

**CITY OF ALTOONA, WI  
REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES  
January 26, 2023**

**(I) Call Meeting to Order**

Mayor Brendan Pratt called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. The Regular Council Meeting was held in person in the Council Chambers at Altoona City Hall, 1303 Lynn Avenue, WI.

**(II) Pledge of Allegiance**

Mayor Pratt led the Common Council and others in attendance in the Pledge of Allegiance.

**(III) Roll Call**

City Clerk Cindy Bauer called the roll. Mayor Brendan Pratt, Council Persons Dale Stuber, Jon Olson, Susan Rowe and Timothy Lima were present. Also Present: Attorney Sam Bach Hanson, City Administrator Michael Golat, Assistant City Administrator Richard Downey, Police Chief Kelly Bakken, Planning Director Taylor Greenwell, and City Clerk Cindy Bauer.

Absent: Council Members Matthew Biren and Kaitlyn Leopold.

**(IV) Citizen Participation Period**

There being no Citizen Participation, motion by Lima/Stuber to close the Citizen Participation Period. **Motion carried.**

**(V) Approval of minutes.**

Motion by Stuber/Lima to approve the minutes of the January 12, 2023, Regular Council Meeting. **Motion carried.**

**(VI) City Officers/Department Heads Report**

City Administrator Golat reported on the following:

- Commented on that the Crokicurl Tournament will take place January 28, 2023 in River Prairie.

Police Chief Kelly Bakken introduced Evan Dieringer as the new full time Police Officer for the City of Altoona. Clerk Bauer gave Dieringer his official oath.

Police Chief Bakken reported the following:

- Working on the 2022 Annual Report and will be presented at a future Council Meeting.
- Gave an overview of the CSO program and commented on the primary tasks of a CSO.
- A full written report presented by Bakken is on file in the clerk's office.

**City Committee Reports – none.**

**(VII) Consent Agenda**

**Discuss/consider approval of Nathan Cardin as the new Agent for Eau Claire Golf & Country Club, Inc, DBA Eau Claire Golf & Country Club, located at 828 Clubview Ln, Altoona.**

City Clerk Bauer noted that the City was notified in writing by the Eau Claire Golf & Country Club that Nathan Cardin has been appointed to take over responsibilities of the Agent for the Eau Claire Golf & Country Club located at 828 Clubview Ln, Altoona, replacing Teofilo Badoc. The Eau Claire Golf & Country Club has submitted the necessary forms for appointing a new agent and has been approved by the Altoona Police Department.

Motion by Lima/Rowe to approve Consent Agenda Item 1. **Motion carried.**

**(VIII) Unfinished Business - None**

**(IX) New Business**

**(1) Discuss/consider approval of Resolution 1A-23, a Resolution Authorizing Vibrant Spaces Grant Application.**

Assistant City Administrator Richard Downey explained that the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC) has announced a local government grant opportunity to help local communities develop and enhance public spaces. This grant will provide up to 30 awards of \$25,000-\$50,000 each. Assistant City Administrator Downey noted that City Staff recommends applying for the vibrant spaces grant to enhance the amenities at the Altoona Container Park. There will be two items purchased under this grant. The City will apply for structure wraps for some of the sides of the containers on the outside of the container park. Designs are not finalized but will resemble the pictures as reflected in the Council Summary Packets. The thought is that the space can be activated with photo sites, and other art to enhance the park appearance.

Designs are not finalized but the wraps themselves will resemble the pictures below. The containers by their very nature will be corrugated “bumped out” portions every 6 inches. The purpose of this design is to give the Container more strength and to shed water from the roof to the sides of the Container. Assistant City Administrator Downey mentioned that he talked to one wrap vendor and it is possible to create the images we want, but the wraps will be longer than the sides we want as the wraps will go inside the corrugations. #

The second part of the grant will fund an interactive play system. Locally, Larson Orthodontics has one in their lobby, if Councilmembers are interested in seeing what they look like in person. The system projects an image on either a wall or a floor and patrons can play up to one-hundred different educational and recreational games. The system consists of a processor and a projector, and if mounted at ten feet high will provide a play field of eleven feet by six feet. The system is free for guests to use, can be scheduled to activate at night, and during special events can be locked so that it only shows the City of Altoona Logo, or other image, such as the Lions Club Logo if it is a Lions Club or other club event. Pictures of the system being used are below. One of the companies does run sales on the systems throughout the year, so the City may be able to purchase multiple systems that we can locate around the park for use by patrons. Prices for the system are normally \$12,500 but they are currently running a 60% off sale making the system only \$4,900. Downey discussed the funding for the City’s match with the Finance Director and if the City is awarded the grant, we would take the \$25,000 match out of the fund balance.

Motion by Rowe/Lima to approve Resolution 1A-23, a Resolution Authorizing Vibrant Spaces Grant Application for \$25,000 for amenities at the Altoona Container Park. **Motion carried.**

**(IX)(2) Discussion with Council regarding volunteers on a steering committee for Housing Study.**

Planning Director Taylor Greenwell explained that the Regional Housing Study with the City of Eau Claire and Eau Claire County is underway and are working on putting a steering committee together with 3-4 members from each jurisdiction. The purpose of the steering committee is to guide the project and serve as a sounding board for findings and draft strategies.

Planning Director Greenwell noted that as of today, the following members volunteered to serve on the steering committee for the Housing Study: Mayor Brendan Pratt, Council Members/Plan Commission Members Matt Biren and Sue Rowe. No action taken.

