

# **ALBERT LEA PORT AUTHORITY**

---

## **MINUTES**

**Wednesday, April 1, 2020 – 7:30 a.m.**

**Regular Meeting**

**132 N Broadway Ave, Albert Lea**

### CALL TO ORDER & NOTATION OF ROLL

The Regular Meeting of the Albert Lea Port Authority was called to order on Wednesday, April 1, 2020 at 7:30 a.m. by President Nelson. Roll was noted by the Board Secretary.

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Sarah Nelson, President; Nate Jansen, Vice President; Mark Heinemann, Treasurer; Vern Rasmussen, Jr., Rich Murray, Bryan Skogheim, Tricia Dahl

EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS PRESENT: David Todd, City of Albert Lea Representative; Mike Lee, Freeborn County Representative; Susie Petersen, Local Tourism Representative; Holly Karsjens, Local Tourism Representative

EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS ABSENT: Tom Jensen, Freeborn County Representative; Torrey Zimmerman, Business Community Representative

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT: Phillip Johnson, Executive Director; Noelle Hagen, Assistant Executive Director

GUESTS: None

### APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM MARCH 4, 2020 REGULAR MEETING

The minutes from the Wednesday, March 4<sup>th</sup> regular meeting were reviewed. Commissioner Skogheim made a motion to approve the minutes as presented, seconded by Commissioner Murray. President Nelson asked for any further discussion and hearing none, the motion carried 6 in favor; 0 opposed.

### RESOLUTION PA-20-08 AUTHORIZING PAYMENT OF CLAIMS

The claims were presented for review. Commissioner Rasmussen made a motion to accept the claims as presented in the amount of \$7,232.97, seconded by Commissioner Heinemann. President Nelson asked for any further discussion and hearing none, the motion carried 6 in favor; 0 opposed.

### STAFF REPORT

- COVID-19 Response and Resources
  - Since the stay-at-home orders and business closures were given, staff has been sending weekly updates via email to local businesses including information with links to resources related to COVID-19 as well as financial resources. Staff has

- had conversations with several businesses as well as ALEDA tenants and loan clients.
- Staff will continue to provide information and speak with local businesses and offer them what guidance they can through this time.
  - There is a new dedicated resource page on ALEDA's website with links to important state and federal government sites including MN DEED, SBA, SBDC, etc.
  - Strategic Planning
    - Staff has been working with partners on Quarter 1 goals. A lot of the projects assigned to quarter one were started before the stay-at-home orders were given.
    - The next joint project that will be started is the joint marketing plan.
  - Unique Opportunities, LLC.
    - Staff and City Staff are waiting for more information from Ehlers. Unique Opportunities is also working with the city on design.
  - Judisch and Judisch Enterprises, Inc.
    - They came to Albert Lea to visit a few weeks ago to look at the two locations they are considering projects for. These plans are still moving forward at this time.
  - Audit Update
    - Staff has been working with the auditors and the accountants at Hammer Dierler Mangskau on gathering information and uploading it to the auditor's portal. The process is going well so far.
  - Streater Lease
    - Streater reduced their square footage over the winter and is now looking to increase it again to 10,000 sq ft. Staff has drafted a new lease at \$4.80/sq. ft. (all-in) for 10,000 sq. ft. on a month-to-month basis. Commissioner Rasmussen moved to approve the new lease, seconded by Commissioner Heinemann. President Nelson asked for any further discussion and hearing none, the motion carried 5 in favor; 0 opposed.
  - ALEDA Park Lot Interest
    - There is a small business looking for space to build a new building. They are interested in the lots near the ALEDA #1 Spec Building.
    - They would only need about one acre, recently our land in the Northaire Industrial Park was appraised at \$43,000 per acre.
    - Staff is looking for feedback from board as far as asking price and willingness to dip well below the costs incurred to purchase and develop the property.
    - Commissioner Rasmussen said that if we are going to parcel out and discount land, make sure that its not a good flat piece that would be better suited for project using the whole piece.

ALEDA MISSION STATEMENT

*"To provide and promote services and resources to retain, expand, create and attract businesses, increase tax base and quality employment opportunities in Freeborn County."*

- Commissioner Heinemann said that it's not all about recovering the costs, especially if the project brought in many good paying jobs. Staff noted that it would like be only 5-10 jobs over time.
- Conferences/Meetings to Note
  - Executive Director Johnson met with Tribune for an article that was done on the strategic plan.
  - Staff attended the South East Minnesota Economic Development Professionals meeting in Oronoco. The topic of the presentation was ESOP and cooperative business models.
  - Many meetings/calls have been COVID-19 related.
  - Staff met with SMIF via Zoom call to discuss the Entrepreneurial Bridge Event which was previously in Austin, but will be held in Albert Lea this year.

#### EX-OFFICIO UPDATE

- **Freeborn County – Mike Lee**
  - The government center is closed to the public due to COVID-19 including the licensing center – time to renew license, tabs, etc has been extended.
  - Mike commended county administrator, Tom Jensen, for doing a good job managing this difficult time well.
- **City of Albert Lea – David Todd**
  - Lots of focus on COVID-19. City Offices are also closed to the public. One staff member there to process bills, AP, and payroll at a time and to facilitate calls to essential services that are operational right now.
  - City staff has had discussions about what the City can do to assist businesses. It is unclear right now if the City can use funds for helping businesses with COVID-19 financial stress. They are working with the League of MN Cities for guidance.
  - City has been flexible with lease payments.
  - Unique Opportunities – David has been talking to Ehlers for the last few weeks working on the project.
- **Chamber of Commerce – Tricia Dahl**
  - There was no Chamber Board Meeting last month.
  - Staff is working on an alternative 3<sup>rd</sup> of July Parade route due to the Bridge Avenue construction.
- **Convention and Visitors Bureau – Susie Peterson, Holly Karsjens**
  - A new director has been hired, Holly Karsjens. Susie will be retiring effective May 1, 2020.
  - The tourism industry has been hit hard due to the COVID-19 pandemic. CVB staff has been attending MN Association of CVB calls each week. Staff has also been in contact with lodgers in Albert Lea. AmericInn has closed temporarily.

#### ALEDA MISSION STATEMENT

*“To provide and promote services and resources to retain, expand, create and attract businesses, increase tax base and quality employment opportunities in Freeborn County.”*

- The CVB board and staff are also working on the budget as the drop in lodging tax revenue will affect their budget.
- Holly shared that she is very excited to start her new role. She has been working with partners via Zoom and is getting ready to launch a TripAdvisor campaign to encourage the community to review and rate favorite local businesses and things to do in the community. Holly asked if ALEDA would be interested in being involved and staff confirmed that they would.

COMMISSIONER/OTHER ITEMS

Commissioner Rasmussen said welcome Holly Karsjens, we look forward to working with you. And thank you and congratulations to Susie Peterson on her retirement.

ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Heinemann made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Commissioner Skogheim. The motion carried 7 in favor, 0 opposed. The meeting adjourned at 8:09 am.

Filed and attested April 1, 2020.



\_\_\_\_\_  
President



\_\_\_\_\_  
Secretary

ALEDA MISSION STATEMENT

*"To provide and promote services and resources to retain, expand, create and attract businesses, increase tax base and quality employment opportunities in Freeborn County."*