

PRESENT: Mayor Rasmussen Jr., Councilors John Schulte V, Larry Baker, Ellen Kehr, Reid Olson, Larry Anderson and Al Brooks. Also present were City Manager Chad Adams, City Engineer Steven Jahnke, City Attorney Lee Bjorndal and Council Secretary Pro Tem Wendy Flugum.

CONSENT AGENDA

- A. Approve Minutes of the August 27 , 2012 Regular Council Meeting
- B. Approve Minutes of the August 23, 2012 Work Session
- C. Approve Minutes of the August 20, 2012 Special Meeting
- D. Licenses and Permits (See attached list)
- E. Resolution Accepting Donations
- F. Resolution Calling a Public Hearing for October 8, 2012 on Proposed Assessments for Lincoln Avenue from Front Street to the DM & E Railroad (Job #1103)
- G. Resolution Calling a Public Hearing for October 8, 2012 on Proposed Assessments for Downtown Alleys between Washington Avenue and Broadway Avenue from College Street to Water Street (Job #1008)
- H. Resolution Authorizing Agreement with Albert Lea Hockey Association
- I. Schedule Truth In Taxation Meeting for December 10, 2012 at 7:00 P.M.

MOTION: I will move to approve the consent agenda as presented.

Motion made by Councilor Baker, seconded by Councilor Brooks. On roll call vote, the following councilors voted in favor of said motion: Councilors Schulte V, Baker, Kehr, Olson, Anderson, Brooks and Mayor Rasmussen Jr. Mayor Rasmussen Jr. declared the motion passed.

(See Secretary's Original Resolutions 12-172-12-175
included with these minutes.)

PUBLIC FORUM

Keith Porter Sr., 1634 Masee asked if the public has voted or will vote on the Broadway Ave Streetscape Project before the September 24th council meeting.

Lynn Berven, 1701 Southview Lane stated he has talked to many people in favor of a full-time Fire Department. Mr. Berven considers a full-time Fire Department to be an insurance policy and hopes that Council has listened to the public.

Charles Grinolds, 526 Park Avenue noted that his father was Fire chief until 1985 and commented that both victims and firefighters would be endangered by reducing staff. He stated there is no price for life and hopes the department remains at full staff.

PETITIONS-REQUESTS-COMMUNICATIONS

A. ALBERT LEA COMMUNITY THEATER (ACT) – MET OPERA AND NEW EQUIPMENT

Albert Lea Community Theater co-chairs, Tony Segura and Rosalie Truax presented a report on the expanded use of the theater since ACT leased it in April 2012. Mr. Neil Lang was hired as part time facilitator and coordinator and has brought in many extra events. Box office sales can be completed online, including electronic ticket payment. The theater is now on Facebook and it was noted that 23% of sales are from out of town. ACT Theater has partnered with Civic Music and installed \$25,000 worth of new equipment paid for by Civic Music, including a large projector and 16 ft. screen. The Civic Music performances will be on Saturday afternoons at exactly the same time that the Metropolitan Opera performs in New York City. Tickets are \$20 and the audience is seated up close in a nice venue. Mr. Segura also invited the public to attend a sneak preview of the ACT season on Thursday, September 20th at 7:30 p.m. The event includes tours of the building and refreshments. It was noted that ACT assumes the expenses for day to day operations. Marion Ross plans to visit Albert Lea in July 2013.

Mr. Rory Mattson commented that one of their challenges is publicity. The ACT board has been discussing marquee signage and Mr. Mattson stated he has done research on what is historically appropriate for marquee signs. After conducting a public survey, it was concluded that the most important way to get information out about events is to see signage or hear about it from another person. ACT would like to add a marquee that fits into the City's existing downtown plan.

Councilor Baker stated he is seeing more traffic around the theater and Councilor Kehr said that historically, marquees and theaters go together and people expect it.