**(IX)(3) Discuss/consider funding related to the Northeast Utilities Extension project.**

City Administrator Golat explained that Council previously agreed to commit TID funds to extend utilities to serve property north of the Union Pacific Railroad in the northeast corner of the city. An exhibit depicting this extension and the properties involved was attached. Staff met again with the developer and adjacent property owners to discuss this project. Topics discussed during this meeting included funding and potential impact of special assessments on the adjacent property owners. The adjacent property owners are seeking reassurance that they will not be burdened by substantial special assessment fees, given that they may not connect to the utilities for some time. Items of note include the following.

**Funding Level.** Council previously agreed to commit up to \$850,000 for the cost to extend the utilities

into the development property. The amount is included in the TID #3 pro forma, and a budget amendment would be required to include the project in the 2023 budget. With the recent increase in costs, however, construction will likely exceed that amount.

Council may wish to consider the following options.

Current Designated TID Funds. Council has the authority per Section 3.02 - Tax Increment Financing to waive the cost to the developer if using TIF funds. The applicable section is as follows.

**3.02.040 Waiver of Costs.**

Any and all references throughout the City of Altoona Code regarding a developer being responsible for utilities and other infrastructure may be waived by the Common Council when aspects of the development are eligible to take part in the City's TIF District under this Chapter. Such decisions by the Common Council shall be done on a case-by-case basis. (Ord 1A-08, 2008)

By inference, the cost to the adjacent property owners would also be waived. The remaining cost above the committed funding level would need to be addressed, as discussed in the next section.

Increased TID Funding. If the cost of the project exceeds \$850,000, Council may wish to consider increasing the funding level to cover the entire cost of the utility extensions into the development property. This would address the concerns of the adjacent property owners with respect to special assessments for costs incurred above what is budgeted.

Excess Cost. If Council chooses to not increase the funding level to cover excess construction cost, two options may be available.

Special Assessments. Chapter 3.24 covers the special assessment process. The excess cost could be assessed to the adjacent property owners consistent with code. The special assessment cost would, comparatively, be significantly less than the typical cost levied against property owners. Deferral of the assessments is an option, as outlined in the following paragraph.

**3.24.100 Deferred assessments.**

A. If the city council wishes to postpone the due date of special assessments while no use of the improvement is made, it should state the terms and conditions of such postponement in the final resolution.

B. If such deferment is granted, it shall be deferment of principal only; the property owner must make yearly payments of the interest on the principal. Interest on special assessments shall be equal to the interest the city paid on the bond issue for the given project, or if debt has not been issued for the project on the date of the final special assessment resolution or debt is not being issued for the project, then the annual interest shall equal the interest rate the city would be charged for general borrowing on the date the final resolution is adopted. A 2% administrative fee will be added on to required payments beginning with the due date of payments starting November 1, 2025 and moving forward. (part Ord 4C-20, 2020)

C. The period of deferment may not exceed ten years from the date of the final resolution, except where annual installment payments are authorized.

D. Any such special assessments shall be a lien against the property from the date of the levy, and shall be paid in full before or at the time of transfer or sale of the property. (Ord. 7E-83 (part), 1983; Ord. 11D-81, 1981; Ord. 9 (part), 1977)

Cost Recovery through Development Agreement. A more streamlined approach to recouping the additional construction cost could be addressed through a Development Agreement, wherein the developer would pay back the additional cost through installments outside of the special assessment process.

Other Items to Consider

1. The schedule for moving this project forward is time-sensitive, as the window to utilize TID funds closes later this year.

2. The process involved includes annexation, TID amendment, easement acquisition from the railroad and construction commencement.
3. Development of the noted property is conservatively anticipated to result in approximately \$35,000,000 in additional tax base consisting of a mix of multi-family, twin home and single-family dwelling units. The project also creates the opportunity for more development to the east and south.

A representative on behalf of Jason Gripentrog was present to answer any questions Council had regarding the proposed property.

Motion by Lima/Rowe to waive any assessments to the three properties owned by the Planert's (two south of the railroad tracks, one north of the railroad tracks) or subsequent owners of subject properties, for water and sewer mains extended adjacent to these properties; said waiver due to the source of project funding being TID #3 funds. **Motion carried.**

**(IX)(4) Discuss/consider convening in closed session pursuant to Wis. Stats 19.85 (1)(e) deliberating or negotiating the purchasing of public properties, the investing of public funds, or conducting other specified public business, whenever competitive or bargaining reasons require a closed session.**

**A. Purchase of Lot 2, Hillcrest Parkway.**

Motion by Lima/Stuber to convene in closed session at 6:37 p.m. Roll call vote, 4-ayes, Stuber, Lima, Olson, Rowe, 0-nays. **Motion carried 4-0.**

**(IX)(5) Motion to reconvene to Open Session for the purpose of discussion and possible consideration on the matter entertained in Closed Session.**

Motion by Rowe/Lima to reconvene in open session at 6:52 p.m. Roll call vote, 4-ayes, Rowe, Lima, Stuber, Olson, 0-nays. **Motion carried 4-0.**

City Administrator Golat reported that there was discussion for possible purchase of property. No action taken.

**(X) Miscellaneous Business and Communication.**

City Administrator Golat commented that talks continue with Eau Claire Fire Department regarding the Ambulance Service.

**(XI) Adjournment.**

Motion by Lima/Rowe to adjourn at 6:54 p.m. **Motion carried.**

Minutes submitted by Cindy Bauer, City Clerk