

**REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING  
CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS, CITY OF ALBERT LEA  
August 11, 2025 – 7:00 P.M.**

**PRESENT:** Mayor Rich Murray, Councilors Rachel Christensen, Larry Baker, Jason Howland, Reid Olson, Keith Van Beek, Brian Anderson, City Manager Ian Rigg, Public Works Director Steven Jahnke, City Attorney Joel Holstad of Lakes National Law LLP, and City Clerk Daphney Maras.

**ADDITIONAL STAFF PRESENT:** Sergeant-at-Arms-Police Chief Darren Hanson, Building/Zoning Official Wayne Sorensen

**CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL** - Mayor Murray called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM. City Clerk Maras administered roll call.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE** - Mayor Murray asked all in attendance to stand and recite the Pledge of Allegiance.

**CEREMONIAL ITEMS** – None

**PUBLIC FORUM**

Bill Howe spoke regarding his opposition of the legalization of cannabis.

Jerry Collins spoke on behalf of supporting local cannabis operators versus outside corporations.

Lana Howe spoke regarding her opposition to the legalization of cannabis

Aaron Boshart – He is the consultant representing Cristina Aranguiz, owner of Black Husky. He provided background and history on Ms. Aranguiz' ownership of businesses.

Eva Larson – Spoke of the condition of the house at 1316 S. Broadway Ave.

Chris Gracia Sr. – Owner of Matchbox Farms MN, LLC introduced himself and acknowledged that legal cannabis can be a controversial topic and respects everyone's opinion. He looks forward to providing high-quality regulated cannabis to adults who choose to use it. They look forward to being a part of the community.

Elijah Quigley commented on the bad behavior of some of the council members at the last council meeting. Next, he spoke of moderate to low independence of cannabis products.

Sue Williams – Spoke regarding her opposition to the legalization of cannabis in this community.

Kurt Harmony – Founder and owner of Midwest Legacy Seeds, located in Austin, MN. He spoke of his support for cannabis businesses.

Craig Rosell – Reported CDC statistics related to the dangers and fatalities associated with alcohol, as opposed to no reported fatalities related to marijuana.

### **CONSENT AND APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

- A. Approve Minutes of the July 28, 2025 Regular Council Meeting
- B. Approve Minutes of the July 28, 2025 Work Session
- C. License & Permits
- D. Resolution Approving Minnesota Energy Resources Corporation Utility Easement - Frank Hall Park – ROW Permit 2023-7
- E. Resolution in Support of Minnesota Highway Freight Program Grant Application for the Interstate 35/Interstate 90 and Interstate 35/East Main Street Freight Safety Project - 2025 Misc. 27
- F. Resolution Approving Minnesota Department of Transportation Two-Year Maintenance Agreement No. 1060154 – 2025.189

Motion made by Councilor Baker to approve the consent agenda as read, seconded by Councilor Howland. On voice call vote, the following councilors voted in favor of said motion: Christensen, Baker, Howland, Olson, Van Beek, Anderson, and Mayor Murray. Mayor Murray declared the motion passed.

(See Secretary's Original Resolution 25-125 through 25-127  
Included with these minutes)

### **PETITIONS, REQUESTS AND COMMUNICATIONS** - None

### **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

#### **A. Ordinance 25-143 Amending Chapter 46 – Vegetation, Article II. – Weeds and Tall Grass (2<sup>nd</sup> Reading)**

Following the initial reading of this ordinance, revisions have been made, including the addition of a definition for 'Conservation Easement' under Section 46.022, and the removal of the phrase 'or scenic' from subsection (10) of the same section. This revised ordinance represents an alternative to the current language and is being presented by staff for consideration.

Motion made by Councilor Christensen to approve as read, seconded by Councilor Howland. On voice call vote, the following councilors voted in favor of said motion: Christensen, Baker, Howland, Olson, Van Beek, Anderson, and Mayor Murray. Mayor Murray declared the motion passed.

(See Secretary's Original Ordinance 25-143  
Included with these minutes)

#### **B. Ordinance 25-144 Amending Chapter 8 – Animals - Article 1. – In General (2<sup>nd</sup> Reading)**

This ordinance amendment is being presented for its final reading. Following a comprehensive evaluation by staff addressing cost implications, health considerations, land use impacts, and

related factors, these revisions have been proposed. As this ordinance does not fall under the City Code requiring Planning Commission review, staff has developed and recommended this revised language as an alternative to the existing wording

Motion made by Councilor Baker to approve as read, seconded by Councilor Anderson. On voice call vote, the following councilors voted in favor of said motion: Christensen, Baker, Howland, Olson, Van Beek, Anderson, and Mayor Murray. Mayor Murray declared the motion passed.

