

MINUTE RECORD FOR CITY OF ALMA
REGULAR CITY COUNCIL MEETING
September 20, 2023

A regular meeting of the City Council of the City of Alma, Nebraska was held at City Hall on Wednesday, September 20, 2023, at 5:30 p.m.

Present were Council Members: Tom Moulton, Larry Casper, Chris Tripe and Mayor and Acting Administrator Hal Haeker. Absent: Dyann Collins. City Clerk Dawn McNulty, Treasurer Tashia Butterfield City Utility Superintendent Russ Pfeil, and City Attorney Doug Walker were also in attendance. Notification of this meeting and the agenda was given in advance by posting, a designated method for giving notice. Advance notice of the meeting and the agenda was given to the Mayor and all members of the City Council. All proceedings hereinafter were taken while the convened meeting was open to the attendance of the public.

Mayor Haeker advised the public of the Open Meetings Act posted on the east wall of the meeting room, and then proceeded to call the regular meeting of September 20, 2023, at 5:30 p.m. and the following business was transacted:

Roll call: Tom Moulton-present, Dyann Collins-absent, Chris Tripe-present, Larry Casper-present, and Mayor Haeker-present. Motion by Moulton, second by Casper to determine this meeting as previously publicized, duly convened and in open session. There being no further discussion upon the motion made and upon roll call vote, the following voted yes: Tripe, Casper, and Moulton. Voting no: None. Motion carried.

Mayor Haeker opened the floor to approve the Budget Hearing and Tax Request minutes of the September 6, 2023, council meeting. Motion by Casper, second by Moulton to approve the Budget Hearing and Tax Request minutes of the September 6, 2023, council meeting. There being no further discussion upon the motion made and upon roll call vote, the following voted yes: Casper, Tripe, and Moulton. Voting no: None. Motion carried.

Mayor Haeker opened the floor to approve the minutes of the September 6, 2023, council meeting. Motion by Moulton, second by Tripe to approve the regular minutes of the September 6, 2023, council meeting. There being no further discussion upon the motion made and upon roll call vote, the following voted yes: Casper, Tripe, and Moulton. Voting no: None. Motion carried.

Mayor Haeker opened the floor to discuss the claims and invoices for September 7, 2023, through September 20, 2023, for a total of \$301,947.08. Tripe asked if previous Treasurer CeeAnn Affolter was done with her duties. Treasurer Butterfield said that she was still working about 8 hours a week and checking things over. Treasurer Butterfield said that she had asked previous Treasurer Affolter to stay on through October 16th which is when the audit is to make sure she was ready for it and got through it ok. Motion made by Casper, second by Tripe to approve the claims. There being no further discussion upon the motion made and upon roll call vote, the following voted yes, Tripe, Casper, and Moulton. Voting no: None. Motion carried.

Mayor Haeker opened the floor to discuss and or approve the Treasurer's report. Motion by Tripe, second by Moulton to accept the Treasurer's report as presented. Treasurer Butterfield brought the Councils attention to the wastewater fund. It is in the red due to a grinder for the lagoon. This was a large, unexpected expense and they will be receiving a \$25,000 loan from the gas department. Next year, the wastewater department will be paying back that loan. Tripe asked how far in the red the wastewater department was before this expense. Tasha Butterfield stated that she did not know. Mayor Haeker said that yes, we were in the red, and this expense just put us further in the hole. There being no further discussion upon the motion made and upon roll call vote, the following voted yes: Casper, Moulton, and Tripe. Voting no: None. Motion carried.

Mayor Haeker opened the floor to discuss and or approve Federal Share Summary and Progress Estimates related to Airport Taxiway Lighting Grant. Moulton said that he could not believe how many people had their hands in this project. Treasurer Butterfield stated that this was the last payment and then we would expect 90% back. Motion made by Moulton, second by Tripe to approve Federal Share Summary and Progress Estimates related to Airport Taxiway Lighting Grant. There being no further discussion upon the motion made and upon roll call vote, the following voted yes: Tripe, Casper, and Moulton. Voting no: None. Motion carried.

