

**REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING
CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS, CITY OF ALBERT LEA
March 10, 2025 – 7:00 P.M.**

PRESENT: Mayor Rich Murray, Councilors Rachel Christensen, Larry Baker, Reid Olson, Keith Van Beek, Brian Anderson, City Manager Ian Rigg, Public Works Director Steven Jahnke, City Attorney Joel Holstad of Lake National Law LLP, and Deputy City Clerk Karla Tukua

ABSENT: Councilor Jason Howland and City Clerk Daphney Maras

ADDITIONAL STAFF PRESENT: Sergeant-at-Arms-Public Safety Director JD Carlson and City Planner Megan Boeck

CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL - Mayor Murray called the meeting to order at 7:01 PM. Deputy City Clerk Tukua administered roll call.

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

CEREMONIAL ITEMS - None

PUBLIC FORUM – Bruce Manwarren

CONSENT AND APPROVAL OF AGENDA

- A. Approve Minutes of the February 24, 2025 Regular Council Meeting
- B. Approve Minutes of the February 24, 2025 Work Session
- C. Approve Minutes of the February 20, 2025 Council Retreat
- D. License & Permits
- E. Appointment of Jennifer Levisen to the Heritage Preservation Commission
- F. Resolution Authorizing City of Albert Lea and Albert Lea Township to Enter into Agreement for Fire Protection Services
- G. Resolution Authorizing City of Albert Lea and Pickarel Lake Township to Enter into Agreement for Fire Protection Services
- H. Resolution Approving Plans and Ordering of Bids for the 2025 Neighborhood Improvement Project (Job 2501)
- I. Resolution Approving Plans and Ordering of Bids for the 2025 State Aid Street Overlay Project (Job 2502)
- J. Resolution Designating “No Parking” on West Side of Garfield Avenue from Fairlane Terrace to Richway Drive (Job 2502)
- K. Resolution Approving Plans and Ordering of Bids for the 11th Street Reconstruction Project (Job 2503)
- L. Resolution Authorizing an Agreement with Houston County Regarding Federal Aviation Administration Airport Improvement Non-Primary Entitlement Funds for the Albert Lea Municipal Airport

Motion made by Councilor Baker to approve the consent agenda as read, seconded by Councilor Anderson. On voice call vote, the following councilors voted in favor of said motion: Christensen, Baker, Olson, Van Beek, Anderson, and Mayor Murray. Mayor Murray declared the motion passed.

(See Secretary's Original Resolution 25-040 through 25-046
Included with these minutes)

PETITIONS, REQUESTS AND COMMUNICATIONS - None

UNFINISHED BUSINESS - None

NEW BUSINESS

A. Resolution 25-047 Approving Preliminary and Final Plat of Dress Addition

City Manager Rigg stated that the Planning Commission held a public hearing on February 4, 2025 to review Preliminary Plat of Dress Addition for compliance with Chapter 38 Subdivisions. The purpose of the plat is to subdivide into a smaller parcel to meet the needs of a developer. The preliminary plat also designates an additional 27 feet of city property to Blake Avenue as public right-of-way, which will accommodate the future Blazing Star Trail extension. The 2040 Comprehensive plan identifies the property as commercial—including both large and moderate scale serving uses which is common to areas with higher levels of accessibility and visibility from adjoining roadways. Planning Commission recommends approval of the preliminary and final plat of Dress Addition.

Motion made by Councilor Christensen, seconded by Councilor Baker. On voice call vote, the following councilors voted in favor of said motion: Christensen, Baker, Olson, Van Beek, Anderson, and Mayor Murray. Mayor Murray declared the motion passed.

(See Secretary's Original Resolution 25-047
Included with these minutes)

B. Resolution 25-048 Accepting Bid and Awarding Project for the Eberhart Street & Utility Improvements Project (Job 2413)

Rigg mentioned that Engineering and JHS Engineering have reviewed the bids opened Tuesday, February 28, 2025 for the Eberhart Street & Utilities Improvement Project. This is the construction of approximately 370 feet of roadway including utilities. It also involves construction of a stormwater pond. Engineering received five bids. Engineering is recommending the low bid of \$802,419.58 from Jensen Excavating & Trucking LLC of Albert Lea, Minnesota. The Engineer's estimate was \$860,000.00. The bid abstract is attached. Contracts will be signed once agreements for development and purchase are complete on Block 1, Lot 1. Staff recommends approval.

Motion made by Councilor Baker, seconded by Councilor Anderson. On voice call vote, the following councilors voted in favor of said motion: Christensen, Baker, Olson, Van Beek, Anderson, and Mayor Murray. Mayor Murray declared the motion passed.

MAYOR AND COUNCIL REPORTS:

First Ward, Councilor Christensen reported:

- Ward Items – Has two ward items that are being worked on.
- Committee Update – City Hall Safety and Efficiency group will meet this week.
- Sr. Center Board will meet this Wednesday and she spoke about the Connected Community Grant that is being administered by St. Johns. Explaining that there will be clear and consolidated information on the resources available to the community. She stated that by being involved on these different committees, that there are a lot of services that are available.
- Sr. Resources is hosting Minnesota Senior Linkage to speak on money saving programs and services available. Call Sr. Resources if you want to be part of this program. This is on March 19th at 1:30pm at the old facility.
- Blue Zones tip – She shared one of the 9 Power Principles in Blue Zones, which is Downshift. She said with this beautiful weather we are having it's a great time to Downshift; reverse disease by finding a stress relieving strategy that works for you, and what better way to do that then to take a walk around Fountain Lake on the Blue Zones walkway.
- Recognized Pastor George and Grace Christian Church on starting a conversation on chemical dependency and addiction. They hosted a group from Adult and Teen Challenge and also hosted a panel on addiction and recovery. She thanked them for their leadership.

