

**REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING  
CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS, CITY OF ALBERT LEA  
February 26, 2024 - 5:30 P.M.**

**PRESENT:** Mayor Rich Murray, Councilors Rachel Christensen, Larry Baker, Jason Howland, Sherri Rasmussen, Robert Rasmussen, Brian Anderson, City Manager Ian Rigg, Public Works Director Steven Jahnke, City Attorney Joel Holstad of Lake National Law LLP, and City Clerk Daphney Maras.

**ADDITIONAL STAFF PRESENT:** Sergeant-at-Arms-Public Safety Director JD Carlson, Building Zoning Official Wayne Sorensen.

**CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL** - Mayor Murray called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM. City Clerk Maras administered roll call.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE** - Mayor Murray asked all in attendance to stand and recite the Pledge of Allegiance.

**CEREMONIAL ITEMS** – Sergeant Steven Charboneau presented the Lifesaving Award to Mr. Luis Daniel Martinez. Charboneau described the heroic life-saving actions by Mr. Martinez when he performed CPR on Robert Scrabeck who collapsed on December 11, 2023. Mr. Scrabeck said he is very thankful, and spoke of his immense appreciation to Mr. Martinez.

**PUBLIC FORUM** – Bruce Manwarren spoke of the train tracks by the Fire Station and the Fire Trucks needing to wait for a train to pass.

**CONSENT AND APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

- A. Approve Minutes of the February 12, 2024 Regular Council Meeting
- B. Approve Minutes of the February 12, 2024 Work Session
- C. License & Permits
- D. Resolution Revising the Municipal State Aid Street System

Motion made by Councilor Baker to approve the consent agenda as read, seconded by Councilor S. Rasmussen. On roll call vote, the following councilors voted in favor of said motion: Christensen, Baker, Howland, S. Rasmussen, R. Rasmussen, Anderson, and Mayor Murray. Mayor Murray declared the motion passed.

(See Secretary's Original Resolution 24-037  
Included with these minutes)

**PETITIONS, REQUESTS AND COMMUNICATIONS** - None

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

- A. **Ordinance 24-105 Amending Chapter 32 – Parks and Recreation (2<sup>nd</sup> Reading)**

City staff as well as the Parks and Recreation Board recommend adopting this ordinance updating rules for City of Albert Lea parks to help ensure the safety and enjoyment for everyone using our parks, especially children. It is recommended the current system remain in place requiring parties renting City park facilities hire a business with an on-sale liquor license and the required caterer's permit. Other major changes clarify the rules prohibiting cannabis and tobacco; add ATVS, UTVS and dirt bikes to the definition of motor vehicles prohibited in parks except on designated roads and in parking areas; and that a written agreement with the city is needed to store any personal property in parks.

Motion made by Councilor Baker, seconded by Councilor Anderson. On roll call vote, the following councilors voted in favor of said motion: Christensen, Baker, Howland, S. Rasmussen, R. Rasmussen, Anderson, and Mayor Murray. Mayor Murray declared the motion passed.

(See Secretary's Original Ordinance 24-105  
Included with these minutes)

**B. Resolution 24-038 Approving Publication Summary - Ordinance 24-105 Amending Chapter 32 – Parks and Recreation**

Ordinance Summaries may be published if they reasonably inform the public of the effect and intent of the Ordinance. Summaries fulfill all legal requirements as if the entire summarized matter had been published and also directs the public how to obtain the complete Ordinance.

Motion made by Councilor Baker, seconded by Councilor Anderson. On roll call vote, the following councilors voted in favor of said motion: Christensen, Baker, Howland, S. Rasmussen, R. Rasmussen, Anderson, and Mayor Murray. Mayor Murray declared the motion passed.