Mayor opened the floor to discuss and or approve the In Office Payment Processor. Treasurer Butterfield

shared information about a new credit card machine service. Casper asked if the one that we are using is not working properly. Butterfield said no, the one we have is working just fine. Tripe asked if we were still under contract and Butterfield said no. Tripe asked about a trial period for the new machine and she stated no. We can come back to the old company within 90 days without any penalty. We would get a free terminal, capable of taking apple pay and tap. The terminal would be much like the one we have now, featuring more security. If we update the old terminal, we are looking at a cost of \$180.00 to \$225.00 to replace the type of terminal that we have now. Butterfield said that on average we run about \$4,000 per month through the machine. Tripe said that he would defer to what she would recommend. Butterfield said that she is concerned about the security of the cards that we scan, and the age of the machine. Tripe said that we could eat into fees with apple pay as they charge more for merchant fees. Tripe said that he is not sold. Casper said when would the new reader be in. Butterfield said in a week, and if we get into it and we do not like it, we can keep our current account active. If there is no penalty for trying them, it might be worth it. Moulton said that they need to waive those fees because of all the money that we send through that machine. Motion by Casper, second by Tripe to approve Opening account with Sekure for payment processing on a trial basis. There being no further discussion upon the motion made and upon roll call vote, the following voted yes: Tripe, Casper, and Moulton. Voting no: None. Motion carried.

Mayor opened the floor to discuss and or approve Hospital Sinking Fund Management. Treasurer Butterfield stated that this is not a money market account, this is a savings account getting 1.25% interest. Each month we transfer \$1,666 from the general fund into the Hospital Sinking Fund. Currently there is \$227,802 in the account. The proposed idea is to put these funds into a 6-month CD. The fund is currently at First State Bank, and they have offered us 5.5% interest. We continue to add the same amount into the savings account and let that accumulate. Interest has been raised on the savings account regardless of what we do to 2%. At the end of the 6 months, we can renew the CD and we can add in what we have added into the savings account. Joel Wheeler has agreed that if ever the funds from the CD are needed there will not be penalties to cash it out. He wrote a letter stating the same. Butterfield also ran this strategy by the accountant, and he is in favor of it. So, we will accumulate whatever is on the CD and add the savings account into a new CD for another 6 months at 5.5%. This would be just 1 CD. Motion by Tripe, second by Casper, to approve Hospital Sinking Fund Management. There being no further discussion upon the motion made and upon roll call vote, the following voted yes: Tripe, Casper, and Moulton. Voting no: None. Motion carried.

Mayor opened the floor to discuss and or approve CD Renewal. Treasurer Butterfield stated we have three CD's coming up to maturity in October, one at First State Bank and two at Banner Capital. The ones at Banner Capital receive a check every quarter for the interest and so they stay the same amount. The one at First State Bank, the interest is compounded. Treasurer Butterfield asked about the current offers at the banks. First State Bank is still 5.5%, Banner Bank is for 12 months at 4.465%, Community Bank 5 months and 23 months. Treasurer Butterfield also listed how we have all of our monies spread across all the three banks. If the City chooses to renew with the same bank, or something different. Treasurer Butterfield stated that she wanted to give everyone the big picture. There was discussion with Moulton and Tripe about the 1.5% rate at Community Bank not being correct. Tripe suggested that Treasurer Butterfield talk to a bank officer to get the correct rate. Tripe said that there will be one more interest rate hike this year. Mayor Haeker said that they will mature after the next meeting. Moulton said we should table the item. Motion by Moulton, second by Casper, to approve CD Renewal. There being no further discussion upon the motion made and upon roll call vote, the following voted yes: Tripe, Casper, and Moulton. Voting no: None. Motion carried.

Mayor opened the floor to discuss and or approve Resolution 12-2023 to set the Cleaning Contract with Samantha Kresser for Municipal Buildings. Moulton stated that she needed to keep the bathrooms at the Auditorium and Johnson Center stocked. Doug Walker said that nothing really changed since last year, Treasurer Butterfield commented that there was a change from \$25 per month on the ballfields in the summer to \$25 per week. This was listed on the Cleaning Service Agreement #2. Casper asked if we are generally happy with the job she is doing. Motion by Moulton, second by Casper to approve Resolution 12-2023 Cleaning Contract with Samantha Kresser for Municipal Buildings. There being no further discussion upon the motion made and upon roll call vote, the following voted yes: Casper, Tripe and Moulton. Voting

no: None. Motion carried.

