

The minutes of the Fairmont City Council meeting held on Monday, May 8, 2023, at the City Hall Council Chambers.

Mayor Lee Baarts called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

Council Members Wayne Hasek, Britney Kawecki, Randy Lubenow, Jay Maynard and Michele Miller were present. Also in attendance: City Administrator Cathy Reynolds, Finance Director Paul Hoye, City Clerk Patricia Monsen and City Attorney Cara Brown.

Council Member Maynard made a motion to approve the agenda as presented. Council Member Miller seconded the motion and the motion carried.

Dustin Benes from Martin Soil and Water Conservation District gave a presentation on aquatic invasive species. A motion was made by Council Member Miller to authorize Martin Soil and Water Conservation District to have a presence at Fairmont's lake accesses to educate the public on aquatic invasive species. Council Member Maynard seconded the motion and the motion carried.

During Public Comment the following citizens of Fairmont expressed concerns with building a community center: Richard Bradley, Bill Cieslinski, Darlene Lutz, Denny Breitbarth, Bruce Eastlund, Ann Osborn, John Sorenson, Nancy Gunther, Marge Johnston and Marvel Snyder. Garth Carlson spoke on behalf of the Carlson Walters Group voicing concerns about their rezoning request. Rin Porter spoke on behalf of the Ad Hoc Human Rights Commission requesting the city to reactivate this committee. She also spoke in favor of the proposed community center.

Council Member Maynard made a motion to approve the consent agenda. Council Member Miller seconded the motion and the motion carried. Items on the consent agenda were: Minutes from the April 24, 2023 City Council meeting; Event Permit for Visual Identity Vault, Tent/Sidewalk Sale on May 18, 2023; Event Permit for Fairmont Lakes Foundation Spring Fishing Contest on May 20, 2023; Event Permit for Legion Post 36 & VFW Post 1222 for the Memorial Day Parade on May 29, 2023; Event Permit for Red Rock Center for the Arts Memorial Day Community Picnic on May 29, 2023; Event Permit for Indulge to hold a Indulge Pop Up on June 6, 2023; Event Permit for City of Lakes Garden Club to have a Garden Party and Plant Swap on June 10, 2023 at Lincoln Park; Event Permit for Red Rock Center for the Arts to hold a concert by Good Morning Bedlam at Gomsrud Park on June 14, 2023; and Event Permit for Indulge to hold a Indulge Pop Up on July 6, 2023.

Council Member Maynard made a motion to approve the selection of KLJ Engineering as the airport consultant. Council Member Miller seconded the motion and the motion carried.

Council Member Miller made a motion to approve demolition assistance at 50% of the actual cost up to \$10,000 for Michael and Jaime Bliesmer for demolition of a commercial building located at 912 North State Street. Council Member Lubenow seconded the motion and the motion carried.

Council Member Lubenow made a motion to approve the lease agreement with Community Education and Recreation in the Southern Minnesota Educational Campus building. Council Member Miller seconded the motion and the motion carried.

Mayor Baarts began the conversation on the hiring of an interim city administrator. Mayor Baarts stated that he has talked with Finance Director Paul Hoye and Hoye is not interested in being the interim city administrator. The Hiring Committee contacted Mark Sievert and Sievert agreed to come to Fairmont to be the interim city administrator. However, since agreeing, he has been contacted by a citizen of Fairmont and a city council member. In addition to these contacts, posts on social media made him change his mind and he withdrew his offer to come to Fairmont. Mayor Baarts stated that these actions were unprofessional and now the hiring committee will be starting over.

Council Member Miller made a motion to authorize the hiring of a fourth full time employee at the liquor store. Council Member Maynard seconded the motion and the motion carried.

Mayor Baarts stated that he has had conversations with the Charter Commission, and he has brought items 10.1 and 10.2 forward to the council for discussion. Mayor Baarts made an executive order that the expenses of the charter commission be reimbursed. Council Member Maynard questioned what expenses the mayor was referring to. Mayor Baarts clarified that they were expenses from 2022 for advertising in the photo press. Council Member Maynard pointed out that these expenses were brought forward by the charter commission to the council already, and they were denied by the city council. Council Member Maynard made a motion to not have charter commission expenses from 2022 paid. Council Member Miller seconded the motion. After discussion, the council directed the city attorney to see under what authority the mayor could issue an executive order and if the council could make a motion overruling the executive order. Also, to determine the authority of a few members of the charter commission spending funds without the entire charter commission's direction and the legality of spending funds budgeted for 2023 to pay expenses from 2022. This matter will be brought back to the May 22, 2023 city council meeting.

Reynolds reported that the city has received state funding from MnDOT for the Blue Earth Avenue project from Downtown Plaza to TH15 for 2025 construction. The funding will be at 80%.

Reynolds thanked the community and city staff for their support. She stated once she announced her resignation, she has received an outpouring of positive support from the community. She feels overwhelmed by all the emails, phone calls and text messages and would like to thank everyone.

Council Member Hasek reported that the Public Utilities Commission talked about the new meters and encouraged citizens to call city hall if they have not had their meters replaced yet.

Council Member Lubenow stated that the HRA discussed the shared Economic Development Director position and discussed the contract between the HRA and the City. Attorneys for the HRA had some questions and will be working with the city to come to an agreement. If an agreement is reached, the HRA is planning on having a special meeting to approve the agreement. Council Member Lubenow stated that there were a lot of people who appeared for the Local Board of Appeal & Equalization hearing. Some adjustments were made. If citizens feel their concerns were not resolved by the Local Board of Appeal & Equalization, they may bring their case to the County Board of Appeal and Equalization.

Council Member Maynard reported that the Board of Zoning Appeals granted a variance to the minimum lot size requirement for an industrial Planned Unit Development at 1329 East 8th Street for some storage buildings.

Council Member Miller stated that Visit Fairmont has been working on the visitors guide and other promotional materials. FEDA discussed the sale of the incubator building and approved a sponsorship for the Chamber of Commerce Leadership in Martin County.

A motion was made by Council Member Miller, seconded by Council Member Hasek and carried to adjourn the meeting at 6:50 p.m.



Lee C. Baarts, Mayor

ATTEST:



Patricia J. Monsen, City Clerk