(See Secretary's Original Resolution 24-038  
Included with these minutes)

**NEW BUSINESS**

**A. Public Hearing and Resolution 24-039 Ordering Improvement and Preparation of Plans for the 2024 Neighborhood Improvement Project (In the Area of Fairlane Terrace) – (Job 2401)**

The proposed project has 3 main components: bituminous mill & overlay in the Fairlane Terrace area, bituminous surface and watermain replacement on the Spicer Road cul-de-sac, and replacement of the bituminous surface on the east end of Hammer Road. The streets in the mill & overlay area include:

- Fairlane Terrace – Richway Drive to Briarwood Drive
- Crestview Road – Fairlane Terrace to Levison Street
- Foothills Boulevard – Crestview Road to Fairlane Terrace
- Spicer Road – Fairlane Terrace to Foothills Boulevard
- Briarwood Drive – Garfield Avenue to Crestview Road

- Kent Avenue – Fairlane Terrace to Levison Street
- Levison Street – Garfield Avenue to Crestview Road
- Columbus Avenue – Hawthorne Street to Crestview Road

Work in the mill & overlay area will involve milling the existing bituminous street surfacing for a 6-foot width along each concrete gutter line so the new bituminous layer will match with the level of the concrete gutter. A 2-inch thick layer of bituminous will be laid over the entire width of the street. The project would also involve replacing sections of curb & gutter that have settled and are causing drainage issues.

On Spicer Road from Fairlane Terrace to the cul-de-sac, work will include removing and replacing the bituminous surface, curb & gutter, aggregate base, and watermain.

Work on Hammer Road from Sorensen Road to the east end will include removal and replacement of the bituminous surface and aggregate base.

There are 186 properties to be assessed as part of this project (171 in the overlay areas, 11 along the Spicer Road cul-de-sac, and 4 along Hammer Road). The assessments for the overlay areas depend on the width of the roadway and range between \$33.55 per foot to \$35.21 per foot. The preliminary assessment rate for Spicer Road is \$129.69 per foot, and for Hammer Road it is \$62.43 per foot. The preliminary assessment roll is attached to this report.

Following the assessment policy, the assessments will be over 10 years for the mill & overlay areas, and 15 years for Spicer Road and Hammer Road work. The interest rate will be based on bonding in 2024.

The estimated project cost is \$1,379,114.66 and would be paid for with assessments, sanitary sewer funds, water funds, and City bonding funds.

The neighborhood meeting was held January 29, 2024 to discuss the project with affected residents.

Councilor S. Rasmussen commented on the high cost of the assessments and said council is considering a review of the current assessment policy.

At Mayor Murray's request, Rigg explained the process should a resident choose to appeal their final assessment. Additionally, he explained at this point the assessment amounts will not go up but they could go down. Baker encouraged residents to contact their council member if they have questions or concerns about their assessments now or in the future.

Mayor Murray opened the public hearing. Bob Graham spoke of his concerns about the Crestview Road construction project due to several older sewer and water systems still remaining. He is not opposed to the project but inquires as to how many older water and sewer systems remain.

Mayor Murray called two more times. No one spoke. He closed the public hearing.

Motion made by Councilor Baker, seconded by Councilor S. Rasmussen. On roll call vote, the following councilors voted in favor of said motion: Christensen, Baker, Howland, S. Rasmussen,

R. Rasmussen, Anderson, and Mayor Murray. Mayor Murray declared the motion passed.

(See Secretary's Original Resolution 24-039  
Included with these minutes)

**B. Public Hearing and Resolution 24-040 Ordering Improvement and Preparation of Plans for the 2024 State Aid Street Overlay Project (In the Area of Greenwood Drive) – (Job 2402)**

A public hearing is being held for public input for City Job No. 2402

Rigg explained the proposed project includes bituminous mill & overlay on Greenwood Drive from Richway Drive to the bridge, and installation of new sidewalk from Richway Drive to Hammer Road. The project area is as follows:

- Greenwood Drive – Richway Drive to Hammer Road

Work in the mill & overlay area will involve milling the existing bituminous street surfacing for a 6-foot width along each concrete gutter line so the new bituminous layer will match with the level of the concrete gutter. A 2-inch thick layer of bituminous will be laid over the entire width of the street. The project would also involve replacing sections of curb & gutter that have settled and are causing drainage issues on the east side of the road.

