

ALBERT LEA PORT AUTHORITY
MINUTES

Wednesday, September 4, 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, September 4, 2024 at 8:00 a.m. by President Murray. Roll was noted by the Board Secretary.

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

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: Larry Baker

EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS PRESENT: 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; Holly Babcock, Local Tourism Representative

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

APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM AUGUST 7, 2024 REGULAR MEETING

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

APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM AUGUST 13, 2024 SPECIAL MEETING

The minutes from the Wednesday, August 13, special meeting were reviewed. Commissioner Heinemann made a motion to approve the minutes as presented, seconded by Commissioner Nelson. President Murray 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.”

RESOLUTION PA-24-15 AUTHORIZING PAYMENT OF CLAIMS

The claims were presented for review, staff noted that the amount is high due to a large payment for the ALEDA Spec #1 parking lot, which will be reimbursed 2/3rds by the City and the tenant. Commissioner Dahl made a motion to accept the claims as presented in the amount of \$299,959.98 seconded by Commissioner Nelson. President Murray asked for any further discussion and hearing none, the motion carried 6 in favor; 0 opposed.

SOUTHERN MINNESOTA INITIATIVE FOUNDATION PRESENTATION

A presentation was given by SMIF staff highlighting the work they do which focuses on economic development, early childhood education, and rural communities. They highlighted numerous loans to small businesses in Freeborn County as well as several communities who have participated in the REV program.

2025 BUDGET REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Staff presented the draft budget to the board. Treasurer Heinemann previously reviewed the budget as well and feels that estimations for next year's revenue and expenses are reasonable. Overall no major changes were noted. Commissioner Dahl moved to approve the budget as presented, seconded by Commissioner Nelson. President Murray asked for further discussion and hearing none, the motion carried 6 in favor; 0 opposed.

STAFF REPORT

- **Collaboration (Chamber/CVB/ALEDA)**
 - i. Collaboration efforts ongoing; map guide project discussed.
- **Childcare**
 - i. Recently met with Jeff, who provided an update on the childcare pod model, with a more affordable version.
 - ii. Plan to identify spaces that can be redeveloped into childcare pods and ask Jeff's group to assess feasibility.
 - iii. Uncertainty remains around the school district's decision regarding childcare.
 - iv. Focus is on feasible solutions rather than simply allocating funds without a plan. The in-home grant has been successful, but new regulations on in-home care could cause some providers to quit. These changes have been paused following pushback.
 - v. Redeveloping spaces into pod models is currently a practical strategy. The goal is to make an impact where feasible.
- **Ventura Foods Lease and Building**
 - i. Ventura Foods has all the necessary information on the offer of sale, the new lease language concerning maintenance, and the cost of the dock doors. Waiting for corporate's decision on the next steps.
- **Design Ready Controls**

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- i. Work continues on the microgrid project. A lease amendment is ready to adjust the parcel size to accommodate their project. Awaiting updates from JHS, the City, and the County.
- **Conferences/Meetings to Note**
 - i. **Balchem:** Met with Mike to discuss the buyout option for the building, available yearly from September to October until 2032. The buyout price is unpaid principal plus 20%. Staff recommends encouraging Balchem to exercise the option, and they have shown interest.
 - ii. **Scholarship Meeting:** Enrollment increased from 27 students last year to 67 this year. Funding remains a concern, and the structure of the program may need revision if the number of applicants exceeds available funds. Discussion needed on whether funding should be distributed proportionally or based on need. A lunch meeting is scheduled for November 12th to engage potential donors.
 - iii. **Brookshire:** Continuing collaboration, recently received a video from them.
 - iv. **Watershed:** Following up on ongoing discussions.
 - v. **Tribune:** Engaged in discussions for upcoming stories on housing and childcare.

EX-OFFICIO UPDATES

- **Freeborn County (Ryan Rasmussen, John Forman)**
 - i. A letter is being sent to Mayo as the county board also serves as the medical board. Awaiting a response.
 - ii. Ditches: Spring rains caused significant ditch work, which will be paid for by those living along or benefiting from the ditches. The county is working on reapportioning who gets the benefit.
 - iii. Cannabis: Still working through rules and addressing grower concerns.
 - iv. Budgeting: The county continues to work on the budget.
- **City of Albert Lea (Ian Rigg)**
 - i. The city's budget stands at 15.75%, with 10% related to the arena. Clarifications are being provided. There were significant wage increases following a wage and compensation survey, which helped attract high-quality candidates.
 - ii. All department heads reviewed the budget carefully, with supplies cut by 2% and services by 4%.
 - iii. Ian met with Mayo regarding properties in the area and discussed future development plans. Conversations with Ehler's and attorneys are ongoing regarding TIFs or redevelopment funds. Discussions include ideas about ALEDA's ability to raise capital for future projects.
- **Chamber of Commerce (Shari Sprague)**
 - i. No updates provided.
- **Convention and Visitors Bureau (Holly Babcock)**
 - i. Holly provided updates via email. Key events include:

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1. Mexican Independence Day celebration on Sunday, September 15th at the north lot.
2. Fall Sip and Shop on Saturday, September 28th, in collaboration with downtown retailers.
3. Progress on the large foldable map project is underway.

ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Nelson made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Commissioner Heinemann. The motion carried 6 in favor, 0 opposed. The meeting was adjourned at 8:25 a.m.

Filed and attested September 4, 2024.

President

Secretary

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