

**Present:** Allman, Harrington, Mapes, Mott, Piccolo, Pitt & Stahl.

**Absent:** None.

**Work Session began at 5:30 p.m.**

City Manager Schooley presented the September 6, 2019 Newsletter for discussion.

### **Agenda Items**

#### **Employee Manual**

The final version of the Employee Manual had been previously sent to you for your reading pleasure. The plan is to give a short presentation tonight for the manual functionality and some key points. This is a large document and I do not expect that you will have had sufficient time to look it over by the meeting on Tuesday. We will present it to the Commission for approval at the first October meeting after everyone has had time to process the document.

Mayor Mapes asked if the Commission needs to approve the manual since it is an operational tool for the City. City Attorney Costanzo will check on this.

City Manager also reminded the Commission that the new website will be live on September 16, 2019 along with the new Alma.net. Alma.net will be the Internal website for Commissioners and employees to receive communications, download forms, post agendas, newsletters and minutes.

#### **Iowa Street Traffic Study and Recommendation**

A traffic study was conducted by the police department on August 26, 27, and 28<sup>th</sup>. Officers monitored traffic in the early morning and afternoon hours corresponding with school times. Over the course of the monitoring, 113 cars were sampled. The highest speed logged was 36 mph and the lowest speed was 13 mph. 2 vehicles were traveling at or above the 30 mph, for an enforcement rate of 1.7%.

### **Information**

#### **Brooke Siefka Completes MCAT Certification**

I am pleased to inform the Commission that Brooke Siefka recently attained her Michigan Certified Assessing Technician designation from the Department of Treasury. To obtain the certification Brooke attended a course on basic education in assessment administration and was required to pass an exam administered by the State Tax Commission. Congratulations to Brooke for this achievement. We hope this is the beginning of a meaningful career for Brooke in the Assessing field. We are happy to have her here as member of our team.

#### **MSU Extension: Connecting Entrepreneurial Communities Conference**

I believe everyone received the invitation from MSU Extension for the Connecting Entrepreneurial Communities conference that takes place in Ludington in October. I have heard very good things about this conference from past years. Shortly after receiving this flyer for the conference I was contacted by Diane Longanbach from MSU Extension. Diane is a member of the team that coordinates this conference, and a Gratiot County resident. Diane expressed an interest in having Alma be a host site for this conference in the next year or two. She stated it would be great to showcase all of the things we have been working on here in the middle of the state. Needless to say, I told her I was excited to look into the prospect of hosting such an event in the city. I believe it would be a great conference for our community leaders to attend with the added bonus of showing support for potentially hosting. I understand this is short notice and you all have busy schedules. I would like to put a team from Alma together to attend. I have asked the Admin Team to check their schedules as well as some key community members. As of today, we have 7 potential attendees from the Admin Team and community members.

If you are interested in attending, please let me or Sheila know so we can make arrangements.

## **Work Sessions**

Work sessions are intended to provide opportunities for Commission members to study difficult issues, gather and analyze information, and clarify problems. These sessions can be the vehicle for addressing major issues more effectively. They can also provide opportunities for members to focus on long-term decisions rather than the day-to-day management issues that confront the city. Presumably they should make regular sessions more productive and shorter. Work sessions can also help members relate better to one another because of the greater informality of such sessions. The approach I would like to propose is to have quarterly work sessions for planning purposes and major projects. Goal-setting, budget review and other major development proposals are examples of what would be discussed in these quarterly sessions. Commission members would be encouraged to bring specific topics to the City Manager for research in advance of each work session. I am proposing that work sessions be set for January, April, July, and October of each year. Dates are set ahead of time and proper notice is given to the public. Keep in mind the general public may not be aware of the difference between the regular meeting and a work session. While the public must be given the opportunity to address the Commission under the Open Meetings Act, it must be made clear to those in attendance that the purpose of the meeting is to study issues – not take any action.

I would continue to present the Commission with a newsletter as a part of each Commission meeting. It could be received as a part of all department reports.