New sidewalk is proposed to be installed on the west side of Greenwood Drive. This will be accommodated by narrowing the street by 3 feet and moving the curb & gutter on the west side. Parking is proposed to be on the west side of the roadway.

There are 44 properties to be assessed as part of this project. The preliminary assessment rate for the mill & overlay and curb & gutter replacements is \$60.09 per front foot. The preliminary assessment rate for the sidewalk installation is \$4.58 per square foot. The preliminary assessment roll is attached to this report.

Following the assessment policy, the assessments will be over 10 years. The interest rate will be based on bonding in 2024.

Approximately \$500,000 of the costs for the road narrowing and sidewalk installation are eligible for possible grant funding through MnDOT's Safe Routes to Schools (SRTS) program. Engineering will be applying for this grant funding; however, the City will not know whether these funds are secured until April or May.

The estimated project cost is \$905,344.04 and would be paid for with assessments, State Aid funds, City bonding funds, and (if awarded) SRTS grant funds.

The neighborhood meeting was held February 20, 2024 to discuss the project with the impacted residents.

Council Christensen commented that all these projects were discussed in depth at the work session prior this council meeting. Furthermore, these projects are not finalized at this time and there is still time for adjustments.

Mayor Murray opened the public hearing.

Jim Gudbranson lives on Greenwood Drive and supports the proposed sidewalk on the West side of Greenwood Drive, however disagrees with the financial burden put on the residents that live on the East side of Greenwood Drive. Including the responsibility of maintaining snow removal on the sidewalk by all the residents when the City is already providing snow removal on other neighboring streets. Additionally, he suggests a crosswalk should be installed on Richway Drive and Greenwood Drive.

Mayor Murray called a second time. Catherine Pectorious lives on Greenwood Drive and spoke of the financial burden of the proposed assessments. She also has concerns of parking and disagrees with the installation of a sidewalk.

Mayor Murray called a third time. No one spoke. He closed the public hearing.

Councilor Christensen said she has had conversation with the City and the County Engineers regarding the installation of a crosswalk at the intersection of Greenwood Drive and Richway Drive and this suggestion will be reviewed.

Motion made by Councilor Christensen, seconded by Councilor R. Rasmussen. On roll call vote, the following councilors voted in favor of said motion: Christensen, Baker, Howland, S. Rasmussen, R. Rasmussen, Anderson, and Mayor Murray. Mayor Murray declared the motion passed.

(See Secretary's Original Resolution 24-040  
Included with these minutes)

**C. Public Hearing and Resolution 24-041 Ordering Improvement and Preparation of Plans for the Marshall Street and Sibley Avenue Reconstruction Project (Job 2403)**

A public hearing is being held for public input for City Job No. 2403.

The proposed project calls for the complete reconstruction of portions of Marshall Street and Sibley Avenue (approximately 1,200 total feet). Proposed work will include complete removal and replacement of the pavement, curb & gutter, sidewalk, sanitary sewer, storm sewer, and watermain. The existing concrete and bituminous pavements will be removed and replaced with a bituminous surface. The streets are:

- Marshall Street – Bridge Avenue to E Main Street (TH 65)
- Sibley Avenue – Marshall Street to E. Main Street (TH 65)

Sibley Avenue and the portion of Marshall Street from Bridge Avenue to Sibley Avenue are roadways under the jurisdiction of Freeborn County. If this project is approved, the City of Albert Lea and Freeborn County will partner to complete this project. The City will act as the lead agency

and will be in charge of project design, the bidding process, and construction oversight. Freeborn County would then reimburse the City for the construction and engineering costs with the estimated amounts outlined in the table attached.

