

Mayor Nyman called a regular meeting of the Alma City Commission to order at 6:00 p.m. at the Alma Municipal Building.

**Present:** Ayers, Comer, Dancer, Legene, Mapes, Moes, & Nyman.

**Absent:** None.

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

Motion by Commissioner Mapes seconded by Commissioner Comer to approve the minutes of the November 13, 2007 regular meeting as submitted.

**Yes:** Ayers, Comer, Dancer, Legene, Mapes, Moes, & Nyman.

**No:** None.

Motion by Commissioner Ayers seconded by Commissioner Comer to receive a communication from Michigan Municipal Rick Management Authority advising that the Alma Public Library has received a RAP funding grant for an amount up to \$1,640 for the Library digital cameras and security project.

**Yes:** Ayers, Comer, Dancer, Legene, Mapes, Moes, & Nyman.

**No:** None.

A Public hearing to consider an Industrial Facilities Tax Exemption Certificate request for Terry Asphalt Materials, Inc was held at 6:03 p.m. Brian Dancer, City Assessor presented the following information to the City Commission. Terry Asphalt Materials, Inc, 1950 Williams receives various grades of asphalt cements from refiners and blends the various grades together to prepare finished products, which meet various state and federal specifications for the road paving industry. Terry Asphalt Materials, Inc. has installed equipment to process various types of polymers and additives into the blended asphalt cements. These modifications are necessary in order to meet several of the Michigan Department of Transportation, as well as Federal, specifications for performance graded asphalt cements which are also used in road paving. The project consists of construction of a concrete dike area for installation of two 9,800 gallon diluent tanks. Pump and process lines to be constructed to the emulsion mill area for the manufacture of emulsion asphalts. All work to be done in accordance to MDEQ and NFPA 30 on storage and handling of flammable/combustible liquid. One additional tank will be purchased and installed in 2008. The estimated installation cost of the machinery and equipment will be \$70,680.99. The time schedule for start to finish of the equipment installation is from May 7, 2007 through May 1, 2008. Terry Materials plans to retain one existing job as a result of this project and create one additional job within two years of the project completion.

There being no further questions or comments, the public hearing was closed.

Motion by Commissioner Mapes seconded by Commissioner Legene to close the public hearing at 6:06 p.m.

**Yes:** Ayers, Comer, Dancer, Legene, Mapes, Moes, & Nyman.

**No:** None.

The following preamble and resolution was offered by Vice-Mayor Moes seconded by Commissioner Comer:

**Whereas**, application has been made by Terry Asphalt & Materials Inc. to the City of Alma for an Industrial Facilities Tax Exemption Certificate under P.A. 198, and

**Whereas**, on July 20, 1980, an Industrial Development District was established by the Alma City Commission, and

**Whereas**, the District is described as follows:

COM AT NE COR OF SE 3 SEC 35-12-3, WEST 120 RDS S 75 S E ABOUT 25 RDS TO NORTH LINE OR PMRR RIGHT OF WAY THENCE N EASTERLY ALONG SAID RR TO E LINE OF SAID SECTION, THENCE N ABOUT 20 RDS TO BEGINNING 40 ACRES MORE OR LESS, EXCEPT COMM AT A PT 768.3 FT E 66.0 FT S OF N COR OF INTERSECTION OF MICH AVE AND WILLIAMS ST TH E ALONG THE S LINE OF WILLIAMS ST, 844.8 FT S 975.9 FT TO THE N RIGHT OF WAY LINE OF PMRR TH S 60° 52' W ALONG THE N RIGHT OF WAY LINE OF PMRR 465.4 FT TH W 438.3 FT N 1197.7 FT TO PT OF BEG CONTAINING 15.71 ACRES MORE OR LESS (1950 Williams Road, Property No. 29-51-353-252-00).

**Whereas**, it appears that each legislative body which levies an ad valorem tax against the property above described has been notified and afforded an opportunity for hearing, and

**Whereas**, the Alma City Commission finds and determines that the granting of the Industrial Facilities Exemption Certificates previously granted and currently in force under Act 198 of P.A. 174 and Act 244 of P.A. 1978, shall not have the effect of substantially impeding the operation of the City of Alma or impairing the financial soundness of a taxing unit which levies ad valorem property taxes in the City of Alma.