There was some discussion about meeting days and times that I feel would better fit the first organizational meeting in January. Maybe we could talk about it at the work session in October.

## **Street Construction Update**

Construction of Hannah Avenue between Michigan Ave. & Ferris St. is now complete, and the street is open to through traffic. The City of Alma Engineering Department would like to thank the residents along this street for their patience, understanding, and cooperation during the project and Crawford Contracting as well as their sub-contractors for their quality of workmanship and rapid progress to complete the street reconstruction projects. We would also like to thank Engineering Technician Kristine Saia for her hard work during long hours, attention to detail, and working with residents to address their concerns and working with them to improve their drive approaches.

Construction has begun on Pleasant Avenue between Rosedale St. and Eastward St. and is ongoing. The watermain has been placed and has passed both pressure and bacterial tests. The contractor is now installing the new sanitary sewer main. Once the sanitary sewer is installed, they will move on to storm sewer work before moving on to road building and the placement of the new sidewalk. Weather and sub-contractor scheduling permitting, this project will likely wrap up in early October.

Without the help of quality staff as well as contractors, these projects would not move forward as quickly as they do and with the high-quality of the final product. We cannot emphasize enough as to the importance of quality contractors to perform these types of projects because it greatly reduces resident's complaints, anxieties, and making necessary and special accommodations whenever possible for particular situations.

## **East-West Alley Between Wheeler Avenue and Sharrar Avenue**

Public Works Director David Ringle gave a presentation on this alley connection project.

Over the past few years, a number of residents in the areas around Wheeler & Sharrar Avenues have voiced concerns over the condition of the existing driving surface at the north end between the two streets. Adding to their frustrations is the fact that the existing driving surface is on private property, owned by Shiloh Industries and because of that, the City cannot maintain private property, so maintenance of any means is problematic. In the Spring of 2018, the property owner at the south-west corner of the alley and Sharrar contacted the City and expressed complaints over vehicles trying to avoid the washouts and potholes and were driving on the north edge

of what he thought to be his property but is indeed and undeveloped City of Alma right-of-way. It is also difficult for vehicles to make that corner and stay on the narrow existing driving surface and the wheels of vehicles consistently travel approx. 18-24 inches into the terrace and leave wheel marks. Over the Summer of 2018 and into the Fall that same year, the City was in contact with Shiloh and requested an easement over the current driving path so that we could make basic improvements on the current driving surface. However, Shiloh respectfully declined and understandably did not want the public driving on their property for liability reasons.

With the current drive path not being open for public use, this unfortunately creates two dead-end streets (Wheeler Ave. & Sharrar Ave.) within the City which presents a number of problems and undue hardship for Public Safety, ambulances, and other first responders, the public, and City of Alma crews. For F.Y. 2020, the Public Services Department budgeted \$25,000 to re-construct a gravel driving surface within the 25 ft. wide City right-of-way to allow for the necessary connector between Wheeler and Sharrar Ave. Director Ringle respectfully request the need for the City to move forward with this proposed project. He would like to put this project in our Fall construction season and use the current Capital Improvement Project contractor to obtain the needed sand and gravel at the rate that was contracted for the Capital Improvement Project.

The September 10, 2019, City Commission work session concluded at 6:09 p.m.

**Alma, Michigan**  
**September 10, 2019**

Mayor Mapes called a regular meeting of the Alma City Commission to order at 6:10 p.m. at the Alma Municipal Building.

**Present:** Allman, Harrington, Mapes, Mott, Piccolo, Pitts & Stahl.

**Absent:** None.

Mayor Mapes asked the City Commission and members of the audience to stand and recite the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

Motion by Commissioner Piccolo as supported by Commissioner Mott to approve the Amendment to the Agenda to enter into executive session to discuss property matters.

**Yes:** Allman, Harrington, Mapes, Mott, Piccolo, Pitts & Stahl.

**No:** None.

Motion by Commissioner Pitts as supported by Commissioner Allman to approve the minutes of the August 27, 2019 regular meeting.