Assessments will be levied to the benefiting properties for the street pavement and curb & gutter along the City-owned portion of Marshall Street. While the street will be both wider and constructed with thicker pavement due to traffic volumes, per the Assessment Policy, the assessments will be based on a standard 33-foot wide residential street with a typical 8" aggregate base and 4" bituminous surface. The proposed preliminary assessment rate is \$164.63 per front foot.

The City Assessment Policy is to assess 25% of the sidewalk replacement costs. The proposed assessment rate for the sidewalk is \$3.20 per square foot. While the City has historically paid for sidewalk and pedestrian improvements on County roadways within City limits, Freeborn County has agreed to pay all the sidewalk costs along the County-owned portions of this project. Because the County is paying these costs, these properties are not proposed to be assessed. There are 8 properties proposed to be assessed as part of this project (including one City owned lot). A preliminary assessment roll is attached to this report.

Following the assessment policy, the assessments will be over 15 years. The interest rate will be based on bonding in 2024.

Currently the project is shown using state aid funds. This would impact parking stalls on Marshall. The other option is not to use state aid funds and bond for this portion of the project. The Council must make this decision tonight. The attached resolution indicates the use of bonding funds.

The estimated project cost is \$1,164,998.40 and would be paid for with Freeborn County reimbursement, assessments, sanitary sewer funds, water funds, and City bonding funds or State Aid funds.

The neighborhood meeting was held February 8, 2024 to discuss the project with impacted residents and businesses.

Councilor Howland asked what the plan is for access to the businesses located in that area during construction. Mayor Murray deferred the question to Rigg who explained Engineering staff will work with the contractors to ensure the best possible solution to avoid complete street closures and create alternative means to access. Jahnke said a stipulation in the contractor's agreement is that Sibley Street and Marshall Street cannot be closed at the same time. Additionally, there is an area on Bridge Street that will be designated for temporary parking during construction.

Howland spoke of concern for B&B Café's already reduced parking noting Sibley Street is the only parking option. Jahnke explained the sidewalk will remain in place and available thereby allowing people to park near the Salvation Army and walk to the businesses in the area.

Councilor Baker inquired if there are any programs to assist residents with financial hardships unable to pay the assessments. Rigg described the deferred program the City offers as well as programs offered by Semcac.

Councilor S. Rasmussen reiterated Councilor Christensen's earlier comments regarding council's review of the assessment policy.

Mayor Murray opened the public hearing. He called the first time. Daniel Stromley is the executor of the owner of the home at 801 Marshall Street. He described the assessment amount of over \$17,000 and believes the assessment far exceeds the benefit on this property. He referenced an Informational Brief of the MN house of Representatives. He implored council to re-assess the assessment amount.

Mayor Murray called a second time. Michael St. Romaine spoke of two properties he owns on Marshall Street. He described the importance of maintaining all the current parking spaces on Marshall Street.

Mayor Murray called a third time. Brandy Krenz owns a property on Marshall Street. She spoke of the importance of keeping all the current parking spaces for the sake of all the businesses in the area.

Robert Hoffman is a realtor in Albert Lea. He commended the council on successful street projects in Albert Lea and to the businesses and residents living in the proposed construction area, he assured it will pay off in the end.

Chris Poasek co-owner of Scooters Coffee described his concerns with street closure during reconstruction. He looks forward to learning of the phase construction plan when it becomes available.

Mayor Murray called again. No one spoke. He closed the public hearing.

City Manager Rigg said the resolution that is before the council is to NOT use the state aid money and preserve the current parking spot. That money will not be forfeited, as it can be used on a different street project. Additionally, he reiterated that the it is written in the contract that Sibley Street and Marshall Street cannot be closed at the same time thereby always providing consumer access to these businesses. Mayor Murray stated his appreciation to the businesses and assured them the City will do everything possible for the smoothest construction process possible.

