

# **ALBERT LEA PORT AUTHORITY**

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## **MINUTES**

**Wednesday, April 7, 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; Mark Heinemann, Treasurer; Rich Murray, Bryan Skogheim, Vern Rasmussen, Jr., Tricia Dahl

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: Nate Jansen, Vice President

EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS PRESENT: 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: Tom Jensen, Freeborn County Representative

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

GUESTS: None

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

The minutes from the Wednesday, March 3<sup>rd</sup> regular meeting were reviewed. Commissioner Rasmussen made a motion to approve the minutes as presented, seconded by Commissioner Skogheim. President Nelson asked for any further discussion and hearing none, the motion carried 6 in favor; 0 opposed.

### RESOLUTION PA-21-09 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 \$53,245.86, 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
  - Staff still works from home and in the office occasionally. The plan is to return to the office potentially in May.

- County may receive more funds to give to businesses and use for other Covid Expenses.
  - We continue to work with tenants and loan clients on deferred rent if requested.
- Unique Opportunities LLC
  - Clean up process is still ongoing, almost ready to go out for bids for cleanup.
- Cold Storage Expansion Project
  - The draft purchase agreement has been sent to Vortex. Waiting to hear back on any changes, attorneys are working through that now.
  - Tentatively, the groundbreaking is scheduled for April 21<sup>st</sup>.
  - After meeting with Braun Intertec and Chosen Valley, some reconsiderations were made and things will go forward.
- Strategic Plan and Lake Front Development Meetings
  - Staff held a meeting to review the strategic plan 2021 goals with our partners on March 12<sup>th</sup>. Focusing right now on marketing plan, volunteer database, wayfinding sign, community calendar, and connecting schools (K-12 and Riverland) with businesses.
  - Going forward we plan to meet bi-monthly on the goals. 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 was held on March 17<sup>th</sup>, to look at what types of uses or activity we would like to see on the lake. Partners and interested active community members attended. Ideas around different developments of new amenities and businesses was 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. Ideas included a marina, RV park, moving the skate park and adding other amenities at the beach, developing the North parking lot in downtown into something else, and an additional boathouse on Albert Lea lake.
- Collaboration (Chamber/CVB/ALEDA)
  - Staff continues to collaborate on various projects with the partner agencies.
  - New signage should be put soon by Tic Toc Digital.
  - 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.
- Audit Update

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.”*

- Auditors are completing the “virtual on-site” portion of the audit. Hoping to have all their additional questions answered by the end of the week. Draft should be ready in April, they will present the final audit statements in June.
- Intern Scholarship Update
  - Staff applied for the Minnesota Economic Development Foundation Internship Scholarship program. We were awarded the scholarship; it is a matching program with up to \$1,000 available. The intern job description has been posted, staff hopes to bring the intern on in May when the office has reopened and staff works at the office regular hours.
- 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 or a mini trade show for the businesses who attend the event to share their businesses; will be held in downtown weather permitting.
  - KAAL Story – story turned out very well and showed a positive side of businesses in Albert Lea during COVID.
  - Meetings participated/attended;
    - Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative
    - SELMN Housing Discussion
    - Weekly attendance at Kiwanis.
    - Presented to the Day breakers Kiwanis.
    - Discussion and help on City’s Maxfield study.
    - Albert Lea Greater Education meeting.
    - Attendance at Mainstreet meeting.

## 2. EX-OFFICIO UPDATE

- Freeborn County – Ted Herman
  - Gopher Stop and the Hartland Gas Station have been purchased. Currently have 9 employees, looking to have up to 25. They will be investing in significant upgrades.
  - County board is interested in what they can do to help get funding to complete the Fountain Lake Dredging project.
- City of Albert Lea – Ian Rigg
  - Waste Water Treatment plant – MCPA has agreed to give Albert Lea 8 years with an additional 2 years if there is a funding gap to address the changes.
  - Unique Opportunities is moving forward.
  - Looking at doing testing of the entire Blazing Star Site to understand what areas have contamination issues and develop a plan to address those issues so the site can be used for additional developments.

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- Food Truck Corral idea, looking into if it is feasible to place this at the channel near the old dominos. Would include parking, hook-ups for food truck, and picnic tables.
- Meeting with Congressman Hagedorn to view the Marion Ross Community Theatre. ACT is looking for funding, also requesting funding for Blazing Star funding and wastewater treatment plant.
- City Hall will be opening up May 13<sup>th</sup>.
- Chamber of Commerce – Shari Jenson
  - Ag committee recently announced the farm family of the year. Had a small event at their farm.
  - Ambassadors had a ribbon cutting at Wintergreen, will be having another one soon for a food truck.
  - Scholarship winners will be chosen soon.
  - Governmental Affairs committee will meet to discuss clean cars initiative and the Hwy 65 project.
  - Wellness committee continues to meet, a lot of businesses have taken advantage of grants to put wellness rooms into their buildings.
  - Ambassador Golf outing is scheduled for July 19<sup>th</sup>, rain date is July 26<sup>th</sup>.
  - Mental health presentation on 22<sup>nd</sup> of each month. Started with an employee mental health committee in October, committee has expanded and is working on new ideas. The committee has expanded into a Community Resiliency Committee.
  - Chamber Foundation is meeting this Friday. Trying to come up with a better fee system to help the community groups that use the foundation.
  - Blood drive on April 30<sup>th</sup>.
- 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/Katherine Island area. Utility box wraps – want to see if they can be covered.
  - Billboard Project – waiting for confirmation from County.
  - Building Signage – waiting for good weather for Tic Toc to hang the signs.
  - Content Creator coming soon to tour the town and make an itinerary to be posted on the Sherpa app.
  - Working on Pinterest boards for Albert Lea.
  - Attended the Explore MN Annual Conference.
  - Summer Basketball League that is being put together.

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- 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. Working on getting local entertainment lined up for the seasons.
- Rock and Roll Lakes Bike Event – working to make that happen this year as well.
- United Preschool just installed their last art for the season in Downtown and storefronts. Coming up will be store front decorating competitions for 4<sup>th</sup> of July, Homecoming, Eddie Cochran, etc.
- Held off on creating a 2021 Visitors Guide, will be looking at making a guide in partnership with Chamber and ALEDA that would be more of a Community Guide for 2022.

#### COMMISSIONER/OTHER ITEMS

None.

#### ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Murray made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Commissioner Heinemann. The motion carried 6 in favor, 0 opposed. The meeting adjourned at 8:10 am.

Filed and attested April 7, 2021.



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President



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Secretary

#### ALEDA MISSION STATEMENT

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