

ALBERT LEA PORT AUTHORITY
MINUTES

Wednesday, November 1, 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, November 1, 2023, at 7:30 a.m. by President Skogheim. Roll was noted by the Board Secretary.

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Bryan Skogheim, President; Nate Jansen, Vice President; Rich Murray, Sarah Nelson, Tricia Dahl, Larry Baker

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: Mark Heinemann, Treasurer

EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS PRESENT: Ryan Rasmussen, Freeborn County Representative Holly Babcock, Local Tourism Representative

EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS ABSENT: John Forman, Freeborn County Representative; Ian Rigg, City of Albert Lea Representative; Shari Sprague, Business Community Representative; Holly Babcock, Local Tourism Representative

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

APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM OCTOBER 4, 2023 REGULAR MEETING

The minutes from the Wednesday, October 4, regular meeting were reviewed. Commissioner Jansen made a motion to approve the minutes as presented, seconded by Commissioner Dahl. President Skogheim asked for any further discussion and hearing none, the motion carried 6 in favor; 0 opposed.

RESOLUTION PA-23-15 AUTHORIZING PAYMENT OF CLAIMS

The claims were presented for review. Commissioner Jansen made a motion to accept the claims as presented in the amount of \$69,508.66 seconded by Commissioner Dahl. President Skogheim asked for any further discussion and hearing none, the motion carried 6 in favor; 0 opposed.

RESOLUTION PA-23-16 AUTHORIZING THE PURCHASE OF 12+ ACRES OF LAND FROM BUSINESS SOLUTIONS CONSULTING FOR \$180,000

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 explained that the resolution is to approve the purchase of a property that would be used for a housing development project. The need for housing in Albert Lea is great and the housing studies show an alarmingly low vacancy rate and available housing. In order for our employers to sustain the level of jobs and productivity they currently have, we will need to be proactive in creating opportunities for additional housing developments. Commissioner Dahl moved to authorize the purchase of 12+ acres from Business Solutions Consulting for \$180,000, seconded by Commissioner Jansen. President Skogheim asked for any further discussion and hearing none, the motion carried 6 in favor; 0 opposed.

STAFF REPORT

Collaboration Chamber/CVB/ALEDA

- Staff discussed promoting "Shop local" and Small Business Saturday.
- Staff continues to assist each other in events and other ongoing projects.

Scholarship Program

- Progress is being made toward reaching the desired number for the scholarship program.
- At the chamber's annual meeting, it was announced that the program will soon be launched, with confidence in bridging the remaining gap. An announcement is expected within the next month or so.

ALEDA Spec/DRC Building Parking Lot Expansion

- The project encountered some miscommunication between ZRT and Ulland Brothers, causing difficulties in its progression.
- While getting at least a gravel surface is planned, paving may not be feasible before the end of 2023.
- Gravel will be placed next week, and a bill from Thompson Electric to relocate electricity needs to be addressed to ensure the project moves forward.
- Staff will inform Design Ready Controls that gravel will be installed, with the project's completion scheduled for the Spring.
- Expanding parking will allow DRC to accommodate up to 120 employees, up from the current 70.

New Potential Grocer

- Six potential contacts are lined up for outreach once the narrative is aligned.
- It's essential to discuss how land marketing and costs are presented to avoid miscommunications and ensure good relations.

North #1/Carpenter Building Parking Lot

- An attempt was made to engage the tenant for the full parking lot project, but they are not interested. If they do not accept responsibility for their \$30,000 share, the question arises whether we should proceed with the repair.
- After discussion, staff will move forward with the patching this season if feasible and schedule repaving for the following Spring, with lease adjustments to cover the cost.

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South Shore Drive Property

- The purchase agreement has been drafted.
- A positive meeting was held with Green Smith. They also visited the Gerry's property to discuss townhouse locations near Wedgewood Cove. The plan is to construct the first townhouse and potentially develop four or five more together.
- A preliminary plat for South Shore Drive Property was reviewed and found to be in alignment with our layout idea. The intention is to purchase the property, rezone it as R3, complete the platting, and subsequently transfer it to Green Smith for development.

Conferences/Meetings to Note

- Staff attended regular meetings.
- The Chamber Annual Meeting was successful, with Phillip Johnson, Ryan Rasmussen, and Rich Murray providing updates on various projects and discussing economic development topics during a panel discussion.

EX-OFFICIO UPDATE

Freeborn County – John Forman, Ryan Rasmussen

- There is a proposed cannabis ordinance scheduled for discussion on November 7th.
- Pat Martinson is set to retire on November 10th, and the board has appointed Kelly Hendrickson as an interim replacement. The board is also considering the consolidation of certain departments and positions.
- The Truth in Taxation statement is expected to be released later this month.
- It's worth noting that the largest change in the tax burden will affect farmers.

City of Albert Lea – Rich Murray

- In terms of the budget, we reviewed the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) last week and discussed various projects and matters.
- There's a focus on the personnel budget, which will be contingent on the outcome of union negotiations.
- Efforts are underway to address issues with the VFW building. The proposal for repairs to stabilize the building was voted down. The goal is to obtain a clear record of the development process, the reasons for the delays, and the property tax status. While the ultimate decision may still be the same (repair or risk collapse), there's now more information and context available.
- A meeting with the housing bonding committee took place last week to tour the wastewater treatment plant. The meeting covered what needed to be done and what was required from them to move forward with the project.

Chamber of Commerce – Shari Sprague

- Shari was not able to attend but sent the following update;
 - Want to thank Phillip, the Mayor, and Ryan again, for speaking at the Annual Meeting. It was very well received!
 - Our new intern started this week so we're really excited about that.

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- Business After Hours is growing. Please join us the third Tuesday of every month, from 5 to 630, at Wedgewood. November will be hosted by our small, medium, and large Business of the Year.
- Today kicks off Small Business Season. We will have daily Facebook posts and will be giving away \$100 in Chamber Bucks on December 1.
- In partnership with Bergdale, we are also collecting toys for the Salvation Army. On Small Business Saturday (November 25th) there will be a Santa Ride and the toys will be presented to the Salvation Army.
- We are also collecting coats for Jack Frosts Closet.

Convention and Visitors Bureau – Holly Babcock

- Holly was unable to attend but provided the following update:
 - Oktoberween has been a hit, our first weekend we had 4,700 people through the gate. Second weekend was not as well attended due to the stark difference in weather.
 - Art sculptures are being welded onto their pedestal plates at Riverland right now. They'll be in place before end of year.
 - Deer Widow BIG Buck Hunt is Nov 3&4, fun way to encourage retail shopping throughout Albert Lea, check out the Facebook event/ flyer for details
<https://facebook.com/events/s/deer-widows-big-buck-hunt-shop/325527749870204/>

COMMISSIONER/OTHER ITEMS

None.

ADJOURNMENT

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

Filed and attested November 1, 2023.



President



Secretary

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