Motion made by Councilor S. Rasmussen approved the resolution as written with maintaining the current 13 parking stalls, seconded by Councilor Anderson. On roll call vote, the following councilors voted in favor of said motion: Christensen, Baker, Howland, S. Rasmussen, R. Rasmussen, Anderson, and Mayor Murray. Mayor Murray declared the motion passed.

(See Secretary's Original Resolution 24-041  
Included with these minutes)

**D. Public Hearing and Resolution 24-042 Ordering Improvement and Preparation of Plans for the 7<sup>th</sup> Street & Winter Avenue Reconstruction Project (Job 2404)**

A public hearing is being held for public input for City Job No. 2404.

The proposed project calls for the complete reconstruction of portions of 7<sup>th</sup> Street and Winter Avenue (approximately 1,650 total feet). Proposed work will include complete removal and replacement of the pavement, curb & gutter, sidewalk, sanitary sewer, storm sewer, and watermain. The existing concrete and bituminous pavements will be removed and replaced with a bituminous surface. The streets are:

- 7<sup>th</sup> Street – SE Broadway Avenue to James Avenue
- Winter Avenue – Fountain Street to Abbott Street

Winter Avenue is 31 feet wide from back-to-back of curb with sidewalk along both sides of the street and is proposed to be reconstructed to the same configuration. A short section of Winter Avenue is raised where the Union Pacific Railroad used to cross. This rail line has now been abandoned, this bump will be smoothed out with the new construction.

7<sup>th</sup> Street is 37 feet wide with no sidewalk. 7<sup>th</sup> Street is wider due to the traffic from the surrounding neighborhood funneling to this street as it connects to SE Broadway Avenue (TH 65). Engineering is evaluating two options for the new street layout for 7<sup>th</sup> Street as outlined in the following section.

There is no sidewalk along 7<sup>th</sup> Street due to the existing street width, narrow right-of-way, and steep boulevards. Adding sidewalk would require significantly narrowing of the street and likely eliminating parking on one side. Engineering has laid out two options for this report with the total costs outlined below.

- Option 1 – Reduce the street width to 32 ft to accommodate a new sidewalk on the north side of the road. This would connect the surrounding neighborhood to the sidewalk along SE Broadway Avenue. With the reduction in street width, Engineering would recommend elimination of on-street parking on one side of the road due to the traffic patterns and volume on this street. The sidewalk would need to be installed directly off the back of the curb to prevent the removal of 4 large private trees and construction of a retaining wall along a portion of the sidewalk.
- Option 2 – Widen the street slightly to 38 ft and do not install new sidewalk. This configuration would better accommodate on-street parking on both sides while maintaining full two-way traffic (2 – 11 ft driving lanes and 2 – 8 ft parking lanes). This would meet minimum street width standards if this section of roadway were to be added to the City's Municipal State Aid Street system in the future.

Engineering is recommending Option 1 due to the improved pedestrian safety and connectivity.

Assessments will be levied to the benefiting properties based upon constructing the street with the City minimum standard of 4 inches of bituminous over 8 inches of aggregate base. Properties on Winter Avenue and Option 1 for 7<sup>th</sup> Street will be assessed for the full street width, while properties along assessments for 7<sup>th</sup> Street for Option 2 will reflect a 34 ft wide street per the Assessment Policy. The proposed preliminary assessment rates are \$148.96 per foot for Winter Avenue, \$151.25 per foot for 7<sup>th</sup> Street Option 1, and \$154.19 per foot for 7<sup>th</sup> Street Option 2.



The City Assessment Policy is to assess 25% of the sidewalk replacement costs. The proposed assessment rate for the sidewalk is \$2.69 per square foot.

There are 36 properties proposed to be assessed as part of this project (13 along 7<sup>th</sup> Street and 23 along Winter Avenue). Following the assessment policy, the assessments will be over 15 years. The interest rate will be based on bonding in 2024.