(See Secretary's Original Ordinance 25-144  
Included with these minutes)

## **NEW BUSINESS**

City Manager Rigg read a general report on Cannabis Licensing. He said the city license registration ordinance states at the beginning: The purpose of this chapter is to implement the provisions of Minn. Stats. ch. 342, which authorizes the city to protect the public health, safety, and welfare of the city residents by regulating cannabis businesses within the legal jurisdiction of the city. The city finds and concludes that the proposed provisions are appropriate and lawful land use regulations for the city. That the proposed amendments will promote the community's interest in reasonable stability in zoning for now and in the future, and that the proposed provisions are in the public interest and for the public good.

This has been in potential conflict with the first licensee to come to the City. Past criminal charges were brought to the attention of elected officials approximately 3 days prior to their vote on July 28<sup>th</sup>. This same information was brought to staff attention approximately 2 weeks earlier. With this information, the City Attorney reached out to the Office of Cannabis Management about the claim to make sure they were aware and how, if at all, this information impacts their decision. Simply put, it did not impact their decision as they were not allowed to let it impact their decision.

The number of applicants pre-approved by the OCM became a concern for staff because product availability and distribution is not believed to be sufficient to match the number of businesses currently approved, leading potentially to failure of many of the businesses. In the end, it would appear the state approval process seemed disjointed from real concerns about the welfare of communities and the practicality of operation.

Staff was told on a number of occasions that our job is to set the limit on the number of locations if the council chooses to and the zoning for those locations. The very nature of how they described our involvement in the process indicated we were nothing more than a rubber stamp as registers of the licenses the OCM approves.

Furthermore, it had been clear from the discussion in the legislature and some reports by the OCM that local control is a problem. This is a continued theme with the State that local government is the problem on many issues. The change in the revenue share last legislative session, paired with the large number of applicants getting preapproval in Albert Lea, remains a concern that we are being used as a revenue source from Iowa for the state, regardless of how it impacts this community. The legislature's actions supporting the belief that local government is

the problem, mixed with a belief this legislation would only create an idyllic outcome, support our growing concern the state would use its authority over Albert Lea. This concern is only amplified by the spotlight placed upon us. Much of this would have been resolved, better understood, or come to faster resolution if there were more local involvement, two-way communication, or oversight.

After discussion with the OCM, the City Attorney, and staff directly involved, the council and staff have a better understanding of our role and the expectations of the state. First, the OCM cannot compel the City to approve one license over another, only that we eventually approve our mandatory minimum if given the opportunity. The city attorney believes it would only be a history of demonstrated denials that could bring action against the City. Second, we were in error on the level of review and standards that would be part of the OCM licensing process. I truly believe that basing our decision-making on the OCMs' outcomes would be to abandon our obligation to the public. I am less conflicted on this obligation now that it is clear we are not compelled to be a "rubber stamp". Last, we may have liability regardless, given Chapter 5 was written under a number of wrong assumptions as to the nature and process of OCM approval.

Rigg made the following suggestions in addition to the suggestions for each individual license registration before the Council.

We change the selection process to include the following:

1. A criminal background check, as we are not satisfied with the OCM process and the lack of detail. This brings the cannabis retail licensing on equal footing to our alcohol licenses.
2. Once two stores are operating and the supply issues are known to be resolved, consider expansion of licenses. All retail businesses are difficult to operate and maintain success, and even with a limit a business could fail taking one of the few limited spots. Our end goal should be safe and successful businesses that follow state statutes, local ordinances, and other legal orders.
3. The selection criteria should change to match the stated intent of Chapter 5, including but not limited to making misdemeanor offenses of similar felony convictions that would result in denial at the OCM an equal reason to deny registration at the local level.

#### **A. Registration of Cannabis Microbusiness License – Chris Gracia dba Matchbox Farms MN, LLC**

On July 24, 2025, Chris Gracia, operating under Matchbox Farms MN, LLC, was granted licensure by the Minnesota Office of Cannabis Management. The business registered with the City on the same date, marking it as the second cannabis business registration received since the City began accepting applications. The applicant volunteered a background check, and there were no issues found, though it was more cursory. City Manager recommends approval.