The Mayor opened the floor to discuss the Replacement of President of the council. This item was tabled so that Dyann Collins can be present. Motion by Casper, second by Tripe to approve tabling Replacement of President of the Council. There being no further discussion upon the motion made and upon roll call vote, the following voted yes: Tripe, Casper, and Moulton. Voting no: None. Motion carried.

The Mayor opened the floor to discuss and or approve Clerk Wage Increase. Mayor Haeker stated that when Dawn was hired more than 6 months ago, she was set at a certain wage and then later on she was told that there would be a \$5,000 wage increase. It has been longer than those 6 months that she has been here. Since we have not had a city administrator here, Dawn and Tashia have both really stepped up and, in my opinion, done a good job. I think that it's only fair that she was told, now you guys are the ones that say no or half or a thousand or whatever. I would think that since she was told and she is doing a great job, as far as I'm concerned. I would tell her that she needs the \$5,000 increase. Casper said if we are going to be consistent with when we didn't have a clerk for a while, and when we had CeeAnn and Lorri covering that too, we compensated that too. Plus, what we said, I have no objections. Tripe said with them doing extra duties, and they are asked to be doing more. We have not paid the administrator for 4 months, that is a third a year of the administrator wages that have not been paid out to anybody. I don't know if a portion of that needs to be paid out to them as well too. I would say that it at least needs to be looked at. Casper said it is not on the agenda. Tripe said I agree with the increase to \$5,000. Motion by Moulton, second by Casper to approve Clerk Wage Increase. There being no further discussion upon the motion made and upon roll call vote, the following voted yes: Tripe, Casper, and Moulton. Voting no: None. Motion carried.

Mayor Haeker opened the floor to discuss and or approve personnel. Mayor Haeker asked Casper if he wanted to bring anything up. Casper said that they have interviewed some capable candidates and that they are waiting to see if one accepts what we can afford to pay according to our budget. Mayor Haeker said, I am not going to bring anybody forward at this time, we were hoping to hear back but we have not. Tripe said that we should just table this item. The item was tabled until they heard back from the candidate. Motion by Tripe, second by Moulton to table the personnel agenda item. There being no further discussion upon the motion made and upon roll call vote, the following voted yes: Tripe, Casper, and Moulton. Voting no: None. Motion carried.

Mayor Haeker opened the floor to discuss the Downtown Drainage Project. Mayor Haeker said that the project is all done and has been poured. Casper asked if it was satisfactory. Utility Superintendent Russ Pfeil said that the concrete has been poured and that it is satisfactory. That there was still some moisture in the concrete when it was initially poured from the original project, and it caused the issue. We still have a 2-year guarantee on the work.

Mayor Haeker opened the floor to discuss Rural Workforce Housing Land Development Sub-agreement. Mayor Haeker passed out information to the council. Mayor Haeker stated that he had been on a zoom call earlier this morning and the bottom line is The City is not willing to take the risk of paying back the entire amount of money that was awarded, then they would recommend that we don't sign the agreement. Mayor Haeker stated that he does not disagree with that. What basically is going to happen is that the Federal government is going to have a lien against those properties and the title companies are going to have to get a clear title to that ground, they might not give that unless we pay back the amount of money that we have in that property to the Federal Government. So, we take that risk that there may not be a clear title if we don't pay that money back. Looking at the notes, the total amount that was awarded for this project, and 80% of those people are not going to sign this program. So, there are a number of options that they bring up on there and there is no guarantee on the options either. 80% of the towns that were awarded the grant are not going to sign it as is written right now. Tripe asked if we were in that 80%. Mayor Haeker said yes. Mayor Haeker said that he cannot put the taxpayers of Alma on the hook for that kind of money. Of course, the decision is up to you rather we sign this or not. Casper said that what is frustrating is that man hours that Lorri and CeeAnn put looking into this and it sounded like a great deal. Moulton said that it sounded like a great deal at first. Casper said his concern, even if we get it, if we set up a multi-unit duplex, can they rent it for an affordable cost for the people that live in this area. Can you build it and rent it for something that people can actually afford? That