The estimated project cost is \$1,876,060.76 for Option 1 and \$1,804,056.57 for Option 2 and would be paid for with assessments, sanitary sewer funds, water funds, and City bonding funds.

A neighborhood meeting was held on February 22, 2024 to discuss the project with impacted residents and businesses.

Mayor Murray opened the public hearing. Leah Adams lives on Winter Avenue and described the strain of paying the proposed assessment on her property. Her brother, Phil Adams added further context related to the assessment. City Manager Rigg suggested staff will get in touch with Ms. Adams and discuss the potential of deferring her assessment amount.

Rigg reiterated what he mentioned earlier that the proposed assessment amounts cannot go higher, but can be lowered depending on the bids.

Public Safety Director JD Carlson explained due to a language barrier he be allowed to relay a written message from a resident that attended this meeting and resides on 7<sup>th</sup> Street noting her concerns of payment of the proposed assessment. The note was provided to Mayor Murray.

Mayor Murray called two more times. No one spoke. He closed the public hearing.

Motion made by Councilor Baker to approve the resolution with Option 1, seconded by Councilor Anderson. On roll call vote, the following councilors voted in favor of said motion: Christensen, Baker, Howland, S. Rasmussen, R. Rasmussen, Anderson, and Mayor Murray. Mayor Murray declared the motion passed.

(See Secretary's Original Resolution 24-042  
Included with these minutes)

#### **E. Ordinance 24-106 Amending Chapter 42, Article III – Traffic and Vehicles (1<sup>st</sup> Reading)**

This minor amendment is a clarification as to when an RV parking area must be paved or not paved. Amendments made in recent history related to parking made this provision a bit unclear to administer.

Motion made by Councilor Christensen, seconded by Councilor S. Rasmussen. On roll call vote, the following councilors voted in favor of said motion: Christensen, Baker, Howland, S. Rasmussen, R. Rasmussen, Anderson, and Mayor Murray. Mayor Murray declared the motion passed.

(See Secretary's Original Ordinance 24-106  
Included with these minutes)

**F. Ordinance 24-107 Amending Chapter 50, Article I - Zoning – Accessory Buildings, Fences, and Site Appurtenances (1<sup>st</sup> Reading)**

Sec. 50.0018 of this Chapter is amended as it pertains to fence height. The present ordinance limits residential zones front fence heights to three feet. The amendment would allow four feet in height if see through material such as chain link is used. This also aids in households with children and pets.

Motion made by Councilor Baker, seconded by Councilor Anderson. On roll call vote, the following councilors voted in favor of said motion: Christensen, Baker, Howland, S. Rasmussen, R. Rasmussen, Anderson, and Mayor Murray. Mayor Murray declared the motion passed.

(See Secretary's Original Ordinance 24-107  
Included with these minutes)

**G. Ordinance 24-108 Amending Chapter 50, Article III - Division 8 - Districts (1<sup>st</sup> Reading)**

Article III, Division 8 of Chapter 50 pertains to personalized storage or mini warehousing, and design standards. Past enforcement and discussion on industrial type warehousing has been inconsistently administered. B-2 design standards do not work well with the typical warehouse structure. This amendment would clarify the type of warehouse allowed and the standards that would apply. Additionally, language is clarified as it relates to design standards, building materials, and screening requirements.

Motion made by Councilor S. Rasmussen, seconded by Councilor Christensen. On roll call vote, the following councilors voted in favor of said motion: Christensen, Baker, Howland, S. Rasmussen, R. Rasmussen, Anderson, and Mayor Murray. Mayor Murray declared the motion passed.

(See Secretary's Original Ordinance 24-108  
Included with these minutes)

**H. Ordinance 24-109 Amending Chapter 50, Article III – Division 22 – Districts (1<sup>st</sup> Reading)**

This article pertains to building design standards in the Diversified Central District (DCD). This amendment would allow for some modern metal building materials to be allowed if aesthetically compliant with the intent of the ordinance.