B. REQUEST FOR SUPPORT REGARDING THE EDGEWATER COTTAGE PROJECT

City Manager Adams provided background on the project to date. The Parks & Recreation Board met last week and unanimously passed a motion stating their support of the fundraising efforts to restore the cottage, but only if it is possible to save it. Tony Trow, 522 Park Avenue shared information on the history of the cottage and stated that it was part of Albert Lea's history and should be part of Albert Lea's future. City Inspectors have advised him that the cottage needs a lot of work; Preservation Architect Patrick Waddick said it wouldn't be too difficult to save the building. An organizational meeting was held several weeks ago to get a sense of what the community wants. An engineering study has not been done but Zenk, Read & Trygstad will provide a report. The fundraising group plans to contact contractors to request assistance with donation of materials and in-kind labor and will also contact the Riverland College carpentry class. There was no additional discussion by Council.

MOTION: I will move to approve the request for support of fundraising efforts to restore the cottage if feasible.

Motion made by Councilor Schulte and seconded by Councilor Olson. On roll call vote, the following councilors voted in favor of said motion: Councilors Schulte V, Baker, Kehr, Olson,

Anderson, Brooks and Mayor Rasmussen Jr. Mayor Rasmussen Jr. declared the motion passed.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A. RESOLUTION 12-176 RESTORING 5-PERSON CREW FULL-TIME STAFFING LEVELS FOR FIRE DEPARTMENT

City Manager Adams noted that he prepared a resolution for action by Council to restore the Fire Department to full-time staffing levels. A motion was made by Councilor Anderson and seconded by Councilor Baker to open discussion on restoring the Albert Lea Fire Department to 5-person full-time staffing crews effective immediately. The status of two part-time firefighters would also be changed to full-time personnel. Several council members noted that their constituents have stated overwhelming support for returning the department to full-time crews and they understand the cost to make it happen. Councilor Anderson stated that this is a needed resource for bringing in and retaining business. Councilor Kehr reminded everyone of the importance of supporting a full-time department not only now but in years to come. The Mayor stated that he appreciates all the community discussion and the respect shown in following the process to come to a decision. He further stated that the City would work on implementing ways to make it sustainable.

Motion was introduced by Councilor Anderson and seconded by Councilor Baker. On roll call vote, the following councilors voted in favor of said motion: Councilors Schulte V, Baker, Kehr, Olson, Anderson, Brooks and Mayor Rasmussen Jr. Mayor Rasmussen Jr. declared the motion passed.

(See Secretary's Original Resolutions 12-176
included with these minutes.)

NEW BUSINESS

A. RESOLUTION 12-177 ADOPTING ALBERT LEA HOUSING AND REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY PRELIMINARY PROPERTY TAX LEVY FOR FISCAL YEAR 2013

Jon Ford, Executive Director of the Albert Lea Housing and Redevelopment Authority provided information on the proposed property tax levy of approximately \$140,000. Mr. Ford stated that funding mechanisms have been reduced and the intent of the levy is to be able to continue programs as well as to update the housing study. City staff has recommended 30% to start and phasing the levy in over two to three years.

Mr. Ford noted that the HRA has rehabbed up to 75 or 80 homes – fifty homes through the Small Cities Development Program (SCDP) and the rest through the foreclosure recovery project or collaborations with others. He also stated that Council has the right to renew or not

renew the levy and/or recommend a level as in this case. The HRA is willing to partner with the City. Several council members voiced their appreciation of the HRA's efforts.

Motion was introduced by Councilor Schulte V and seconded by Councilor Kehr. On roll call vote, the following councilors voted in favor of said motion: Councilors Schulte V, Baker, Kehr, Olson, Anderson, Brooks and Mayor Rasmussen Jr. Mayor Rasmussen Jr. declared the motion passed.

(See Secretary's Original Resolutions 12-177
included with these minutes.)

