

**REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING
CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS, CITY OF ALBERT LEA
September 23, 2024 – 7:00 P.M.**

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

ABSENT: City Manager Ian Rigg

ADDITIONAL STAFF PRESENT: Sergeant-at-Arms Public Safety Director JD Carlson, Engagement & Enrichment Director Cathy Malakowsky, Park & Recreation Manager Bob Furland, Arena Foreman Josh Heilman, Building Inspector Rob Rice.

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

A. Mayor Murray read aloud the Proclamation Declaring “See Tracks? Think Train® Week” – September 23rd – September 29th. Representative were present to accept the proclamation.

PUBLIC FORUM

Bruce Manwarren – Mentioned KATE Radio is advertising the Big Island Rendezvous.

CONSENT AND APPROVAL OF AGENDA

- A. Approve Minutes of the September 09, 2024 Regular Council Meeting
- B. Approve Minutes of the September 09, 2024 Work Session
- C. License & Permits

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

PETITIONS, REQUESTS AND COMMUNICATIONS

A. Paint the Town Purple - Freeborn County Crime Victims Crisis Center Representatives Maureen Williams Zelenak, Heather Butler, and Kim Tiegs were present and explained October is a national campaign for domestic violence awareness month throughout the nation as well as locally in Albert Lea and Freeborn County. Zelenak said in 2023 FCCVCC assisted

425 victims including adults and minors of domestic violence in our community. They encourage the community to show support for ending domestic violence by displaying a purple light or yard sign in the month of October.

Mayor Murray extended appreciation for the work they do to assist victims of domestic violence.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS – None

In the absence of City Manager Rigg, Clerk Maras read aloud the background of each item below while Mayor Murray invited councilors' comments and/or questions.

NEW BUSINESS

A. Public Hearing Regarding Order for Removal of Hazardous Property at 721 St. Thomas Ave.

Mayor Murray opened the public hearing. Bev Evans is a neighbor to 721 St. Thomas Ave. and spoke of her support of the removal of this structure. She also requested the resident who is currently living there receive assistance to relocate. She requests the garage be removed to avoid housing critters or human habitat.

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

Councilor Olson asked what it might cost to have the garage removed. Mayor Murray offered to have staff gather that information and report back to council.

A1. Resolution 24-166 Approving Order for Removal of Hazardous Property at 721 St. Thomas Ave.

On August 23, 2024, the house at 721 St. Thomas Avenue was placarded as unfit for human habitation. The property is occupied. Removal of the structure is recommended because the foundation is severely failing or failed jeopardizing the structure, gas lines, other utilities, and occupant and public safety. The floor framing is insufficient and of poor design and condition. It is deemed unsafe. The property needs to be vacated and removed. Notice of this hearing has been published and mailed. Staff recommends the structure be removed.

Inspector Rob Rice delivered a presentation outlining both hazardous properties on the agenda tonight. The PowerPoint slides highlighted failed foundation and dangerous conditions contributing to being unfit for habitation. The garage at 721 St. Thomas Ave. is not in failure and is not scheduled to be removed. Council asked questions to which Rice responded.

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

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

B. Public Hearing Regarding Order for Removal of Hazardous Property at 816 S. Newton Ave.

Mayor Murray opened the public hearing. He called three times. No one spoke. Mayor Murray closed the public hearing.

B1. Resolution 24-167 Approving Order for Removal of Hazardous Property at 816 S. Newton Ave.

The garage and primary structure at 816 Newton Avenue South Newton Ave. were placarded on March 29, 2023 and June 26, 2023, respectively, as unfit for human habitation. The property is unoccupied. Removal of the structure is recommended because the garage has a failing roof; and the primary structure has foundation issues, broken windows, a roof in poor condition and a front porch roof failing. It has been deemed unsafe. The structures need to be removed. Notice of this hearing has been published and mailed. Staff recommends the structures be removed.

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

(See Secretary's Original Resolution 24-167
Included with these minutes)

C. Resolution 24-168 Authorizing Broadway Ridge Grant Agreement - 232 S. Broadway

Jordan Loehr applied on behalf of Goose Lake Rentals LLC, and submitted a Broadway Ridge Grant for reimbursement up to 50% of costs associated with a new front entry door. The total improvement cost is \$4,520.50 which will provide the applicant with a 50/50 match grant per policy of \$2,260.25. All improvements have been completed and reviewed by the City's Zoning and Building Official for compliance with application requirements.