Motion made by Councilor Baker, seconded by Councilor Anderson. On roll call vote, the following councilors voted in favor of said motion: Christensen, Baker, Howland, S. Rasmussen, R. Rasmussen, Anderson, and Mayor Murray. Mayor Murray declared the motion passed.

(See Secretary's Original Ordinance 24-109  
Included with these minutes)

**I. Ordinance 24-110 Amending Chapter 50, Article III – Shoreland Management District (1<sup>st</sup> Reading)**

Since the annexation of the land adjacent to Pickerel Lake, the Shoreland Ordinance has not been up to date. This amendment includes the lake in the ordinance and makes one stipulation for a permit requirement for any work within the “Shore Impact Zone.” (37 ½ feet).

Motion made by Councilor Howland, seconded by Councilor S. Rasmussen. On roll call vote, the following councilors voted in favor of said motion: Christensen, Baker, Howland, S. Rasmussen, R. Rasmussen, Anderson, and Mayor Murray. Mayor Murray declared the motion passed.

(See Secretary's Original Ordinance 24-110  
Included with these minutes)

**J. Ordinance 24-111 Repealing and Replacing in its Entirety - Chapter 50, Article IV - Signs (1<sup>st</sup> Reading)**

Building/Zoning Official Sorensen provided the background to this ordinance. He explained this is a complete replacement of the ordinance for signs that current staff consider to be inconsistent, cumbersome, and incomplete as it relates to current signage practices and requests.

The ordinance will have more consistent requirements within zone categories. Basically, these categories are residential, business, and industrial. This replaces many differences that are in current ordinances between the basic 15 different zones the City currently has. It will also add previously undefined and unregulated types of signage including banners, feathers, flag, yard, and monument signs. Limits will be set on districts for sign area, off premise advertising signs, dynamic signs, and electronic messaging signs. Generally, this will also cleanup and update definitions, prohibitions, sign condition, and nonconformities.

Councilor Howland commended Sorensen for his research and common-sense amendments to this resolution. Christensen spoke of the Planning Commission review and support regarding this ordinance

Motion made by Councilor Baker, seconded by Councilor S. Rasmussen. On roll call vote, the following councilors voted in favor of said motion: Christensen, Baker, Howland, S. Rasmussen, R. Rasmussen, Anderson, and Mayor Murray. Mayor Murray declared the motion passed.

(See Secretary's Original Ordinance 24-111  
Included with these minutes)

**K. Resolution 24-043 Approving Cost Participation for Consulting Services for Paved Multiuse Trail in Cooperation with Freeborn County**

City Manager Rigg explained Freeborn County is fee title owner of retired railroad property that exists from Commercial Street in Albert Lea to the city of Hartland that was acquired with the

intent to construct a paved trail facility for public use. The first section of this multiuse trail is from Fountain Street north to the City of Manchester.

This resolution commits the city of Albert Lea to a 50% cost share up to \$150,000 for the initial design phase for the above referenced section. The resolution also commits the city and county to this same 50% cost share for future design work as the trail continues through Albert Lea.

Councilor Christensen commented this is a long-term project and an initial expense however, it will assist in receiving grants. Although this is a value to the community, she encourages staff to continue to be mindful of the increasing costs for projects. Councilor S. Rasmussen concurred with Christensen noting although she is hesitant due to the potential price tag, she will support the cost share. Mayor Murray echoed both Christensen and S. Rasmussen.

Motion made by Councilor Baker, seconded by Councilor Howland. On roll call vote, the following councilors voted in favor of said motion: Christensen, Baker, Howland, S. Rasmussen, R. Rasmussen, Anderson, and Mayor Murray. Mayor Murray declared the motion passed.

(See Secretary's Original Resolution 24-043  
Included with these minutes)

#### **MAYOR AND COUNCIL REPORTS:**

First Ward, Councilor Christensen reported:

- Ward Items – Attended the neighborhood meeting for the Greenwood Drive street project
- Committee Update – Blue Zones continues to look for opportunities to promote events. She said the winter passport event was challenging due to the lack of winter weather. Commended the Albert Lea Tribune on the Progress Edition in showcasing Albert Lea's successes.