B. RESOLUTION 12-178 ADOPTING THE 2013 PRELIMINARY BUDGET AND PROPERTY TAX LEVY

City Manager Adams presented highlights of the 2013 budget. There are no levy limits being imposed in 2013 and no cuts to LGA. The proposed tax levy increase is 4.5% which is a 3% increase to the general fund and a 1.5% increase to the debt service levy that is used primarily for road improvement projects. Revenue changes and strategies for 2013 would include using Fire/Police interest earnings for equipment and maintenance and using the Health Insurance Fund Reserve for the City's share of health insurance increase. The 2011 budget surplus would be used for capital needs. The City Manager provided charts showing proposed revenues and expenditures for 2013 as well as a summary of expenditure changes and strategies. He noted that the City is working on a 5-year rate analysis/plan for the Enterprise funds to determine rates in 2013. Mr. Adams also noted that the City is positioning itself for a healthy financial future and has long-term budget strategies and planning in place. Budget workshops will be held as necessary from September to November. Council will receive public input at the December 10th meeting and adopt the final 2013 levy and 2013 budget in December.

Motion was introduced by Councilor Anderson and seconded by Councilor Brooks. On roll call vote, the following councilors voted in favor of said motion: Councilors Schulte V, Baker, Kehr, Olson, Anderson, Brooks and Mayor Rasmussen Jr. Mayor Rasmussen Jr. declared the motion passed.

(See Secretary's Original Resolutions 12-178
included with these minutes.)

C. BRIDGE AVENUE CORRIDOR UPDATE

City Manager Adams provided background information. City staff has reviewed SRF's traffic report which listed a number of recommendations for the Bridge Avenue corridor. A sub-committee met on the right hand turn lane. The Freeborn County board, acting as road authority granted a right-in access from Bridge Avenue. City staff needs to determine if a frontage road and easement is needed and how the City would participate in a future traffic

signal, the realignment of Plaza Street and other project funding. Mr. Adams recommended that the City, County, Kwik Trip and any other partners meet to discuss a development agreement and associated costs.

Mayor Rasmussen stated that he looks forward to working with Kwik Trip on the project and noted that Bridge Avenue is a congested area. There are issues to be dealt with and the goal is to make the Bridge Avenue corridor work for all future developments.

MOTION: I will move to direct staff to work with interested parties on the Bridge Avenue corridor.

Motion made by Councilor Olson and seconded by Councilor Baker. On roll call vote, the following councilors voted in favor of said motion: Councilors Schulte V, Baker, Kehr, Olson, Anderson, Brooks and Mayor Rasmussen Jr. Mayor Rasmussen Jr. declared the motion passed.

MAYOR & CITY COUNCIL REPORTS

First Ward, Councilor Schulte V. reported:

- Committee Updates - none
- Ward Items – Received calls on bump-outs; received letters on the Bancroft Bay Disc Golf Course with most comments saying they prefer it to be a natural area. Also received many calls supporting 5-person crews for Fire Department.

Second Ward, Councilor Baker reported:

- Committee Updates – Planning Commission met to discuss an RV park, four different places where it could fit, will pursue it with the City.
- Ward Items – Received calls on Broadway Avenue project and Fire Department. Councilor Baker announced the 2nd Annual Fall Festival on September 22 and invited the public to attend.

Third Ward, Councilor Kehr reported:

- Committee Updates – Minnesota Commissioner of Human Rights will be in Albert Lea on September 27. Councilor Kehr served dinner for the Moose Club's 9/11 tribute.
- Ward Items – None. Thanked everyone that called her about the Fire Department and the Broadway Avenue project.

Fourth Ward, Councilor Olson reported:

- Committee Updates – Attended Parks & Recreation advisory meeting, discussed RV park/campground and best uses, there are four possible sites. Also discussed Edgewater Cottage.
- Ward Items – Received calls on Fire Department and calls in favor of the Bancroft Bay Disc Golf Course.