**Yes:** Allman, Harrington, Mapes, Mott, Piccolo, Pitts & Stahl.

**No:** None.

Motion by Commissioner Piccolo as supported by Vice-Mayor Harrington to set a Public Hearing for Tuesday, September 24, 2019 at 6:00 p.m. to consider a request from Avalon & Tahoe Manufacturing, Inc. for a PA 198 Industrial Facilities Tax Exemption Certificate.

**Yes:** Allman, Harrington, Mapes, Mott, Piccolo, Pitts & Stahl.

**No:** None.

Motion by Vice-Mayor Harrington as supported by Commissioner Pitts to approve a request for purchase in the amount of \$37,907.26 to Terex for the rebuild of the Public Works Boom Truck (High Ranger) and related components.

**Yes:** Allman, Harrington, Mapes, Mott, Piccolo, Pitts & Stahl.

**No:** None.

The following preamble and resolution was offered by Commissioner Allman as supported by Commissioner Piccolo:

**Whereas**, on September 27, 2011 the Public Funded Health Insurance Contribution Act also known as Public Act 152 of 2011 became effective; and

**Whereas** the new law requires public employers either contribute less than the “hard cap” towards the medical benefit plan or that the employees of the public employer contribute at least 20% of the cost of the medical plan; and,

**Whereas**, the City of Alma contributes significantly less than the “hard cap” towards the medical benefit plan and is in compliance with the new law; and,

**Whereas**, there are financial penalties for failing to properly comply with the law; and,

**Whereas**, the Alma City Commission endeavors to protect the City of Alma’s financial interests and to limit future costs related to proving compliance,

**Now Therefore Be It Resolved** that pursuant to Section 8 of Public Act 152 of 2011, the City of Alma hereby exempts itself from the requirements of Public Act 152 of 2011 for the calendar year 2020.

**Yes:** Allman, Harrington, Mapes, Mott, Piccolo, Pitts & Stahl.

**No:** None.

Motion by Commissioner Piccolo as supported by Vice-Mayor Harrington to proclaim Constitution Week. Constitution Day is September 17, 2019 and Constitution week is from 9-17 through 9-23-19. This recognizes the Constitution’s 232<sup>nd</sup> anniversary of the framing of the Constitution. This week is proclaimed each year by the President of the United state to recognize the constitution and its Framers.

**Yes:** Allman, Harrington, Mapes, Mott, Piccolo, Pitts & Stahl.

**No:** None.

Motion by Commissioner Pitts as supported by Commissioner Piccolo to adopt Ordinance #814 to amend the Zoning Map of the City of Alma as it appears in Section 32-32 of the Ordinances of the City of Alma. This Ordinance is to conditionally rezone the property at 303 Valley Avenue, from LI, Limited Industrial District to B2, General Business District, and be subject to the conditions set forth in the Conditional Rezoning Agreement.

**Yes:** Allman, Harrington, Mapes, Mott, Piccolo, Pitts & Stahl.

**No:** None.

Motion by Commissioner Pitts as supported by Commissioner Piccolo to approve the resolution authorizing the execution of a Conditional Rezoning Agreement between the City of Alma and Ricky Campbell, Valley Street Rentals, LTD, property owner, which conditionally rezones the property located at 303 Valley Avenue from LI, Limited Industrial District to B2 General Business District.

**Yes:** Allman, Harrington, Mapes, Mott, Piccolo, Pitts & Stahl.

**No:** None.

Motion by Commissioner Allman as supported by Commissioner Piccolo to approve the resolution authorizing the execution of Michigan Department of Transportation Contract No. 2019-0625 for the State Trunk Line Maintenance for the period October 1, 2019 through September 30, 2024 and to authorize the Mayor and City Clerk to execute the agreement on behalf of the City of Alma.

**Yes:** Allman, Harrington, Mapes, Mott, Piccolo, Pitts & Stahl.

**No:** None.

Motion by Commissioner Allman as supported by Vice-Mayor Harrington to receive the following reports and place them on file: Alma Transportation Center August 2019 Report; Building Permit August 2019 Report and the Planning Commission meeting minutes of August 5, 2019.

