

ALBERT LEA PORT AUTHORITY
MINUTES

Wednesday, December 3, 2025 – 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, December 3, 2025 at 7:30 a.m. by President Murray. Roll was noted by the Board Secretary.

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

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: Bryan Skogheim

EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS PRESENT: Val Lockhart, Business Community Representative; Ian Rigg, City of Albert Lea Representative; Konrad Hawkinson, Tourism Representative; Brad Edwin, Freeborn County Representative

EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS ABSENT: Janelle Koepke, Riverland Community College Representative; Melanie Aeschliman, Freeborn County Representative

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

APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM NOVEMBER 5, 2025 REGULAR MEETING

The minutes from Wednesday, November 5th, regular meeting were reviewed. Commissioner Heinemann 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 6 in favor; 0 opposed.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM NOVEMBER 26, 2025 SPECIAL MEETING

The minutes from Wednesday, November 26th, special 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.

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-25-17 AUTHORIZING PAYMENT OF CLAIMS

Commissioner Jansen made a motion to accept the claims as presented in the amount of \$33,416.18 seconded by Commissioner Baker. President Murray asked for any further discussion and hearing none, the motion carried 6 in favor; 0 opposed.

RESOLUTION PA-25-18 AUTHORIZING PURCHASE OF REAL ESTATE

The Port Authority voted to authorize the purchase of multiple properties from Mayo Clinic Health System – Southeast Region, including 210 North St. Mary Ave, 525 West Clark St., the West Clark Street Parking Lot, 510 Water Street, 508 Water Street, and 416 Water Street in Albert Lea. The purchase is contingent upon finalization of the purchase agreement and was determined to be in the best interest of the community and the Port Authority. Commissioner Heinemann introduced the resolution, and Commissioner Baker seconded. The motion passed unanimously with Commissioners Heinemann, Baker, Murray, Jansen, Nelson, and Dahl voting in favor and none opposed.

STAFF REPORT

- **Child Care**
 - Current grants available are primarily focused on strategic planning efforts already underway.
 - The Children’s Center waiting list continues to decrease.
 - Great Start Grant programming remains ongoing.
- **Vortex Cold Storage – Phase III**
 - Continued discussions regarding Phase III and a potential second project.
 - Staff shared general updates on potential locations for future expansion and a partner manufacturing site.
 - Possible adjustments discussed related to the proposed TIF agreement and property coverage.
 - City Council can extend the timeline to amend the TIF, allowing until May 16, 2026, to finalize included properties.
- **Conferences / Meetings to Note**
 - Productive discussions with Justin Erickson.
 - Continued work with Liza from DDA.
 - Ongoing support for the Bent Tree Wind Farm project.
 - Meetings held with the new CVB director.
 - Ribbon cutting held for Vortex.

EX-OFFICIO UPDATE

- **Freeborn County – Brad Edwin**
 - Primary focus remains on budget planning.
 - Two workshops held to further evaluate budget items.
 - Preliminary levy reduced from 15% to 9.5%.
 - \$150,000 in economic development funds allocated toward future trail costs.
- **City of Albert Lea – Ian Rigg**

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- Budget levy reduced from 8% to 5.9% due to several adjustments; insurance increases were less than anticipated.
- Ongoing review of Broadway Ridge grant and housing-related funds.
- Continued housing efforts, including incentives for construction, design, and utilities on vacant and forfeiture lots, with homes targeted in the \$200,000–\$250,000 range.
- Meeting held with ALEDA regarding Vortex; TIF amendment hearing scheduled for December 22 to consider additional properties.
- Preparation underway for upcoming road projects, including bids for city center improvements.
- **Chamber of Commerce – Val Lockhart**
 - Recent meetings with ALEDA staff to explore opportunities for increased collaboration and shared business support services.
 - Discussion of leveraging SBDC coaching resources locally.
 - Launch of Chamber LEAD programming, including trainings and webinars.
 - Recent session focused on Paid Leave; upcoming programming will address business metrics.
 - Ongoing efforts to improve communications and articulate the value of Chamber membership countywide.
- **Convention and Visitors Bureau – Konrad Hawkinson**
 - Continued coordination with partner organizations.
 - Exploration of a mural project with the Albert Lea Art Center.
 - Press outreach related to utility box wrap installations.
 - Work underway on building signage and community wayfinding.
 - Updates to the community calendar in progress.
 - Upcoming events include Shop Small Business Saturday and the Holiday Bazaar on December 11.
- **Riverland Community College – Janelle Koepke**
 - Janelle was unable to attend but provided the following updates:
 - Enrollment continues to trend positively.
 - Ongoing budget considerations remain a focus.
 - Planning underway for workforce-focused initiatives and partnerships.

COMMISSIONER/OTHER ITEMS

- Discussion was held regarding park-related matters and the potential rezoning of an 11-acre property from Residential to IDD. Concerns were noted about future infrastructure needs, particularly the possibility that road improvements may be required if development moves forward.
- Commissioners discussed Minnesota Paid Leave requirements and the applicable contribution rate. It was noted that the Port Authority qualifies for a reduced rate of 0.66%, with discussion around splitting the cost between the employer and employees. Possible contribution allocations were reviewed.
- Assistant Executive Director Noelle Viktora left the room. The Board discussed staff responsibilities, position expectations, and compensation, and agreed to an adjustment in compensation.

ADJOURNMENT

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

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Filed and attested December 3, 2025.

President

Secretary

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