Councilor Howland said he will be voting yes to approve this cannabis registration that has been

licensed by the OCM, and is compliant with the zoning rules that this council set earlier this year. He said in his opinion, it is cut and dry, if a person is granted a license by the OCM and follows the local rules, the process of registration should not be subjective. While, as members of this city council, each of us can, and do have valid concerns about several things, such as overreach by the State on municipalities, public safety, even cannabis legislation itself, which the majority of Minnesotans are in favor of and received bipartisan approval through our elected officials in St. Paul who voted it into law. We, as a council, must abide by our local ordinances, and we must follow State law. Perception is reality. There is an incorrect perception by many in the public that this council and other leaders of the City do not want new businesses to come to Albert Lea. He strongly emphasized; nothing could be further from the truth. We, as a council, and all City leaders want Albert Lea to grow, and we welcome new businesses to our community. The best way to combat and not perpetuate that negative perception is to not prevent legal, licensed, and regulated businesses from opening in Albert Lea. In addition, as mentioned at the last work session, he strongly believes, as the City Manager also suggested, that the council should expand the number of licensed dispensaries allowed in city limits from two to four, possibly five. Because this is a border city at the intersection of two major interstates, we have many businesses that want to set up shop here. In his opinion, leaving the limitation at two only creates a monopoly in the city. We should allow more new businesses to thrive here in Albert Lea, which he believes they will, and make it a free and fair market.

Councilor Baker asked what revenue the city anticipates from a licensed cannabis business. City Manager Rigg responded that the city will receive none. Baker reinforced Howland's remarks addressing public concerns that the council may be discouraging new businesses from coming to Albert Lea. He emphasized that the most powerful promotion the community can offer is to shift away from negative discourse and instead highlight the many positive attributes that make Albert Lea a great place to live, grow, and invest.

Councilor Anderson asked about the potential consequences if the city were to openly reject a registration. In response, City Manager Rigg referred the question to City Attorney Holstad, who cautioned that the League of Minnesota Cities Insurance Trust would likely not provide coverage in the event of a deliberate action by the City of Albert Lea to defy State authority.

Councilor Christensen noted that the issue has been a moving target for an extended period. She stated that Council and staff continue working to resolve conflicting aspects while striving to uphold both the will of the constituents and the applicable legal requirements. She expressed appreciation to all attendees at this meeting and thanked those who submitted questions and comments. She added that she will be voting in favor of approving Mr. Gracia's and Ms. Aranguiz's microbusiness registrations and encourages them to contribute to the city as best they can.

Councilor Olson said he will be voting in the affirmative for these two businesses as well. He believes it is important that cannabis be safe and legal.

Motion made by Councilor Anderson to approve the registration of the Cannabis Microbusiness license for Chris Gracia dba Matchbox Farms MN, LLC, seconded by Councilor Howland. On roll call vote, the following councilors voted in favor of said motion: Christensen, Baker, Howland,

Olson, Van Beek, and Anderson. Mayor Murray voted Nay. Mayor Murray declared the motion passed.

**B. Registration of Cannabis Microbusiness License – Cristina Aranguiz dba Black Husky, LLC**

On July 29, 2025 Cristina Aranguiz, operating under Black Husky, LLC was granted licensure by the Minnesota Office of Cannabis Management. The business registered with the City on July 30, 2025, marking it as the third cannabis business registration received since the City began accepting applications. The applicants volunteered a background check, and there were no issues found, though it was more cursory. City Manager recommends approval.

Motion made by Councilor Anderson to approve the registration of the Cannabis Microbusiness license for Cristina Aranguiz dba Black Husky, LLC, seconded by Councilor Christensen. On roll call vote, the following councilors voted in favor of said motion: Christensen, Baker, Howland, Olson, and Anderson. Mayor Murray and Councilor Van Beek voted Nay. Mayor Murray declared the motion passed.

**C. Reconsideration of Cannabis Microbusiness License – Jacob Schlichter dba The Smoking Tree**

The cannabis license application for The Smoking Tree is being presented to the Albert Lea City Council a second time because the initial vote on July 28, 2025, resulted in a narrow rejection, 3 in favor, 4 against. That decision was not an affirmative denial, but rather resulted in what could be a pause to allow council members more time to address unresolved concerns. In order to reconsider, a motion must be made by one of those who voted in the majority to reject the registration.

