

ALBERT LEA PORT AUTHORITY

MINUTES

Wednesday, January 10, 2024 – 7:30 a.m.

Annual 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, January 10, 2024 at 7:30 a.m. by President Skogheim. Roll was noted by the Board Secretary.

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Bryan Skogheim, Mark Heinemann, Rich Murray, Tricia Dahl, Sarah Nelson, Larry Baker, Nate Jansen

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: None

EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS PRESENT: Holly Babcock, Local Tourism Representative; John Forman, Freeborn County Representative; Ian Rigg, City of Albert Lea Representative

EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS ABSENT: Shari Sprague, Business Community Representative; Ryan Rasmussen, Freeborn County Representative

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

ELECTION OF OFFICERS FOR 2024

- a. President: Rich Murray
- b. Vice President: Nate Jansen
- c. Treasurer: Mark Heinemann

Commissioner Jansen made a motion to approve the appointments as presented, seconded by Commissioner Nelson. President Skogheim asked for any discussion and hearing none, the motion carried 7 in favor; 0 opposed.

APPOINTMENT OF OFFICERS FOR 2024

- a. Board Secretary: Noelle Viktora
- b. Assistant Treasurer: Mardy Oyer (Hammer, Dieser & Mangskau)

Commissioner Heinemann made a motion to approve the nominations as presented, seconded by Commissioner Jansen. President Murray asked for any further discussion and hearing none, the motion carried 7 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."

APPOINTMENT OF EX-OFFICIO BOARD MEMBERS FOR 2024

- a. City Representative: Ian Rigg
- b. County Representative: John Forman, Ryan Rasmussen
- c. Business Community Representative: Shari Sprague
- d. Tourism Representative: Holly Babcock

Commissioner Jansen made a motion to approve the appointment of ex-officio members as presented, seconded by Commissioner Dahl. President Murray asked for any discussion and hearing none, the motion carried 7 in favor; 0 opposed.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM DECEMBER 6, 2023 REGULAR MEETING

The minutes from the Wednesday, December 6, regular meeting were reviewed. Commissioner Jansen made a motion to approve the minutes as presented, seconded by Commissioner Baker. President Murray asked for any further discussion and hearing none, the motion carried 7 in favor; 0 opposed.

RESOLUTION PA-24-01 AUTHORIZING PAYMENT OF CLAIMS

The claims were presented for review. Staff noted that the amount is higher than average due to the purchase of property. Commissioner Jansen made a motion to accept the claims as presented in the amount of \$247,797.65, seconded by Commissioner Nelson. President Murray asked for any further discussion and hearing none, the motion carried 7 in favor; 0 opposed.

RESOLUTION PA-24-02 DESIGNATING DEPOSITORIES AND SIGNATORIES FOR WITHDRAWAL OF FUNDS

- a. Depositories: Arcadian Bank, Home Federal Savings Bank, Produce State Bank, Security Bank MN, US Bank, Wells Fargo Bank, Citizens Community Federal Bank, 4M Fund
- b. Signatories: President, Treasurer and Executive Director

Commissioner Murray made a motion to approve depositories and signatories as presented, seconded by Commissioner Jansen. President Murray asked for any further discussion and hearing none, the motion carried 6 in favor; 0 opposed. Commissioner Heinemann abstained.

RESOLUTION PA-24-03 SETTING MEETING DATES, TIMES AND LOCATION FOR THE PORT AUTHORITY

a. First Wednesday of the month at 7:30 a.m. to be held at 132 N Broadway Ave, Albert Lea
Commissioner Jansen made a motion to approve meeting dates, times and location as presented, seconded by Commissioner Nelson. President Murray asked for any further discussion and hearing none, the motion carried 7 in favor; 0 opposed.

RESOLUTION PA-24-04 AUTHORIZING ROUTINE CLAIMS TO BE PAID MID-MONTH

Commissioner Jansen made a motion to approve as presented, seconded by Commissioner Murray. President Murray asked for any discussion and hearing none, the motion carried 7 in favor; 0 opposed.

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RESOLUTION PA-24-05 RULES FOR ADDRESSING THE PORT AUTHORITY/RULES OF DECORUM

Commissioner Jansen made a motion to approve as presented, seconded by Commissioner Dahl. President Murray asked for any discussion and hearing none, the motion carried 7 in favor; 0 opposed.

STAFF REPORT

Staff Review Process

- Executive Director Johnson completed the employee review process with Assistant Executive Director Viktora. He recommended the board approve a 6% increase to the base salary for 2024.
- Commissioner Skogheim reported that the executive committee met to review the feedback on Executive Director Johnson's performance that was filled out by the board members. After review, the board recommended a 6% increase to the base salary pay.
- The board also discussed a change to the pto policy which will provide staff with 9 days of pto available at the start of the year, with the remaining pto hours per position to accrue throughout the year as stated in the handbook.
- Commissioner Nelson motioned to approve the increase to Phillip Johnson's salary, Noelle Viktora's salary, and the pto policy as presented, seconded by Commissioner Dahl. President Murray asked for any discussion and hearing none, the motion carried 7 in favor; 0 opposed.

Collaboration Chamber/CVB/ALEDA

- Staff continues to support each other in the office and through participation in various projects, committees, and events.
- ALEDA staff will be volunteering as day leaders for the February Business and Economic Development day – part of the Chamber's Leadership Program.

