

# **ALBERT LEA PORT AUTHORITY**

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## **MINUTES**

**Wednesday, March 3, 2021 – 7:30 a.m.**

**Regular Meeting**

**Virtual Meeting through Zoom.us**

### CALL TO ORDER & NOTATION OF ROLL

The Regular Meeting of the Albert Lea Port Authority was called to order on Wednesday, March 3, 2021 at 7:35 a.m. by President Nelson. Roll was noted by the Board Secretary.

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

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: None

EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS PRESENT: Tom Jensen, Freeborn County Representative; Ted Herman, Freeborn County Representative; Ian Rigg, City of Albert Lea Representative; Holly Karsjens, Local Tourism Representative; Shari Jenson, Business Community Representative

EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS PRESENT: None

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

GUESTS: None

### APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM FEBRUARY 3, 2021 REGULAR MEETING

The minutes from the Wednesday, February 3<sup>rd</sup> regular meeting were reviewed. Commissioner Rasmussen made a motion to approve the minutes as presented, seconded by Commissioner Heinemann. President Nelson asked for any further discussion and hearing none, the motion carried 7 in favor; 0 opposed.

### RESOLUTION PA-21-08 AUTHORIZING PAYMENT OF CLAIMS

The claims were presented for review. Executive Director Johnson noted the \$150,000 that the City of Albert Lea has sent the Port Authority which we have then cut a check to Freeborn County. This is for the second round of local COVID-19 Grants. Commissioner Skogheim made a motion to accept the claims as presented in the amount of \$213,795.14, seconded by Commissioner Jansen. President Nelson asked for any further discussion and hearing none, the motion carried 7 in favor; 0 opposed.

### STAFF REPORT

- COVID-19

- Second Round of COVID Grants are complete and money has been sent out. Over 80 businesses received grants.
- Albert Lea Gymnastics Club believes they fell under a different NAICS code which would put them in the priority category which they would receive \$15,000 instead of \$1,000 per employee. However, the grant committee feels that they fit best into the original NAICS code they claimed.
- Staff has discussed with the ALBDC board to forgive the back owed rent by AL Gymnastics as a compromise. The rent balance to be forgiven is a little over \$10,000. Because the AL Gymnastics was not a part of the state NAICS codes that were to be given priority, but were forced to close, we feel this is a fair compromise to help a business that has been struggling due to COVID.
- Unique Opportunities LLC
  - Clean up process is still ongoing, it has been delayed due to a site survey not yet turned in by the developer.
- Cold Storage Expansion Project
  - The draft purchase agreement has been sent to Vortex.
  - There is a discrepancy between the original 2009 report from Chosen Valley on the soil testing conclusions and the new report done by Braun Intertec (hired by Vortex) and their conclusions. It comes down to a difference in what each firm believes the soils can support for weight. The impact is if Braun Intertec's conclusion is correct, geopiers will be needed and that will cost the project more time and money.
  - Staff will be organizing a meeting with Chosen Valley to review the differences between their findings and the Braun report. We will then move forward with a solution after we understand it better.
- Strategic Pan and Lake Front Development Meetings
  - Staff has scheduled a meeting to review the strategic plan 2021 goals with our partners. Going forward we plan to meet bi-monthly on the goals. Some goals and tasks were delayed in 2020 due to COVID-19. Later this year a community event will be organized to share the progress on the strategic plan goals.
  - A meeting focusing on lake front development will be organized to look at what types of uses or activity we would like to see on the lake. Partners and interested active community members have been invited. Ideas around different developments of new amenities and businesses will be discussed. The community has talked about lake front development ideas but having a plan or a vision will help us to attract developers and have feasible locations and opportunities planned. The first meeting will focus on brainstorming.
- Collaboration (Chamber/CVB/ALEDA)
  - Staff continues to collaborate on various projects with the partner agencies.