If reconsidered, it should be known that concerns brought to the attention of elected officials and staff have not been resolved and have only increased. The type of crime that was pleaded down to a gross misdemeanor involved sex with a minor. More concerning is the fact that the applicant has shown disdain or an inability to follow lawful orders and legal requirements. This would include violations of probation by continuing to have contact with minors. Statements to the press about opening regardless of registration. Most recently, a new restraining order was issued against the licensee within the last week. Such a documented display of behavior by the licensee is contrary to Chapter 5.001.

Historically, staff were faced with a similar situation within the last 2 years, as it related to an alcohol license. If not for the fact that the person left the business within a short period of time after staff became aware, we would have recommended revocation or, at a minimum, a non-renewal to the Council. In keeping with parity with other adult-based businesses and for the protection of the community, the City Manager does not recommend reconsideration at this time.

Mayor Murray stated that the State has failed to protect our community and to protect the communities throughout Minnesota when they limited the Office of Cannabis Management (OCM)

authority to consider this applicant or other similar, as objectionable. Approving this registration remains objectionable to the City based on a refusal of the applicant to follow lawful instructions. His reaction to the denial was to harass people to the point they sought new restraining orders after a few years of silence. The applicant has publicly stated that he does not have to follow any of the local requirements. We are doing the unfortunate thing that the Legislature and Governor are not willing to do, which is protecting our community. The feeling on the council varies as to the use and legalization of cannabis; however, we all agree that we, as councilmembers, should have some reassurance that our public is protected. We are concerned by the legislature's sloppiness and bullish behavior regarding cannabis, and what we feel is a flooding of licenses in the border communities to move Iowa dollars to St. Paul. We strongly feel their concern was never how this would operate, but rather a push for a business to open immediately without bringing in those who are most impactful or knowledgeable on this issue. When these concerns were raised with staff, they were later reassured through multiple communications that cities would only be responsible for registering licenses, while the OCM would conduct thorough background checks. Staff were also informed that the OCM intended to be highly selective in granting licenses. This information was shared with the council and stated in public on a number of occasions. Approximately two to three weeks ago, we realized we had misplaced our trust. At a minimum, Mayor Murray said he hopes the Legislature and the Governor, in 2026, will reevaluate their selection criteria and background requirements. If the number one rule on the legalized sale of cannabis is the age of 21 or older, any person with a history or a demonstrated pattern of harmful contact with young people should not be allowed to gain OCM pre-approval. Albert Lea has made an intentional effort to support a healthy lifestyle and encourages positive choices for all ages.

Mayor Murray called three times for a motion to reconsider the registration of the Cannabis Microbusiness license for Jacob Schlichter dba The Smoking Tree. No motion was offered. Mayor Murray declared the item failed due to a lack of a motion.

#### **D. Public Hearing Regarding Order for Removal of Hazardous Property at 1316 Broadway Avenue South**

Mayor Murray opened the public hearing. He called the first time

Marilyn Lancaster is the sister of the owner of this house. She provided information as to the owner's plan to have the house demolished.

Julie Roder is a neighbor to this house and asked if a deadline could be put on the demolition of this house, as it has been going on for so long already. City Manager Rigg responded that this is the reason for this public hearing and process.

Mayor Murray called a second time.

Margaret Smith is a neighbor to this house and has not had any peace since they have lived there due to the condition of this house. She said they had to pay \$1500 to get rid of the roaches that came after the damaged home was being cleaned out. Additionally, the house is inundated with

mice. She implored the council to remove this house.

Patrick Hensey – he is a neighbor who commented that they live next to a garbage dump. They had to hire attorneys to help them. He implored the council to tear that house down.

Marti Sichko – exclaimed how disheartening this situation is that these neighbors, including a Veteran, have to live in this terrible situation.

Nikki Lundberg – She is a friend of the neighbors who have spoken. She spoke of how long this has been going on, and how bad this situation is.

Mayor Murray called a third time. No one spoke. He closed the public hearing.

In June of 2023, a fire occurred at the house at 1316 Broadway Avenue South, and it was placarded. The property was not occupied. Removal of the structure was recommended because of the extensive fire damage. The roof framing was compromised and in poor condition. It was deemed unsafe. The property needs to be removed. Notice of this hearing has been published, posted, and mailed.

#### **D1.Resolution 25-128 Approving Order for Removal of Hazardous Property at 1316 Broadway Avenue South**

Building and Zoning Official Wayne Sorensen presented a PowerPoint featuring photos and a detailed account of the damages to the house, along with a chronological timeline outlining the notices issued and subsequent actions taken.

Councilor Howland apologized to the neighbors of this house and explained that there is a process that must be followed, and it takes far too long. City Attorney Holstad remarked he expects to get an expedited hearing with the District Court due to the time this property has languished.

