

ALBERT LEA PORT AUTHORITY

MINUTES

Wednesday, August 5, 2020 – 7:30 a.m.

Regular Meeting

Zoom Meeting

CALL TO ORDER & NOTATION OF ROLL

The Regular Meeting of the Albert Lea Port Authority was called to order on Wednesday, August 5, 2020 at 7:30 a.m. by President Nelson. Roll was noted by the Board Secretary.

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

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: Nate Janson, Vice President;

EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS PRESENT: Jerry Gabrielatos, City of Albert Lea Representative; Tom Jensen, Freeborn County Representative; Holly Karsjens, Local Tourism Representative; Shari Jensen, Business Community Representative

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

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

GUESTS: None

APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM JULY 1, 2020 REGULAR MEETING

The minutes from the Wednesday, July 1st 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-20-13 AUTHORIZING PAYMENT OF CLAIMS

The claims were presented for review. Executive Director Johnson noted the following items of significance; the down payment for the repairs at the Ring Can building was paid. Commissioner Skogheim made a motion to accept the claims as presented in the amount of \$27,278.35, 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

- Last week the COVID-19 Grant Committee met to review the apps. There were 136 total applications, only 6 were rejected. All 6 of the rejected applications did not qualify due to not having enough of a loss income.
- The qualified applications totaled \$870,000, while we only have \$800,000 in the fund. Staff has set up the first 51 applications to come in this week and sign the grant agreement and receive their check.
- Staff requests that the board approve the transfer of \$70,000 into the fund to later be reimbursed by the City of Albert Lea. This will allow staff to get the remaining 79 applicants their grant money next week instead of waiting up to three more weeks to receive the funds from the City.
- Both the City and the County will be discussing including an admin fee to be paid to ALEDA for the staff time spent on administering the program.
- Commissioner Heinemann moved to approve the modification of the original program from a forgivable loan to a grant and all other changes made by the Grant Committee to the program as well as approving staff to use \$70,000 additional dollars from the Port Authority in order to give the grants now and later be reimbursed by the City of Albert Lea, seconded by Commissioner Skogheim. President Nelson asked for any further discussion and hearing none, the motion carried 6 in favor; 0 opposed.
- Strategic Planning
 - Executive Director Johnson, Executive Director of the CVB, Holly Karsjens, and Executive Director Shari Jensen of the Chamber meet weekly to discuss shared projects and strategic planning goals including a joint marketing and branding plan.
- Unique Opportunities, LLC.
 - The new environmental studies came back following the TIF discussion. There will need to be significant arsenic remediation and that will push the project back to the spring. The developer was understanding and still wants to go forward with the project, despite it changing the project timeline.
 - City Staff will be working on the remediation and may apply for the DEED Brownfield Grants to assist with cleanup costs.
- Cold Storage Facility Expansion
 - The company interested came to visit last week with staff, City Staff, FCMS representatives, and County representative. Staff is currently working with the City on refining incentive numbers before sending off our incentive offer.
 - They are interested in purchasing Lot 5 and 6, potentially Lot 7 as well, in the ALEDA Industrial Park. Executive Director Johnson explained that in the past we've offered these lots at \$50,000 to \$60,000 per acre. In total we've spent almost 3 million in purchasing and developing the 70 acres in the park to be shovel ready.

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."

- Staff would like to tell the company that while we value the property at \$60,000 an acre because of the costs we've put into it, we would be willing to sell them to them for the project at \$30,000 an acre. Staff is looking for board approval to make that discount.
- Commissioner Heinemann said that we should consider doing whatever is need to get the project in Albert Lea and that he is also supportive of taking a lower payment on the land while explaining the discount to demonstrate the value.
- Ex-Officio County Representative Tom Jensen said that the company seems like a good fit for our community and that the owners talked a lot about wanting to have a strong commitment to their new community and they're employees. Commissioner Rasmussen echoed these comments.
- Commissioner Skogheim noted that he has spent a lot of time looking at site values for comps for the FMCS building that will be sold after the new campus is built. He noted that \$60,000 was on the higher side and that selling the property to be developed is more important than to recoup all the costs of developing it.
- Commissioner Rasmussen moved to give staff the flexibility to negotiate the properties in the ALEDA Industrial Park for purchase, seconded by Commissioner Murray. President Nelson asked for any further discussion and hearing none, the motion carried 6 in favor; 0 opposed.
- Collaboration (ALEDA/CVB/Chamber)
 - The CVB has moved into the shared space and all three organizations are now under one roof.
- Conferences/Meetings to Note
 - Most of staff time in the last month was spent on the COVID19 Relief Grant Program.

EX-OFFICIO UPDATE

- **Freeborn County – Tom Jensen**
 - There have been 85 residential and business permits requested this year.
 - The county is in the final stages of approval for the single service wind turbine to go in a REG. This turbine will make REG carbonless.
- **City of Albert Lea – Jerry Gabrielatos**
 - The fire station has moved out of their space at City Hall and is now moved into their new building.
- **Chamber of Commerce – Shari Jensen**
 - The Chamber received their 18,000 masks last week. Holly from the CVB and Freeborn County Public Health and local law enforcement help give out masks to over 280 businesses.
 - The Chamber continues to reach out to businesses, asking them how they are doing with COVID19, and asking how the Chamber can help.

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- The Chamber is also working with it's committees and looking at how it can improve programming.
- **Convention and Visitors Bureau – Holly Karsjens**
 - Working with Don Myran in town to try to figure out billboard options in town to promote positivity, some signs outside of town as well to bring people in to town. Also interested in permanent signs like the Northfield ones. Once a plan is established the CVB will be looking at asking for support from partners to help support the cost.
 - Explore MN is switching their current focus to inside state travel and there may be options to find support for billboards.
 - Downtown Banners – Blue Zones has purchased half of the replacement banners for downtown. The remaining banners will include a variety of designs each featuring events and things we have to offer such as WDW, Big Freeze, community theatre, etc.
 - Kinda Crazy Days – went well for the retailers. Considering other options for another event before holiday shopping starts. There will also be the Deer Widows Weekend as well.
 - The former CVB space will be taken over by a retailer who will be opening a new retail concept – men's retail, home décor, and gift options.

COMMISSIONER/OTHER ITEMS

Executive Director Johnson explained that Big Island Rendezvous has taken a hit due to COVID and their events being cancelled. Johnson has asked Perry Vining and the bookkeeper if they needed help with rent to let us know what they need. Staff has also begun to look at other potential locations in the community for them. BIR has not gotten back to us with any offer or request.

ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Heinemann made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Commissioner Murray. The motion carried 6 in favor, 0 opposed. The meeting adjourned at 8:23 am.

Filed and attested August 5, 2020.



President



Secretary

ALEDA MISSION STATEMENT

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