**Yes:** Allman, Harrington, Mapes, Mott, Piccolo, Pitt & Stahl.

**No:** None.

City Manager Schooley presented the Personnel Policy Manual revised as of September 2019, the myalma.org website and the Alma.net website to the Commission. The Alma.net will be the Internal communication among City Staff, Commissioners and other Boards members. It is internet based and access will be giving by user name and password. Policy and procedures and the Personnel Policy Manual will be available on the site. Acknowledgement of changes to policies will be part of the site to make sure the changes have been seen. We will be monitoring both the myalma.org and the Alma.net to keep both sites current. Agendas and newsletters will be on the Alma.net site. Forms, memos and informational documents will also be pages on the site. We will be going live on September 16, 2019. The myalma.org will be the new Public website. This site will be more user friendly to find the information needed.

Motion by Commissioner Allman as supported by Commissioner Piccolo to approve Warrant No. 20-05 and to authorize the City Treasurer to issue checks in payment of all claims.

**Yes:** Allman, Harrington, Mapes, Mott, Piccolo, Pitts & Stahl.

**No:** None.

Mayor Mapes asked for Commissioner comments.

Vice- Mayor Harrington commented that a great job was done by everyone on the new website.

Commissioner Allman stated that Lucky MacDuck was very successful. The Cyclocross was also well attended.

Commissioner Stahl sent out congratulations to Brooke Siefka on her certification. She is excited about the new website. September is Suicide Prevention Month and today is World Wide Suicide Prevention Day and at Child Advocacy they are supporting this cause and hope that persons reach out to get help. The Gratiot Integrated Health Network has a 24/7 hotline for persons to contact at 989-463-4971.

Commissioner Pitts reminded that Keep Alma Beautiful Clean Up day is Saturday 9 to Noon, meeting at the Chamber Office. The Alma High School Friday football game is Military Appreciation Day. We will get to see the High School band's new uniforms and September is also Childhood Cancer Awareness Month.

City Manager Schooley noted that City Staff had a lot of input into the new website and will be taking ownership of their department's pages.

Mayor Mapes looks forward to the website. He thanks Kathrine Phillips, Finance Director for her work that she presented to the Finance Committee.

Mayor Mapes opened the floor for Public Comments.

Laurie Wilson, St. Louis would like us all to remember the falling firefighters and police officers of 911, the anniversary is tomorrow.

Lynn Ludy, 111 Wheeler reported that again the Used Book Sale is scheduled for next week. September 17, 18, 19

and 20<sup>th</sup>. There will be over 20,000 books for sale. The proceeds go for scholarships to those returning to college to get their degrees.

Tim Lambrecht, County Commissioner reported on Gratiot County activities. A Criminal Justice Reform Study is underway. The budget is final and because of a request of a \$750,000 payment to the retirement system to fund their unfunded Liability, the budget is in the red by \$500,000. The wind projects are coming on line. The County will be doing an Airport Study to know what the Liability would be for the County if they took over the administration of the Airport. Discussions are still going on with coming up with a plan on how to Fund City's Parks with the Park millage.

Motion by Commissioner Piccolo as supported by Commissioner Allman to have City Clerk Letourneau take a Roll Call vote to enter into executive session to discuss property matters at 7:00 p.m.

**Roll Call Vote**

**Yes:** Allman, Harrington, Mapes, Mott, Piccolo, Pitts & Stahl.

**No:** None.

Returned to the regular meeting at 7:26 p.m.

With no further action from the Commission, Mayor Mapes asked for a motion to adjourn.

Motion by Commissioner Allman as supported by Commissioner Piccolo to adjourn the meeting at 7:26 p.m.

**Yes:** Allman, Harrington, Mapes, Mott, Piccolo, Pitts & Stahl.

**No:** None.

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Gregory S. Mapes

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Sheila Letourneau, City Clerk