

ALBERT LEA PORT AUTHORITY
MINUTES

Wednesday, March 6, 2024 – 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 6, 2024 at 7:30 a.m. by President Murray. 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: John Forman, Freeborn County Representative; Holly Babcock, Local Tourism Representative;

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

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

GUESTS: Cathy Malakowsky

APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM FEBRUARY 7, 2024 REGULAR MEETING

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

RESOLUTION PA-24-07 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 \$70,518.52 seconded by Commissioner Dahl. President Murray asked for any further discussion and hearing none, the motion carried 7 in favor; 0 opposed.

PRESENTATION ON REC FACILITIES REFERENDUM – Cathy Malakowsky, City of Albert Lea

- A vote on April 9th will decide whether the city borrows 9.8 million for improvements.
- The focus of the projects is to enhance the quality of life for residents.

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.”

- Federal funding for energy efficiency improvements is being pursued through the inflation reduction act.
- The comprehensive plan design prioritizes maintaining current facilities over building a new community center.
- Cathy discussed the potential consequences of a negative vote and highlighted upcoming open houses.
- Commissioner Murray emphasized that investing in these projects is investing in the community's future, especially for families and youth, he also expressed gratitude to Cathy for her informative presentation.

STAFF REPORT

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 volunteered as day leaders for the February Business and Economic Development day – part of the Chamber’s Leadership Program.

South Shore Drive Property

- Currently in the process of zoning, working with City staff to accomplish.
- Continued discussions with developer on the opportunity.

Infinite Recycled Technologies Expansion

- Expanding with multiple locations across the US.
- Two new expansions planned, including renting space in the former Streater building, adding 10-15 jobs.
- Considering loan funds to finance the gap.
- Exploring a second shift at the main location, adding 10-15 more jobs.
- Interested in an inactive rail hub next to their building, proposing to repair it for rail access in exchange for usage rights.

Childcare

- School district retained child care for another year.
- The Children’s Center remains involved in discussions.
- Staff suggests moving forward with a \$10k grant program, county-wide, despite county non-participation.
- Consideration to request additional funding from SMIF.

ALEDA/Balchem Building Discussion

- Staff has reached out but has not received a response from Balchem yet. Staff will continue to reach out and start a conversation about a possible sale.

Conferences/Meetings to Note

- Continued attendance at regular meetings.
- Onsite audit scheduled for next week with Clifton Larson Allen.
- Multiple meetings regarding the Tiger Cub situation.
- Met with Mayo regarding available properties, exploring potential development opportunities.

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EX-OFFICIO UPDATE

Freeborn County – John Forman

- Approved the trail agreement with the city.
- Discussing repairs for the historic courthouse ceiling and insulation.
- Considering a solar project for county buildings, with potential returns of up to 11%.

City of Albert Lea – Rich Murray

- Addressed public hearings for major road projects.
- Council retreat scheduled.
- Referendum discussion ongoing.

Chamber of Commerce – Shari Sprague

- Shari was unable to attend. Staff noted that the Chamber will be hosting Ag Day and an Ag Luncheon where the Freeborn County Farm Family of the Year will be announced on March 19th.

Convention and Visitors Bureau – Holly Babcock

- Collaborating with the Vote Yes committee, advocating for park improvements.
- Big Freeze event successful, raising \$15k for the inclusive park.
- Upcoming Shop event on April 13th.
- 2nd Annual Polka Party at Edgewater Bay.
- Participation in the Explore MN Tourism conference.
- Working on website improvements for various projects, including Ignite Nutrition and Pelican Breeze.

COMMISSIONER/OTHER ITEMS

Staff brought forward several other items:

- Renewal of Placer contract for two years at \$11,000, board agreed to continue to participate in the contract with Albert Lea and Albert Lea CVB.
- USDA RBEG and IRP Funds; Staff is considering requesting additional funding from USDA due to low loan funds.
- Watershed Property; Potential purchase of Watershed Property for \$250k. Staff has identified a developer interested in development. Staff is seeking approval to offer \$250k to purchase the property and engage a developer. After discussion, the board recommended that staff proceed with making an offer and having a purchase agreement drafted.

ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Skogheim made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Commissioner Heinemann. The motion carried 7 in favor, 0 opposed. The meeting adjourned at 8:30 a.m.

Filed and attested March 6, 2024.

President

Secretary

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