**Whereas**, it appears that approval of the said Terry Asphalt & Materials Inc., application for an Industrial Facilities Exemption Certificate would be beneficial both to the taxpayer and to the general economic development of the community, and

**Whereas**, it appears that the said Terry Asphalt & Materials Inc. has complied with Section 9 of Act 198 of the Public Act 1974 in its entirety with regard to the Industrial Development District set for the above.

**Now, Therefore Be It Resolved**, that the application of said Terry Asphalt & Materials Inc. for an Industrial Facilities Tax Exemption Certificate for the District be hereby approved, for a period of not more than five years from December 31, 2008.

**Be It Further Resolved that** a copy of this Resolution be forwarded to the State Tax Commission forthwith.

**Yes:** Ayers, Comer, Dancer, Legene, Mapes, Moes, & Nyman.

**No:** None.

**Resolution declared adopted.**

Motion by Commissioner Mapes seconded by Commissioner Dancer to adopt a resolution authorizing Mayor Nyman and City Clerk Gager to execute the PA 198 Tax Exemption Certificate Agreement on behalf of the City of Alma.

**Yes:** Ayers, Comer, Dancer, Legene, Mapes, Moes, & Nyman.

**No:** None.

A public hearing was held at 6:07 p.m. to discuss the Alma Community Center. City Manager Phillip Moore addressed the City Commission and audience and presented a brief report on the status of the Community Center. In 1954 City of Alma voters approved a millage for construction and operation of the pool/community center. The pool and Community Center were built in 1956 and operated on a millage until 1971 when Alma Public Schools passed recreation and community education millage and took over the operation of the Community Center and Community Education & Recreation program. In 1992, the City sold the facility to the school system for \$1. In 1995, the millage for recreation disappears and after that is supported by program fees and volunteers. In 2005, Alma Public Schools sold the facility back to the City for \$1.

Mr. Moore advised that the building is in very bad shape and is in need of major repairs. He presented several options for consideration.

1. Basic Fix-up: would require roof replacement; electrical updates, HVAC system replacement; ADA accessibility, at a cost of ~\$376,000.
2. The second option would include the previous along with windows and doors replacement; exterior and interior enhancements; and improvement of the roofing structure, at a cost of ~\$882,000.
3. The third option includes demolition and rebuilding of the Community Center at a cost of ~\$1.4 million.

Mr. Moore also offered several other options, including:

1. Alternative locations, which would eliminate capital costs;
2. Use of other facilities in the community including the Library, old MESC office, schools, churches, college, etc.; focus on programming side;
3. Leasing the Community Center, although capital improvements remain an issue and the City would need to retain control of parking.

4. Selling the Community Center would present several problems since the west half of parcel is a City park; sale of park requires vote of the people; lack of parking would create a non-conforming use; and the may be a ZBA issue for library parking.
5. Demolition of the Community Center would offer the following: expansion of the library parking lot and elimination of future operational costs at a cost of ~\$70,000.
6. Maintaining the Community Center would require staffing (2.5 employees); utilities; insurance; supplies; and maintenance and an annual Budget subsidy of \$117,000.

The annual Budget required for the Community Center would be \$170,000 to \$235,000 and require ~1.5 to 2 mills from voters. Mr. Moore also outlined the main issues to consider: Do we want programming and if so, who pays? Also, should community education and recreation be a City of Alma, regional or County-wide program? Should the programming be based at the Community Center? Do we think the taxpayers would be willing to support 2 mills for facilities and programming? Mr. Moore asked the Commission what staff should do as far as winterizing the facility? Turn heat down to 50 degrees, blow out the pipes and hope for the best. If considering demolition, just turn off utilities. Commissioner Mapes asked if the pipe infrastructure is even worth saving? Ron Turner advised that most of the piping is under the floor and if the building is going to be salvaged, we need to preserve the plumbing. Commissioner Legene questioned whether the building could even be leased in the condition it is in. City Attorney Fortino said that he has had inquiries as to why the City doesn't sell the property and put it back on the tax rolls. Parking would be an issue.