Fifth Ward, Councilor Anderson reported:

- Committee Updates - None
- Ward Items – Items were already given to city staff to take care of. Received calls on Edgewater Cottage, the bump-outs, and Bancroft Bay and thanked everyone for their input. Noted that MNDOT called the CVB for information about Albert Lea.

Sixth Ward, Councilor Brooks reported:

- Committee Updates – Attended the HRA board meeting.
- Ward Items – Inquired about 8th Street / Frank Avenue housing issue, asked if the City could set a time period for building permits, he has seen permits in windows for several years. Asked that Joe Grossman call him about tree issues. Councilor Brooks also helped at the Moose Club's 9/11 tribute event.

Mayor Rasmussen Jr. reported the following:

- Minnesota Vibram Championship, Sept 15-16 - A professional Disc Golf tournament at Bancroft Bay Park, free to spectators.
- Fountain Lake Power Boat Drag Race, Sept 16 - a 1,000 ft. straight line boat race, free to the public.
- Get Active Freeborn County, Sept 21 – a free Interactive Wellness Extravaganza at Northbridge Mall with many activities for kids and adults.
- Downtown Fall Festival, Sept 22 – A family oriented festival with hay rides/train rides for the children; the Farmers Market will be on Broadway Avenue along with craft and food vendors.
- Thorne Crest 5k, Sept 22 - Same day registration starting at 7:30 a.m., race starts at 9 a.m. All ages are welcome to participate in the Walk/Run.

The Mayor attended the Port Authority board meeting; discussion was held on buildings currently owned, tax forfeiture properties available and steps to acquire those for redevelopment; also discussed Bridge Avenue.

CITY MANAGER REPORT

City Manager Adams reported:

- Reviewed timelines for the Broadway Avenue reconstruction and streetscape project; there will be a Neighborhood meeting on September 19 for the downtown to learn about the project scope and assessments. On September 24 Council will vote on ordering the project. Discussion regarding bump-outs and plazas will be held before finalizing plans and specs for the project and awarding the project will follow that. Fact sheets are being prepared to help get the word out. The City Manager has been speaking to civic groups and is willing to speak to other groups.

APPROVAL OF CLAIMS

RESOLUTION 12-179 APPROVING CONTRACT WITH COUNCILMEMBER

City Manager Adams explained that the attached resolution directs the Mayor and City Clerk to make payment on behalf of the City for a claim from Jones, Haugh and Smith, and to issue payment for filing the affidavit of official interest by the interested official, John Schulte, V.

Councilor Anderson moved that the resolution be approved for payment of claims in the amount of \$545.00, seconded by Councilor Baker. On roll call vote, the following councilors voted in favor of said motion: Councilors: Baker, Kehr, Olson, Anderson, Brooks and Mayor Rasmussen Jr. Mayor Rasmussen Jr. declared the motion passed. Council Schulte abstained.

(See Secretary's Original Resolution 12-179
included with these minutes.)

RESOLUTION 12-180 APPROVING CLAIMS

Councilor Kehr moved that the resolution be approved for payment of claims in the amount of \$631,882.14, seconded by Councilor Brooks. On roll call vote, the following councilors voted in favor of said motion: Councilors Schulte V., Baker, Kehr, Olson, Anderson, Brooks, and Mayor Rasmussen Jr. Mayor Rasmussen Jr. declared the motion passed.

(See Secretary's Original Resolution 12-180
included with these minutes.)

ADJOURNMENT

Councilor Baker moved and Councilor Olson seconded that there being no further business, the council meeting be adjourned at 8:18 p.m., until the next regular meeting of the Albert Lea City Council at 7:00 p.m. on Monday, September 24, 2012. On roll call vote, all councilors voted in favor of said motion. Mayor Rasmussen Jr. declared the motion passed and the meeting adjourned.

Mayor Vern Rasmussen, Jr.

Filed and attested September 11, 2012

Wendy Flugum
Council Secretary Pro Tem