at Shawnee Estates. Jepsen stated that the property owner of Lot#16 purchased the lot.

Jepsen informed the Council that the mayor, himself, and others attended a brief meeting at Wings Over Alma with the Lt. Governor and inquired about broadband possibilities. Jepsen stated that hopefully there would be a grant for broadband. Grisen suggested contacting the USDA regarding this matter.

Motion by Meier seconded by Mueller to approve the Finance/Tax & License/Zoning committee report as presented. All members voting yes.

PARKS AND RECREATION COMMITTEE

Chairperson Davie Meier went over the committee minutes of Dec. 9, 2024. Meier stated that the committee discussed and acted upon the following:

- Repair to the observation deck at Rieck's Lake Park has been done underneath the deck and repairs to the railing is scheduled.
- Park building upkeep proposal was presented for the bathrooms at Rieck's Lake Park. Foreman Joe Wick will be presenting additional proposals.
- Due to the costs of electrical, garbage, snow removal and repairs of possibility of freezing of the water facilities at Rieck's Lake Park, the committee approved the closure dates of October 15th to April 15th each year. Currently, the park and campground are open until after deer season in November.

- Snow dumping at Rieck’s Lake Park will continue until an agreement with Dairyland Power has been reached.
- The ARPA grant for Rieck’s Lake Park, Beach Island Park and Buena Vista Park has been fulfilled and payment will be forthcoming.

Motion by Grisen seconded by Earney to approve the Parks and Recreation Committee report as presented. All members voting yes.

Mayor comments:

There is no update on the Riverland Energy property at this time.

Agenda Item #14-Schams claim is tabled.

Mayor Champeny wished everyone a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

Upcoming meetings:

- January 7, 2025-----Services – 9 a.m.
- January 13, 2025-----Utilities – 8:30 a.m.
- January 13, 2025-----Finance – 10:30 a.m.
- January 16, 2025-----Council - 6:00 p.m.

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