

ALBERT LEA PORT AUTHORITY

MINUTES

Wednesday, March 2, 2022 – 7:30 a.m.

Regular Meeting

132 N Broadway Ave

CALL TO ORDER & NOTATION OF ROLL

The Regular Meeting of the Albert Lea Port Authority was called to order on Wednesday, March 2, 2022 at 7:30 a.m. by President Skogheim. Roll was noted by the Board Secretary.

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

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: Nate Jansen, Vice President;

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

EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS ABSENT: Holly Karsjens, Local Tourism Representative

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

APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM FEBRUARY 2, 2022 REGULAR MEETING

The minutes from the Wednesday, February 2 regular meeting were reviewed. Commissioner Rasmussen made a motion to approve the minutes as presented, seconded by Commissioner Murray. President Skogheim asked for any further discussion and hearing none, the motion carried 6 in favor; 0 opposed.

RESOLUTION PA-22-07 AUTHORIZING PAYMENT OF CLAIMS

The claims were presented for review. Commissioner Heinemann made a motion to accept the claims as presented in the amount of \$44,036.56 seconded by Commissioner Nelson. President Skogheim asked for any further discussion and hearing none, the motion carried 6 in favor; 0 opposed.

STAFF REPORT

Design Ready Controls Update

- Design Ready Controls (DRC) has agreed to allow Interstate Packaging to stay in the space until April 1. Interstate Packaging has found a space but they are waiting on confirmation and a lease agreement.

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- Staff is waiting to hear back on the Option to Buy from DRC. They have the draft in hand, will be trying to get that finalized over the next few months.

Collaboration Chamber/CVB/ALEDA

- Still working together on the Visitors & Community Guide.
- Also still working on joint marketing and identity campaign together.

Scholarship Program

- There is a meeting scheduled for March 6th with the local high schools to discuss the program and get their feedback.
- Specially trying to narrow down how many students can be expected to use the program and do the guidelines for admittance align well with what Juniors and Seniors are doing at the school as far as grades, testing, etc.
- Still have not received an outline yet from Riverland. If the outline is not done, staff will work on it instead in order to keep the project moving forward.
- All criteria should be finalized soon. So far feedback from businesses in the community has been really positive. They especially like the commitment of the student working in the community for 2 years after graduation.

Warehousing Opportunity

- Staff had a great conversation with The Brookshire Company and Justin Erickson on the potential for a new warehouse. The concept is 125,000 – 200,000 sq ft of industrial community.
- This could be a great first project for the Equity Fund.
- They will be looking for 50-60% commitment on the space before building. They are working on a pro forma to share and considering costs to build to help understand what rental rates will have to be.
- They would like to break ground in the fall.

Ventura Foods / Ring Can Building

- Staff had a good meeting with Ventura Foods discussing the damages. They accepted responsibility for the docks and concrete.
- Also discussed was the possible sale of the building to Ventura Foods as they feel this fit well into their long term plans.
- Staff will work on getting an appraisal done for the building and parking lot – expected cost is \$2,500.
- After the appraisal is complete, staff will share the information and get feedback from the board on the asking price.
- Selling the building would create an influx of cash that can be reinvested to existing projects and/or invested in new ones such as the new Riverland scholarship fund.

Conferences/Meetings to Note

- Continued attendance at regular meetings.
- Staff attended the MN DEED webinar for their new mainstreet program, RFP was due February 28th. Unfortunately the program was not a good fit for what we were looking to do.

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- Also learned new information about the BDPI fund and that we can now apply to use it for speculative projects and purposes.

EX-OFFICIO UPDATE

Freeborn County – Tom Jensen

- Broadband – going to waive permitting fees in the SE corner of the county to help WCTA with their expansion. Will also be applying for DEED money.
- Joint Powers, City/County – City will be taking over UP trail from Front Street to Highway 13. RFPs went out for portion from Albert Lea to Manchester to Hartland to clear the trail and make it pedestrian friendly. This will be money spent by the county.
- Going through the audit process now, budgeting process will start in April.
- Kelly Callahan will be retiring.

City of Albert Lea – Ian Rigg

- Last week City management was up lobbying for the Waste Water Treatment plant. Met with 4 senators and 1 representative. Overall positive feedback, not too much concern with paying for it but more concern with how much funding going to one district since Austin also will be asking for funds for their plant. City is working on a plan to do the upgrade in sections to help spread out the cost.
- Housing – concern about a bill in the house that may have trickle down effects to all communities needing to revisit their requirements for housing. Talked to DEED about a workforce housing grant up to 1 million dollars for a project coming up. Need to get the school house renovation apartments project completed first or the City will have to pay the state for the funds given.
- Budget came in 450k under anticipated revenue, came in 800k less expenses so positive look for 2021.
- March 5 – council retreat. Will be talking a lot about economic development. Phillip will be there to present. Will also be discussing Freeborn Bank Building and Jacobsen Building.

Chamber of Commerce – Shari Jenson

- Annual Meeting was not in person this year, a Video Presentation has been created and shared so check it out. Annual accomplishments report went out this week.
- Growing Dementia Friendly Freeborn County events. Memory Café is held 2 times each month.
- Business After Hours is coming back, will be open to everyone in the community to attend. Booth space is available.
- Leadership Program will be coming back this year.
- Cash Mob has been going great, last one was Etcetera Tanning and Clothing and 1910 Fresh Mexican.
- Chamber Foundation board is looking at the fee structure and marketing for the foundation.

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Convention and Visitors Bureau – Holly Karsjens

Holly shared the following update via email and staff read aloud at the meeting;

- I attended the annual state explore Mn tourism conference today in Minnetonka, this was the first in person since I came on board in 2020. Great take aways, and some awesome easy to execute short term tasks too!
- As I ramp up for festival and event season; I also prepare our cvb strategic plan for activation in the next month or so. Heavy emphasis on new marketing campaigns and avenues, as well as transitions for event management to other organizations, mainly to Main Street.
- Main Street will release & execute its “Thrive” grant over the next 2 months, \$10k feeding our downtown businesses.
- Many new events on the roster and growing our traditional ones in 2022, WDW will be back this Summer. Our team is meeting to work on volunteer succession planning and growing our event team later this month. Cheers to spring!

COMMISSIONER/OTHER ITEMS

Executive Director Johnson asked the board if they were okay with ALEDA sponsoring 10 \$10 gift cards to go to Albert Lea High School sponsored safe grad party. Board agreed with no formal vote needed.

Executive Director Johnson noted that the raise voted in last year for Assistant Executive Director Hagen’s salary increase was a 2 year plan so no need to vote again. The staff evaluation went well once again this year and so she will move up to the next increase in her pay scale.

Commissioner Nelson shared the final review memo with the full board regarding the recommended salary increase for Executive Director Johnson based off of the board’s reviews. The board agreed and confirmed the increase seemed appropriate. The board feels that Johnson is doing an excellent job, lots of good projects are moving forward, he works well with Noelle and other partners. Commissioner Heinemann moved to approve the salary increase as presented in the memo, seconded by Commissioner Nelson. President Skogheim asked for further discussion and hearing none, the motion carried 6 in favor, 0 opposed.

ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Heinemnn made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Commissioner Murray. The motion carried 6 in favor, 0 opposed. The meeting adjourned at 8:20 a.m.

Filed and attested March 2, 2022.



President



Secretary

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