Scholarship Program

- The program is scheduled for announcement in late January.
- The anticipation is that success will encourage further fundraising efforts, showcasing the program's necessity.
- Plans include local and regional outreach to promote awareness of Albert Lea's unique scholarship program.

South Shore Drive Property

- Successfully closed on the property, initiating discussions with Aaron for a meeting in the week of January 22nd.
- Collaboration with the city on rezoning precedes the property transfer to the developer.
- The project is seen as an exciting prospect that addresses the housing gap, with an estimated timeline for construction starting in 2025.

Albert Lea Real Estate Fund

- Discussions revolve around deploying the funds accumulated in savings, which has grown from 1.2 million to 2.1 million in the last 5 years.
- A proposal to invest \$500,000 in the equity fund for 7-10 years aligns with projects impacting downtown and housing needs, advancing the organization's mission.

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- If the board approves the investment, it would elevate the fund to 2.3 million, reaching 2.5 million with a potential additional contribution from the county.
- Considerations about balancing cash for a new spec building and the possibility of involving community partners in investments were discussed.
- The board expresses support for the investment, aligning with last year's focus on housing and the broader goal of selling and filling the south industrial park.
- Commissioner Nelson moved to approve the Port Authority investment of \$500,000 in the equity fund, seconded by Commissioner Tricia. President Murray called for further discussion, and hearing none, the motion carried 7 in favor, 0 opposed.

Solar Discussion

- A solar group expressed interest in land, particularly around the Plaza area, for potential leasing.
- Staff is exploring less buildable areas for consideration and will engage in discussions with the city about the viability of a solar field.
- Board interest in leasing less desirable land for potential income is moderate, with considerations for industrial park proximity and the less buildable north area.

Conferences/Meetings to Note

- Continued attendance at regular meetings.
- The team met with St. Paul Port Authority and accountants for discussions about the equity fund.
- There were discussions with Crescent City, CA, about Blue Zones, and further information will be provided through Ellen.

EX-OFFICIO UPDATE

Freeborn County – John Forman, Ryan Rasmussen

- Freeborn County is in good financial shape, managing to lower the tax increase to 2.9%.
- The commissioners' wages were increased to \$26,000.
- Exploring opportunities for joint city/county partnerships and impactful projects in the future.
- Initiatives the board is considering include childcare, housing, and other projects with a meaningful community impact.
- Attended the Semcac meeting, where they successfully met the Bell/ALAMCO challenge, securing a \$100,000 matching grant for a fund aiding low-income individuals with car breakdowns, ensuring they can access work by assisting with car repair costs.

City of Albert Lea – Ian Rigg

- Currently working on a solar ordinance, contemplating primary versus secondary use.
- Exploring changes to the sign ordinance, addressing concerns about unconventional signage like vinyl and flags.
- In the process of formulating a cannabis ordinance, with a focus on zoning for different types of businesses.
- Successfully sold 132 South Broadway to Ignite Nutrition, formerly the Hobby Shop.
- Awaiting the TIF report, with early indications suggesting positive performance in certain districts, particularly downtown.
- The budget has been passed, and discussions are underway regarding the arena project. Noteworthy highlights include 49k unique individual attendees at the arena, as reported by Placer

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AI. The council has opted for an election bond, essentially a referendum, with a special election set for either April 9th or May 12th.

Chamber of Commerce – Shari Sprague

- Shari was unable to attend but provided the following updates via email:
- The Chamber is launching a new quarterly event, "New Member New Resident Coffee," starting on Tuesday, January 23rd, at 9 a.m. at The Outlet. The event aims to bring together Chamber and community members, fostering connections and introducing new members to initiatives and benefits. It also provides valuable information to new residents about the local community and offers a comfortable networking environment.
- The Leadership Program is ongoing, focusing on Development and Workforce Development in January. Day Leaders Kim Nelson and Val Kvale will host with guest speakers from DEED and MN Chamber. The selected book for the month is "A New Kind of Diversity" by Tim Elmore, exploring generational diversity in living and working together.
- Age Friendly and Dementia Friendly initiatives are ongoing, with a committee working on an Age Friendly assessment.
- Tech Tuesday and Memory Cafes continue monthly; details are available on the Dementia Friendly Freeborn County Facebook page.

Convention and Visitors Bureau – Holly Babcock

- Working on the budget; Konrad and Holly collected data on marketing effectiveness and optimal spending. Emphasis on making informed decisions for marketing dollars, especially given the expense of events.
- TV commercials have shown positive results.
- Actively seeking new board members, particularly those interested in volunteering at events.
- Exciting winter projects underway, including a revamp of the website, untouched since the Marketing Plant's work with Susie pre-2019.
- Collaborative efforts with Parks and Rec include working on a larger city map and exploring the purchase of a stage.
- Preparations for the Big Freeze, featuring the return of the Polar Plunge, with the Inclusive Park organizing it as a fundraiser.

COMMISSIONER/OTHER ITEMS


None

ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Nelson made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Commissioner Baker. The motion carried 7 in favor, 0 opposed. The meeting adjourned at 8:50 a.m.

Filed and attested January 101, 2024.

President



Secretary

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