Jeff Cook, 201 Westview Dr., Alma, addressed the City Commission. Mr. Cook is a life-long resident of the City of Alma and 33-year business owner. Mr. Cook worked at the community center and pool in the late 60's, early 70's. Mr. Cook advised that he has many fond memories of the community center, but believes it would be ludicrous to put any money into the building. The facility is inefficient and was even inefficient back in the 60's. There are many alternative places available for community recreation. He asked that if the building were to be demolished, is there some material that could be salvaged and sold.

Ken Kline, Ken's Culligan in downtown Alma said he thinks the figures presented by the City Manager are inflated. Business owners in the downtown area are expected to restore and preserve their buildings, why shouldn't the City with the community center. He feels the building has a historical value and that the City should get bids from contractors for restoration.

Motion by Commissioner Ayers seconded by Commissioner Legene to close the public hearing at 6:38 p.m.

Mayor Nyman asked if there were any further questions or comments before the vote was taken on closing the public hearing.

Commissioner Mapes said the City needs to determine how we would use the building. He does not think that the City could get bids until we knew what the building would be used for. It would be unfair to ask contractors to submit bids for a project that may never come to fruition.\

Mr. Kline said he thought the building could be restored and used for receptions and reunions.

Commissioner Mapes advised that under the previous users, the building was available for parties, but there was not enough interest to sustain this use. Overall, the building is not structurally sound.

Commissioner Legene advised he would not want to go to taxpayers and ask for a millage to sustain the facility.

**Yes:** Ayers, Comer, Dancer, Legene, Mapes, Moes & Nyman.

**No:** None.

City Manager Moore asked the Commission for direction on how to winterize. Mayor Nyman said he would like to see the heat turned down. Commissioner Mapes said he would like to see the heat shut off, the pipes blown out. He felt that the piping in the facility would not be what would be needed, and if and when the City would bring the building out of mothballs, renovations would be inevitable. Mr. Mapes asked that if any group has any interest in the building to please come forward as soon as possible.

City Manager advised that it would cost approximately \$5,400 this winter to minimally heat the building.

Motion by Commissioner Mapes seconded by Commissioner Dancer to direct City staff to turn heat off, antifreeze lines and put building in mothballs until a final decision on the building can be made.

**Yes:** Ayers, Comer, Dancer, Legene, Mapes, Moes & Nyman.

**No:** None.

Motion by Commissioner Comer seconded by Commissioner Ayers to approve the following items on the Consent Agenda for payment: \$5,070 to Gratiot Area Chamber of Commerce for Employee Attendance merit awards; \$2,052 to Michigan Precast Company for various size cemetery foundations for use at the Riverside Cemetery; \$3,223.65 to Morning Star Publishing Company for October publications; \$2,846.75 to Fennell Subscription Service for Alma Public Library annual subscription renewal; \$3,945.67 to White Pine Library Cooperative for annual member ship fee for Alma Public Library; \$3,033.01 to The Tharpe Company, Inc. for annual Employee Service awards.

**Yes:** Ayers, Comer, Dancer, Legene, Mapes, Moes, & Nyman.

**No:** None.

Motion by Vice-Mayor Moes seconded by Commissioner Mapes to approve the request to purchase from Etna Supply Company in the amount of \$2,989.03 one four-inch turbo meter w/flanges and MXU for Scottsdale Estates. Scottsdale Estates has reimbursed the City 100% for this purchase.

**Yes:** Ayers, Comer, Dancer, Legene, Mapes, Moes, & Nyman.

**No:** None.

Motion by Commissioner Ayers seconded by Commissioner Comer to approve the request to purchase from System Specialties in the amount of \$11,177 one electro-hydraulic actuator for a high service pump at the Water Treatment Plant.

**Yes:** Ayers, Comer, Dancer, Legene, Mapes, Moes, & Nyman.

**No:** None.

Motion by Commissioner Ayers seconded by Commissioner Mapes to approve the request to purchase from Brown Equipment in the amount of \$4,160 two Taco impellers to replace impellers on the leaf machines.