Second Ward, Councilor Baker reported:

- Ward Items – Ward items are being taken care of.
- Reported on going up to City on the Hill day, stating one of the issues they discussed was the LGA and plans they have.
- Spoke to Senator Dornink on the zoning law that is in the process of getting approved. He requested that the zoning issues and power stays with the individual cities' and not having a blanket law.
- Committee Update – No update today but stated he has a housing meeting and a historic preservation meeting on Tuesday, March 11th. He'll bring his recap to the next council meeting.

Third Ward, Councilor Howland reported: Absent

- Ward Items –
- Committee Update –

Fourth Ward, Councilor Olson reported:

- Ward Items – One item, he'll be speaking to the City Engineer about.
- Gave a thank you to everyone that came up to the State Wrestling meet, there was quite a crowd there. The back of Mayor's head made it in the pump up the crowd video.
- Committee Update – none

Fifth Ward, Councilor Van Beek reported:

- Ward Items – Working on a couple ward items.
- He gave a shout out to ALPD and City of Albert Lea on the reduction in crime, reducing it by 19% in a year.
- Also, shout out to the city in regards to the Euclid Ave. area, he's had compliments from residents in that area on the clean-up and reduction of feral cats, it's truly appreciated.
- Committee Update – no updates.

Sixth Ward, Councilor Anderson reported:

- Ward Items – None
- Committee Update – Had an HRA meeting and will attend the Architect meeting this week on the City Center remodel.
- Attended City Day on the Hill with Councilor Baker. Got to meet with the Bonding Committee Chair Franzen, and if they do a bonding bill, it looks promising that the WWTP will be in there. This was the focus on most of their discussion. Gave additional information on the meeting and what was discussed.
- He asked residents to contact their representatives, the bonding bill is very important for the waste water treatment plant.

MAYOR REPORT:

Attended the following meetings:

- Read to a class of 3rd graders at Lakeview Elementary and then to a kindergarten group.
- ALEDA annual meeting that same day.
- Attended the meeting on Adult and Teen Challenge at Grace Christian Church.
- History Center of Freeborn County held a fundraiser at Moose Lodge that he attended.
- Sunday March 9th, attended the Albert Lea Figure Skating Program; it was a great time.
- Meeting with Mrs. Gerry's on their growth.
- ALEDA meeting Wednesday, March 5th.
- Friday, March 7th, attended the Orrie Jirele basketball tournament.
- Congratulated the AL Law Enforcement on reducing crime, he got calls from inside and outside of the community recognizing Albert Lea for this.
- Mentioned the upcoming events and said they are also listed on the City Website
- One last item he mentioned was to Council. He informed Council; they would receive an e-mail from Human Resource Director Mike Zelenak. Council will be doing a performance evaluation of City Manager, Ian Rigg. Mayor Murray asked that they have the evaluations back to him by April 1st.
- To Adam, Happy 3/11 day.

CITY MANAGER REPORT:

- Last week he spoke in front of the Capital Sub-Committee in St. Paul. Then spent some time at the League and met with the Chair.
- Met with Senator Dornink, he lobbied to improve funding for Library construction projects.
- Talked to Senator Dornink on sales tax and the need to create a standardized method.
- He stated he talked about getting a return on the sales tax on materials for the Arena project. This could give us a return of almost \$400,000 on reimbursements from Dept. of Revenue.
- Talked to Senator Dornink about the WWTP, said the city would love the full \$37 million currently in the bill. But with budget restrictions, the city is breaking the construction down in

- phases and is asking for \$12.5 million of a \$25 million dollar phase.
- Covered changes in the TIF law, zoning laws and asked Senator Dornink to delay or get clarity on Safe and Sick leave policy. Asked on behalf of the city to get clarity on this.
- Will be working with Public Safety, looking at certain efficiencies and changes.
- Working on final updates on certain policies as presented earlier.
- Will need to work on our Cannabis retail selection criteria, if there are more than 2 candidates that are approved through the state.
- Wrapping up direct to congressional spending request, he'll be sending to Representative Finstad.
- Met with Mrs. Gerry's with the Mayor. He re-stated the City's biggest need is housing. Mrs. Gerry's acquired a company out of Wisconsin and wants to add 30 new jobs. Lack of housing was the reason why some applicants did not accept jobs.
- Gave a shout out to the Engineering Dept., the city has received approximately \$3 million dollars in grants for roads, utilities and water improvement. He thanked them for getting that done and keeping costs down.

APPROVAL OF CLAIMS

A. Resolution 25-049 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, Tukua displayed a list of claims over \$25,000 for the public's viewing, transparency and education.

Motion made by Councilor Baker, to approve the claims, seconded by Councilor Christensen. On voice call vote, the following councilors voted in favor of said motion: Christensen, Baker, Olson, Van Beek, Anderson, and Mayor Murray. Mayor Murray declared the motion passed.

(See Secretary's Original Resolution 25-049
Included with these minutes)

Councilor Christensen motioned for adjournment; Councilor Baker seconded. That there being no further business, the Council meeting adjourn until the next regular meeting of the Albert Lea City Council at 7:00 p.m. on Monday, March 24, 2025. On voice call vote, all councilors voted in favor of said motion.

Mayor Murray declared the motion passed and the meeting adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT: 7:30 P.M.

Mayor Rich Murray

Karla Tukua
Secretary Pro Tem