

ALBERT LEA PORT AUTHORITY
MINUTES

Wednesday, September 6, 2023 – 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, September 6, 2023, 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, Sarah Nelson, Larry Baker; Tricia Dahl

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: Nate Jansen, Vice President

EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS PRESENT: John Forman and Ryan Rasmussen, Freeborn County Representatives; Holly Babcock, Local Tourism Representative

EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS ABSENT: Ian Rigg, City of Albert Lea Representative; Shari Sprague, Business Community Representative

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

2024 BUDGET REVIEW & APPROVAL

Staff provided an overview of the proposed 2024 budget. There were no major changes to income or expense to note. Staff also noted that the number used for the personnel expense was based on no increase for staff. The board discussed and Commissioner Heinemann moved to approve the budget with a 6% increase to personnel expense included, seconded by Commissioner Dahl. President Skogheim asked for any further discussion and hearing none, the motion carried 6 in favor; 0 opposed.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM AUGUST 2, 2023 REGULAR MEETING

The minutes from the Wednesday, August 2, regular meeting were reviewed. Commissioner Heinemann 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-23-13 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 \$88,752.02 seconded by Commissioner Dahl. President Skogheim asked for any further discussion and hearing none, the motion carried 6 in favor; 0 opposed.

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 REPORT

Collaboration Chamber/CVB/ALEDA

- Staff continues to work on the Community Guide together.
- Staff continues to discuss the first Business Succession Planning event.

Scholarship Program

- The planning committee met to discuss. There are still 6-7 groups who will donate, and the committee feels confident that they can raise enough funds for the 2024 students.
- There will also be additional marketing alongside the program announcement to highlight the opportunities and careers that are available in Albert Lea and are attainable with Riverland training/education programs.
- John Forman noted that the county board considered withdrawing their funding but kept it in. They may need help understanding why it's still important to have the fund since the State of MN also created a fund.

ALEDA Spec/DRC Building Parking Lot Expansion

- Staff has signed the contract with Ulland so work can begin. The completion date is mid-November.

North #1/Carpenter Building Parking Lot

- Carpenter Company rents the North #1 spec building in the North Industrial Park and has for many years.
- They let us know that they would like to see the parking lot repaired, staff met with a contractor to review the areas that need to be patched.
- The two options that have been discussed are repairing the worst areas for now, which will be a band-aid fix for a few years, or repairing and overlaying the entire area which will last much longer.
- Staff has met with Carpenter, who according to our lease must share the expense 50/50 on anything after \$5,000. They are concerned about getting corporate approval to spend that much so staff has brainstormed with them a way to make it work.
- After discussion, the board recommended that staff get clarification from Carpenter on how they can pay for their share, as well as a quote for the repair instead of two phases.

Interns' Update

- The interns, Mallory Ignaszewski and Lauren Brownlow have finished their internship and have gone back to school. Staff greatly appreciated working with them this Summer and felt that having two interns was a great asset and allowed us to accomplish a lot of work. Staff let them know if they ever need a reference or a letter of recommendation to not hesitate to reach out. We also shared with them that if they would like to come back and work during future breaks, we'd be happy to have them back.

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Conferences/Meetings to Note

- Met with Brookings downtown director and assistant city manager. They are interested in what we've done in our downtown area and wanted to learn more.
- Set up meeting with St. Paul and Minnesota Foundation.

EX-OFFICIO UPDATE

Freeborn County – John Forman, Ryan Rasmussen

- Approved a budget at the last meeting with a 4.5% increase, hope to get that down to 3%.
- Roof project should be completed by the end of the week, windows at the end of the month.
- Pat Martinson is retiring November 10th after 33 years with the county.

City of Albert Lea – Rich Murray

- The City is also working on the budget. The 2nd meeting in September will be the preliminary budget approval.
- The old VFW building is falling in. It is disappointing and city council is extremely unhappy with the situation. The City will be getting involved to make sure they can provide safety repairs and keep the building standing.

Chamber of Commerce – Shari Sprague

- Shari was not able to attend but sent the following update;
 - Chamber is now at "full" staff, with the addition of Nicole Mayer as a part time Administrative Support Specialist. She will be working Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, 9 to 3.
 - Working on Annual Meeting plans. Now taking table sponsors and accepting nominations for small, medium, and large business of the year.
 - Jean and I are still working on the "100 Visits in 100 Days"
 - Leadership program kicked off in August. StrengthsFinder Day is this month on the 19th.
 - Business After Hours will now be held the third Tuesday of every month from 5 to 6:30 at Wedgewood Cove.
 - 3rd Grade Farm Tours are coming up, Thursday and Friday the 28th and 29th of September.

Convention and Visitors Bureau – Holly Babcock

- The kite event went well – there were over 2,400 people there and \$91,000 raised.
- Daisy Fest – over 1,000 people attended.
- Bob & Holly – purchasing an event stage trailer for future events. This would eliminate complications of renting a stage and would also be available for the community to rent.
- New apparel coming for Fall and Winter.
- Events Upcoming:
 - Taste of Albert Lea
 - Mexican Independence Celebration
 - Homecoming
 - Shop Sip and Stroll
 - New things coming for Holiday Bazaar

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COMMISSIONER/OTHER ITEMS

Vortex will be moving forward with Phase II. They have reached out to us to sign a new intercreditor agreement, we are in 6th position. Our note will be paid off in April 2024. Staff is working with POET on the land that the rail hub group is interested in. Would be a great location. Staff have been communicating with them as well on the 8.5 acres next to their current location. They are not ready to purchase the property but are interested in a first right of refusal type option since they are adjacent to the land and they don't want to be landlocked before they can finish their expansion. Staff will explore the option with legal counsel and bring it to the board for approval.

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 8:30 a.m.

Filed and attested September 6, 2023.



President



Secretary

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