**Yes:** Ayers, Comer, Dancer, Legene, Mapes, Moes, & Nyman.

**No:** None.

Motion by Commissioner Legene seconded by Commissioner Dancer to approve the request to engage Lott Construction in the amount of \$2,433 to enclose the central office at the Public Services Garage.

**Yes:** Ayers, Comer, Dancer, Legene, Mapes, Moes, & Nyman.

**No:** None.

Motion by Commissioner Mapes seconded by Commissioner Comer to adopt a resolution authorizing the execution of a Section 5311 Operating Assistance Contract with the Michigan Department of Transportation (#2007-0158/Z2) to provide quarterly federal operational funding to the City of Alma DART system and to authorize Mayor Nyman and City Clerk Gager to execute the agreement on behalf of the City of Alma.

**Yes:** Ayers, Comer, Dancer, Legene, Mapes, Moes, & Nyman.

**No:** None.

Motion by Commissioner Ayers seconded by Commissioner Dancer to receive the following reports and place them on file: Alma Housing Commission meeting minutes of October 23, 2007; Alma Downtown Development Authority meeting minutes of October 11, 2007; Alma Public Library Board meeting minutes of September 27, 2007; Friends of the Alma Public Library meeting minutes of October 17, 2007; October financial statements.

**Yes:** Ayers, Comer, Dancer, Legene, Mapes, Moes, & Nyman.

**No:** None.

Motion by Commissioner Legene seconded by Commissioner Comer to approve Warrant No. 08-10 and to authorize the City Treasurer to issue checks in payment of all claims.

**Yes:** Ayers, Comer, Dancer, Legene, Mapes, Moes, & Nyman.

**No:** None.

Commissioner Dancer reminded everyone of the upcoming "Come Home to Alma for the Holidays" on December 14, 2007 from 5 – 9 p.m.

Commissioner Legene thanked everyone for their comments on the Community Center.

Vice-Mayor Moes asked if the leaf program was still in progress. City Manager Moore advised that the program ends tomorrow, but a third pass through the City would be done, weather permitting.

Commissioner Ayers asked for further input from citizens on the Community Center. He also encouraged everyone to contact the Governor and legislators about supporting the Great Lakes Energy Park.

Commissioner Mapes advised that the addresses for Governor and legislators are on the web. He thanked the public for their input on the Community Center and Terry Materials for their commitment to the community.

Commissioner Comer advised that on December 14, The Bookshops will be hosting the annual "Rescue a Cop from the Donut Shop" fund raiser for the Police Athletic League. She asked for everyone's support.

City Attorney Fortino encouraged people to contact the City Manager regarding community center. He also asked everyone to contact the governor and legislators regarding the GLERP; we can be sure that they are hearing from Consumers and DTE. Imperative that they hear from their constituents.

City Manager Moore thanked the Street Department for the great job they have done with the leaf pickup program. Mr. Moore advised that there have been no prison crews this year; they only have crew of five men that have done all the work this year.

Mayor Nyman also thanked the hard work of all the City departments and those that participated in the public hearing. He also encouraged everyone to contact the governor and legislators.

Matt Muxlow, aide to State Senator Roger Kahn, advised everyone that the energy park is not a dead issue. The Senator has been working on it for months and will be unveiling legislation to make Michigan a leader in clean energy. They are encouraging the governor to become more visible and supportive of this project and assured everyone that this project is a top priority in Senator Kahn's office.

Mayor Nyman reminded everyone that the energy park is not just an Alma project; it is a state-wide project.

Mitch Irwin, Great Lakes Energy Research Park associate thanked the City for their support. He advised that he had just come from a meeting with Senator Carl Levin regarding the project and what it would mean for the state. He said there has been increased activity at the federal level and thanked Congressman Camp, and Senators Levin and Stabenow and the Michigan legislators for their support to obtain the tax credits for the energy park.

Motion by Vice-Mayor Moes seconded by Commissioner Legene to adjourn the meeting at 7:08 p.m.

**Yes:** Ayers, Comer, Dancer, Legene, Mapes, Moes, & Nyman.

**No:** None.

Melvin A. Nyman, Mayor

Barbara A. Gager, City Clerk