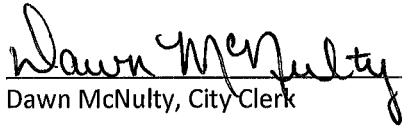
has been one of my concerns all along. Moulton said that the worst problem is the dateline on this. The timeline does not work out on this. You see how long it takes to get houses to get built out here. A year a year and a half. It could take us 6 months to get the property bought and get all the legal fees and jargon done. 2 years is not enough time to do it. Casper said that if this goes back to the legislature, who knows how long that will take. Walker said It's just a matter of identifying properties that are eligible for this, and then just getting them purchased. So, we would not have to go through the condemnation process and working with all the people and negotiating, by the time you get the title work done. It's not very realistic. Moulton said if they had kept it as a grant and not changed it to a loan he would go with it, but as it is he says no. Casper says who is they, it is The Nebraska Department of Economic Development is the way they are interpreting this. Some of this is beyond my comprehension. It just does not make sense at all. Why would we go out and spend money, to purchase property and then boom tell us we have to send it back. Where are we going to get this kind of money? Tripe said I think it's the timetable, I think if this was a 10-year thing, I think that this is still a risk but its more feasible. This has got to be repaid, but properties don't sell overnight. Casper said that it looks bad if the legislature gets it ironed out and we are left out. Moulton said that's a risk we will have to take. Tripe said what is our obligation if we took it and sat on it and waited to see about it and we turn back around and gave it back to them. What is the risk? Casper, you don't get the money until you actually spend it. Mayor Haeker said that is normally the way it is. Tripe said they don't put a million dollars in your bank account, but we have to show receipts for what we have bought. Tripe said we spent the money, and they reimburse us. Casper said I would hope that if they get it cleared out that we are still in line to get some of this funding. You look at all of these towns that say that they are rejecting it. No one is saying they are accepting it, maybe there is someone who is. Mayor Haeker said there was one town that said that they would accept it, now they are thinking differently. Tripe said the nice thing about it is SCEDD managing it. We are not developers or educated on that either. Casper said that we need a motion on this. Haeker said well I think it would be nice to have a motion on this to accept or not accept the award. I can tell you now that if you are going to accept the award, I won't sign it, you will have to have the president of the council sign it later on. Walker asked Is there any way that you can decline unless the NDED changes their stance on this matter and considers this a grant. Mayor Haeker said that they were all part of the discussion and that they are not going to do that. Tripe said to decline the Rural Workforce Housing Land Development Sun Agreement. Moulton said it was a good deal to begin with, but it changed. Casper said that we invested a lot of time in this. Moulton said you do that with any contract you do. Mayor Haeker said that if you are awarded a certain amount of money and you decline it, you are blackballed, and no one is going to give you money after this. Allman said that this case is an outlier. That is not the case. Casper said that we were approved by the federal and state level and now the state seems to have changed the rules. Moulton said that we have proof that they have changed the terminology. Casper said, I think that there was confusion when we were applying for it. We were approved at the state level. We were not approved by the Federal level. The state seems to have changed the rules. The first sub agreement that they did, they made some changes too. Motion by Tripe to decline Rural Workforce Housing Land Development Sub Agreement it in its current state unless the terms change. Second by Casper to decline the Rural Workforce Housing Land Development Sub Agreement in its current state unless the terms change. There being no further discussion upon the motion made and upon roll call vote, the following voted No: Tripe, Casper, and Moulton. Voting yes: None. Motion not carried.

Motion to adjourn the meeting by Tripe, second by Moulton. There being no further discussion upon the motion made and upon roll call vote, the following voted yes, Tripe, Casper, and Moulton. Voting no: None. The meeting was adjourned at 6:23 p.m.



Hal Haeker, Mayor

I the undersigned Clerk hereby certify that the forgoing is a true and correct copy of the proceedings had and done by the Mayor and Council; that all of the subjects included in the foregoing proceedings were contained in the agenda for the meeting, kept continually current and available for public inspection at the office of the Clerk; that such subjects were contained in said agenda for at least twenty-four hours prior to said meeting; that at least one copy of all reproducible material discussed at the meeting was available at the meeting for examination and copying by members of the public; that the said minutes were in written form and available for public inspection within ten working days and prior to the next convened meeting of said body; that all news media requesting notification concerning meetings of said body were provided advanced notification of the time place and of said meeting and the subjects to be discussed at said meeting.


Dawn McNulty, City Clerk

