**ALBERT LEA PORT AUTHORITY**

**MINUTES**

**Tuesday, March 6, 2018 - 7:30 a.m.**

**Regular Meeting**

**Albert Lea Business Development Center**

 CALL TO ORDER & NOTATION OF ROLL

The Regular Meeting of the Albert Lea Port Authority was called to order on Tuesday, March 6, 2018 at 7:30 a.m. by President Rasmussen. Roll was noted by the Board Secretary.

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Vern Rasmussen Jr., Rich Murray, Nate Jansen, Sarah Hensley, Brian Skogheim

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: Ginny Larson, Mark Heinemann

EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS PRESENT: Chad Adams, City of Albert Lea representative; Tom Newell, Business Community representative

EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS ABSENT: Mike Lee, Freeborn County representative

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT: Ryan Nolander, Executive Director; Noelle Hagen, Small Business & Marketing Manager; Jillayne Raetz, Board Secretary

STAFF MEMBERS ABSENT: None

GUESTS: Jerry Gabrielatos, Assistant City Manager

APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM FEBRUARY 7, 2018 MEETING

The minutes from the February 7, 2018 meeting were reviewed. Commissioner Jansen made a motion to approve the minutes as presented, seconded by Commissioner Murray. President Rasmussen asked for any discussion and hearing none, the motion carried 5 in favor; 0 opposed.

 RESOLUTION PA-18-07 AUTHORIZING PAYMENT OF CLAIMS

The claims were presented for review. Executive Director Nolander noted the annual workers compensation and quarterly property insurance payments. Commissioner Skogheim made a motion to accept the claims as presented in the amount of $33,733.24, seconded by Commissioner Jansen. President Rasmussen asked for any discussion and hearing none, the motion carried 5 in favor; 0 opposed.

 STAFF REPORT

* ZRB Building Project
	+ The ribbon cutting is at 11:00 am today. Walk through for the punch list was held last Friday, which went well. Currently still waiting on the permanent certificate of occupancy for the building. ZRB should take possession of the building today and then transition out of the ALEDA Spec #1 building by the end of April.
* Bank Building Update
	+ The business interested in occupying the former Freeborn Bank Building participated in a walkthrough of the main floor with contractors and city staff to discuss what they’d like to see for the build out should they reach an agreement with the City on the space. Executive Director Nolander and City Manager Adams also discussed with the business owners possible financing assistance such as the JCF program and other opportunities that the City and ALEDA could partner in to assist them.
* Northbridge Mall Update
	+ Bon-Ton, parent company of the Herberger’s store (Albert Lea) and Younkers (Austin), has filed chapter 11 bankruptcy. The two stores have not been named on the lists of closing stores, however it is too soon to tell the fate of the department store brand.
	+ As mentioned last month, two gentlemen have been inquiring about redevelopment opportunities in Albert Lea and have expressed interest in the Northbridge mall. They have asked about incentives and other assistance to redevelop the mall but have not given a plan or any other further details.
* Blazing Star Landing Update
	+ The City is still working on getting funding in the bonding bill, but it will be difficult without a commitment from private development. City Manager Adams is working with a developer on a possible commitment letter that can be submitted to the legislature.
* East Main Street Redevelopment
	+ The City Council is still looking at East Main Street as a possible option for the new fire station which would require relocating a couple businesses. There are a lot of moving parts should this location be chosen and the timeline is narrowing because the fire station project needs to move forward.
* 132 Broadway
	+ The former Johnny’s Hobby Shop is failing structurally; the roof and walls have sustained a lot of damage. The Council has acted and has begun to investigate the costs of repairing the building and will assess the costs to the building owner. There is concern that the neighboring buildings may have damage because of the condition of the hobby shop building.
* Opportunity Zones
	+ Opportunity Zones is a new program created by the federal government to facilitate reinvestment in low-income census tracts through Opportunity Funds. In Minnesota, the Governor can designate 128 census tracts as Opportunity Zones. DEED has requested that all counties in Minnesota submit their top 3 choices for designation in their county. Wyeth Anderson, intern for the City of Albert Lea, and Noelle Hagen, ALEDA Small Business & Marketing Manager, have been working on the application. At this point, it is difficult to understand how the program will work and it appears that there may be an extension granted for nominations to be submitted.
* Business Retention Visits
	+ Executive Director Nolander met with Dave Peterson of Brink’s Mfg. They toured and discussed his business, and Dave discussed how he would like to be a part of a local group of business owners, city officials, county officials, school district, ALEDA, etc. to help provide guidance on the future of our community.
	+ Nolander and Hagen toured Schipp’s Pro Power Wash and the new building that is part of their recent expansion project. John Schipper presented a possible idea for some extra space in the new building.
	+ There is group that would like to build a convention/conference center with hotel and food options that could host large conferences that Albert Lea is currently missing out on. A private owner owns the land they would like to purchase to make the project happen. Executive Director Nolander organized a meeting with the parties and the land owner confirmed that he is interested in selling.
	+ Executive Director Nolander met with Scott Spates at St. John’s Lutheran Community. The transition to the new facility is going smoothly. Nolander and Spates discussed potential options for the space in the highway 13 location that will be empty. They are a couple options that they are going to pursue.
* Audit Process
	+ CliftonLarsonAllen will be at a future board meeting to present audit results. Staff has been working with the auditors to complete the audit. There were several changes last year that added a layer of complexity to this year’s audit.
* Meeting & Conferences to Note
	+ CGMC Legislative Day – 3/14/18 – Director Nolander is attending with Mayor Vern Rasmussen and Councilor Larry Baker.
	+ SE MN EDA Professional’s Meeting – 3/16/18 – Executive Director Nolander will be attending this meeting in Oronoco.
	+ Chamber Ag Lunch – 3/20/18 – Small Business & Marketing Manager Hagen is going to attend this event on behalf of the organization.