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."*

- We are working on a joint marketing project focusing on brand awareness. The campaign will focus on relaying to the community what our different roles are/what we do and how we work together. We are working with an outside marketing group to develop the campaign.
- Conferences/Meetings to Note
  - Entrepreneurial Bridge Event – have begun planning sessions with SMIF to plan for the event. The plan is to have the event in person at Wedgewood Cove. After the event a happy hour will be held in downtown.
  - KAAL Story – interviews are happening today for the two-part story on COVID19 effect on small businesses. The story is focusing on Albert Lea and the resiliency of our business. They will be interviewing three businesses and one non-profit.
  - Albert Lea Greater Education – working on consolidating the efforts of the school district and Riverland to focus on the student business connection as outlined in the strategic plan.
  - HRA – met to discuss some potential programs for incentives that can be used to make our area more attractive.

## 2. EX-OFFICIO UPDATE

- Freeborn County – Tom Jensen, Ted Herman
  - All of the COVID-19 Grants have been sent with the exception of a few who are working on getting their documents sent.
  - Solar farm is proceeding with permitting in St. Paul through the PUC.
  - The County will be looking at local ordinances on cannabis. At state level looks like its going to go forward sometime soon.
  - Reopening county buildings – talking about it next Tuesday. The board will be considering reopening on April 1.
- City of Albert Lea – Ian Rigg
  - Looking at a pro forma for a business to move from one location to another – will expand their business in the process.
  - Met with another business who owns some prime land and is looking at expanding.
  - Also looking at a new business who would be an expansion of an existing business – a partnership – would bring new recreational opportunities to the community.
  - Unique Opportunities Property – they just had the site plan done and I believe the engineers were trying to get some drawings done overlaying the site plan and they will be getting that sent in this week.
  - Bridge Ave construction will start again at the end of March.

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- Permit interest from local food trucks at doing morning options, might need an ordinance change to allow them to do that.
- Chamber of Commerce – Shari Jenson
  - Cross promoting on social media of members’ posts.
  - Have been doing Chamber check-ins instead of ambassador visits – next ambassador visit is March 17<sup>th</sup>.
  - Mental health presentation on 22<sup>nd</sup> of each month. Started with a an employee mental health committee in October, committee has expanded and is working on new ideas.
  - Blood drive last Friday.
  - Ambassador Golf outing is scheduled for July 19<sup>th</sup> , rain date is July 28<sup>th</sup>.
  - The Ag committee picked farm family of the year and they will be announced this month.
  - Next big thing is parade and fireworks and figuring out how that can work this year.
  - Future Forward and bus ed committee – sent to members who weren’t already involved in Future Forward to get them involved.
  - Leadership book club starting this spring – partnership with Austin Chamber.
- Convention and Visitors Bureau – Holly Karsjens
  - Spring Public Art – large marquee signs – something like the “only in MN” that came during fishing opener – but would just say “Albert Lea”. Working with Riverland on design and engineering for that as well as a large picture frame project – potentially putting that somewhere by new Denmark park area.
  - Building Signage – at the permit stage with the city, within the next month or so signs will go up.
  - Lots of meetings with Bob at the city about where events will be and met with Sue and Anita at Freeborn County Public Health. If things stay the same, we should be able to have Thursdays on Fountain. Reasoning is the availability to count people – compared to WDW its much easier to count and control entrance/exit. Will use Fountain Lake Park more often this year as its much easier to block off access and just use ramp. Also looking at how we can involve more food trucks.
  - Rock and Roll Lakes Bike Event – working to make that happen this year as well. Also working with Abby Leach and new people to make Wander the Water half marathon happen again.
  - Also working on an Easter and spring event with the city park & rec.

COMMISSIONER/OTHER ITEMS

None.

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ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Skogheim made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Commissioner Murray. The motion carried 7 in favor, 0 opposed. The meeting adjourned at 8:15 am.

Filed and attested March 3, 2021.



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President



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Secretary

ALEDA MISSION STATEMENT

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