Second Ward, Councilor Baker reported:

- Ward Items – Attended the neighborhood meeting for the 7<sup>th</sup> Street and Winter Ave. street projects and reported residents had a lot of questions to which the Engineering staff responded. Spoke of the possibility of installing a "No Outlet" sign in the Park Avenue area.
- Committee Update – Attended the HRA Special Meeting last week approving signatories and he was nominated to serve as the new Chair. Attended an HPC meeting and the Shared Services meeting at the County. In addition to the discussion of cost-sharing the consulting services for the proposed trail, there was conversation regarding sharing grant-writer services. He will be attending an HRA and Watershed meeting next week.

Third Ward, Councilor Howland reported:

- Ward Items – None
- Committee Update – Attended the Shared Services meeting at the County. He said it is exciting to talk about this proposed trail that is finally coming to fruition. He said the possibility of sharing a grant-writer with the County is a good idea. Attended the CVB Board meeting last week. He said there are two open positions open on that Board.

Fourth Ward, Councilor S. Rasmussen reported:

- Ward Items – Has received input from residents regarding upcoming street projects
- Committee Update – Will be attending an HRA meeting tomorrow night. Encourages the community to attend a Fraud Prevention Q&A event to be held at the Senior Center on February 29<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 a.m. There is no cost to attend. Encourages the community to donate blood at the blood drive to be held at the Senior Center on March 21<sup>st</sup>.

Fifth Ward, Councilor R. Rasmussen reported:

- Ward Items – Working on a couple of ward items.
- Committee Update – Will be attending a road project meeting next week. Provided a report after attending the Library Board meeting last week.

Sixth Ward, Councilor Anderson reported:

- Ward Items – Attended the street project meeting last week regarding the 7<sup>th</sup> Street project. Encourages residents to contact their council member with questions or concerns related to the street projects.
- Committee Update – Attended a special HRA meeting last week and will be attending another HRA meeting next week.

### **MAYOR REPORT:**

Attended the following:

- Several sporting events
- Mental Health forum at the Fire Department
- Shared Services meeting at the County
- Chamber Business After-Hours last week sponsored by the Albert Lea Seed House and spoke of their long-time success
- A Rec Facilities open house
- Historical Society fundraiser at the Moose Lodge
- Albert Lea Art Center

Mentioned the upcoming events and noted the events are also listed on the City's website.

### **CITY MANAGER REPORT**

- He mentioned the upcoming Citizen's Academy and encourages up to three council members and anyone in the public to attend.
- Closing out on year-end financials and reported everything is looking good
- Reviewing some policy edits
- Closed on the sale of 132 S. Broadway and reports Ignite Nutrition are the new owners
- Staff is reviewing ways to support HRA
- Reported on the recent Green Team meeting
- Will be attending the Chamber of Commerce meeting on Wednesday

### **APPROVAL OF CLAIMS**

#### **A. Resolution 24-044 Approving Claims**

**(1). Presentation of Claims Over \$25,000**

The attached resolution directs the Mayor and City Treasurer to issue the payment of claims as presented in the Detail of Claims report. In addition, Maras displayed a list of claims over \$25,000 for the public's viewing, transparency and education.

Motion made by Councilor Christensen, to approve the claims, seconded by Councilor Howland. On roll call vote, the following councilors voted in favor of said motion: Christensen, Baker, Howland, S. Rasmussen, R. Rasmussen, Anderson, and Mayor Murray. Mayor Murray declared the motion passed.

(See Secretary's Original Resolution 24-044  
Included with these minutes)

**ADJOURNMENT: 8:41 P.M.**

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Mayor Rich Murray

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Daphney Maras, City Clerk  
Secretary of the Council