Staff recommends approval of the attached Resolution which approves funding for up to 50% of the total project

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

(See Secretary's Original Resolution 24-168
Included with these minutes)

D. Resolution 24-169 Approving Design Amendment 1 to the Guaranteed Energy Savings-Investment Tax Credit Contract with Apex Facility Solutions

After the successful referendum last spring, the City Council approved two design contracts with Apex Facility Solutions for the improvements to the City Arena, Aquatic Center, Splash Pad and Marion Ross Performing Arts Center. As explained at that time, the contracts were for design only with final approval of individual projects coming to the Council as amendments to those contracts. Apex has the first Arena projects ready for review and approval. These are amendments to the guaranteed energy savings contract with federal investment tax credits: 1) A new refrigeration system for both the Nystrom and Colstrup rinks; 2) A new floor for the Colstrup rink; and 3) A reverse-osmosis system for water used to resurface the ice of both rinks. The total dollar amount for all 3 projects is \$7,839,594 with federal incentives of \$2,471,805 expected for a net cost of \$5,367,789. The refrigeration system bids were significantly higher than originally estimated. That increase has been mostly offset by not needing to do frost removal below the Colstrup rink, lower bids on other projects, contingency in the original budget, and a donation from the Albert Lea Hockey Association. The total for the contract amendment is \$8,201,594, with the City already paying for the frost testing and some of the design work. The Albert Lea Parks and Recreation Board voted Sept. 16 to recommend Council proceed with these projects.

Engagement/Enrichment Director Cathy Malakowsky displayed a PowerPoint outlining the most recent Rec Facilities update. This was reiterated from the presentation she delivered during the work session. Representatives from Apex were present and added comments and spoke of the manufacturer's severe increases in product expenditures. Council added dialogue.

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

(See Secretary's Original Resolution 24-169
Included with these minutes)

E. Resolution 24-170 Accepting Donations as Presented to the City of Albert Lea

The City of Albert Lea is generally authorized to accept donations pursuant to Minnesota Statutes Section 465.03 for the benefit of its citizens.

- Mayo Foundation for Medical Education & Research donated \$500 to the Schools Out Program.

- The Friends of the Albert Lea Public Library raise non-profit funds for programs and equipment not covered by the general library budget. The Friends of the Albert Lea Public Library raise the funds through the Fountain Lake Bookstore, two book sales throughout the year, membership fees, and general donations. During the months of June and July 2024, the Friends of the Albert Lea Public Library donated a total of \$5,667.33 to the Albert Lea Public Library. The funds were used for the programs and equipment listed on the included sheet. Without the generous donations from the Friends of the Albert Lea Public Library, many of the library's programs, including the Summer Reading Program, would not be possible.

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

(See Secretary's Original Resolution 24-170
Included with these minutes)

MAYOR AND COUNCIL REPORTS:

First Ward, Councilor Christensen reported:

- Ward Items – Has several ward items in progress. Encourages residents to continue to contact the DNR to express their support for Phase III Dredging project.0123
- Committee Update – She hosted a graduation class of 1969 for their 55th class reunion over the weekend and mentioned the positive comments the attendees made regarding the beauty of Albert Lea.

Second Ward, Councilor Baker reported:

- Ward Items – Spoke of a stop sign on Eagle Drive and suggests staff take a look at it and reconsider its position.
- Committee Update – Attended a recent Historic Preservation Conference in Red Wing.

Third Ward, Councilor Howland reported:

- Ward Items – None
- Committee Update – Attended the Park & Rec. Board meeting last week and reports they unanimously voted to recommend to council to approve the Rec Facilities project amendments. He suggested the next council retreat be held at the arena to allow a fresh view of the proposed designs. He extended appreciation to the Park & Rec Board for all they do.

Fourth Ward, Councilor Olson reported: None

- Ward Items – None
- Committee Update – Said the baseball association might be requesting, from the Park & Rec. Board, a storage shed out at Snyder field to store equipment.

Fifth Ward, Councilor Rasmussen reported:

- Ward Items – None
- Committee Update – None

Sixth Ward, Councilor Anderson reported:

- Ward Items – Working on one ward item
- Committee Update – None

MAYOR REPORT: Attended the Following:

- Attended the Albert Lea Health Care Coalition Ribbon Cutting
- Met with a group at Austin Riverland College
- Attended a meeting with young professionals
- Ran the 5K at St. John's
- 110th YMCA Anniversary
- Albert Lea Health Care Gala
- Mexican Independence Day Celebration in the North Lot
- Albert Lea Safety gathering at Morin Park
- Recharge MN at the U of MN for a statewide recharge event and presented as well

Announced upcoming events within the city and encouraged the community to participate.

CITY MANAGER REPORT: Absent

APPROVAL OF CLAIMS

A. Resolution 24-171 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 Anderson to approve as read, seconded by Councilor Christensen. On roll call vote, the following councilors voted in favor of said motion: Christensen, Baker, Howland, Olson, Rasmussen, Anderson, and Mayor Murray. Mayor Murray declared the motion passed.

(See Secretary's Original Resolution 24-171
Included with these minutes)

Councilor Howland motioned for adjournment; Councilor Anderson 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, October 14, 2024. On roll call vote, all councilors voted in favor of said motion.

Mayor Murray declared the motion passed and the meeting adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT: 8:06 P.M.

Mayor Rich Murray

Daphney Maras
Secretary of the Council