 EX-OFFICIO UPDATE

Freeborn County – Mike Lee, Freeborn County representative

* Absent, nothing to report.

City of Albert Lea – Chad Adams, City of Albert Lea representative

* The City received good feedback and comments about the February housing summit.
* The City will continue to work on the housing issues in Albert Lea. More market-rate housing is needed as new professionals look to move to Albert Lea, because they are finding it difficult to find suitable options.
* The Albert Lea City Council held a retreat on Saturday (March 3) to discuss goals and projects. Topics included Blazing Star Landing plans and bonding, housing, and economic development.
	+ At this time, City Manager Adams and President Rasmussen recommended to the board that ALEDA staff participate in an economic development summit or forum to get feedback from the community as well as share initiatives and resources available through ALEDA. Commissioner Murray and Commissioner Jansen agreed that this would be worth a try. Commissioner Jansen commented that staff may even find that they receive a few good ideas from the community.
* Albert Lea Public Safety Director Dwaine Winkels is retiring at the end of March. He oversees the fire department, police department and inspection department. The City would like to find another candidate who will do well at supervising all three departments.
* Hospital Services Update: The conversation with alternative providers continues. However, it is not likely that an alternative provider would be able to offer a full service hospital because of laws as well as demand. The City will be meeting with providers to explore options for clinic services.

Chamber of Commerce – Tom Newell, Business Community representative

* The Chamber recently announced a scholarship program with Riverland. They have received matching dollars for all but 1 of the 6 scholarships.
* Interviews have taken place for the executive director position; no choice has been made yet.
* The annual Ag Luncheon will be on March 20th, National Ag Day, and the leadership class will be attending.

 COMMISSIONER/OTHER ITEMS

* None

 ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Jansen made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Commissioner Murray. The motion carried 5 in favor, 0 opposed. The meeting adjourned at 8:25 a.m.

Filed and attested March 6, 2018.

  

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President Board Secretary