City Manager Rigg asked Sorensen what the expected timeline is after this hearing, to which Sorensen described the process.

Motion made by Councilor Howland to approve as read, seconded by Councilor Christensen. On voice call vote, the following councilors voted in favor of said motion: Christensen, Baker, Howland, Olson, Van Beek, Anderson, and Mayor Murray. Mayor Murray declared the motion passed.

(See Secretary's Original Resolution 25-128  
Included with these minutes)

#### **E. Public Hearing Regarding the Disposal of Property – 409 W. Clark St.**

This hearing is to determine if the property at 409 W. Clark St. continues to have a public use. There has been a proposal sent to the City Manager in response to an RFP posted this spring. Ownership by the City is not necessary, and converting to affordable housing better serves the



public's interests.

Mayor Murray opened the public hearing. He called three times. No one spoke. Mayor Murray closed the public hearing.

**E1. Resolution 25-129 Declaring No Public Interest in Real Property – 409 W. Clark St.**

Motion made by Councilor Baker to approve as read, seconded by Councilor Howland. On voice call vote, the following councilors voted in favor of said motion: Christensen, Baker, Howland, Olson, Van Beek, Anderson, and Mayor Murray. Mayor Murray declared the motion passed.

(See Secretary's Original Resolution 25-129  
Included with these minutes)

**F. Resolution 25-130 Authorizing the Creation of a Redevelopment RFP for Apartments in the Downtown**

It is recommended that the city take a different approach on trying to redeveloping the 300 Block. In the past, some advertisements of land or incentives would be made in the hope of gaining the attention of developers. Instead, we are looking to put together a plan to show the financial feasibility, starting with construction costs from a construction firm. These costs will be run in a proforma by our financial advisors after updating our rental housing study. In the end, three things will be known:

1. The project is financially sound for private development, so an RFP will be written and sent out to large developers.
2. The project is financially sound as a non-profit development, so a project plan will be put together for Council, HRA, and/or Port Authority consideration.
3. The project is financially unsound, and an alternative, cheap public use should be considered to improve the image of the area.

Mayor Murray inquired about the source of funding, and Rigg explained that the funds would be drawn from the TIF District. The Mayor then asked whether the study previously conducted by an interested developer could be repurposed to reduce costs. Rigg responded that, given the inconsistencies in the earlier study, commissioning a new one would be the more prudent approach.

Motion made by Councilor Baker to approve as read, seconded by Councilor Anderson. On voice call vote, the following councilors voted in favor of said motion: Christensen, Baker, Howland, Olson, Van Beek, Anderson, and Mayor Murray. Mayor Murray declared the motion passed.

(See Secretary's Original Resolution 25-130  
Included with these minutes)

**G. Resolution 25-131 Authorizing the Contribution of Funds to the Riverland Scholarship**

## **Program**

The City is increasing the amount it awards to the Riverland Scholarship by \$10,000, as ALEDA has also increased its contribution by \$10,000. A presentation on the program was led by Janelle Koepke at 5:30 during the workshop session before the regular session.

Rigg stated that, of the many academic programs that have been enrolled in as a result of this scholarship, half of them, or 8 of the 16, are related to the Trades, Agriculture, or Healthcare. These are all pivotal studies and important training; this is essential to the local workforce here in Albert Lea. A majority of the students who have received this scholarship have indicated a desire to remain in the community.

Councilor Howland noted that the County withdrew its previously committed funding for the scholarship, citing concerns that it does not fulfill a public purpose. He questioned whether, in light of this reasoning, the City should continue its financial support. In response, City Attorney Holstad expressed his disagreement with the County's findings, asserting that the City has ample discretion to define what constitutes a public purpose. City Manager Rigg further noted that during the County's audit, questions were raised regarding certain contributions. He explained that similar inquiries, from the same audit, were directed toward the Port Authority/ALEDA, and in each case, the City and its partners provided sufficient justification, demonstrating that the expenditures aligned with economic development objectives and were consistent with authorized uses under the statute. In response to Councilor Howland's inquiry, Mayor Murray clarified that the city's increased contribution of \$10,000 is intended to offset the shortfall resulting from the County's withdrawal. Councilor Howland expressed his continued support for both the scholarship program and the city's financial commitment.

Councilor Christensen expressed her gratitude to Janelle Koepke for her presentation during this evening's work session. She voiced strong support for the program and praised Riverland for its outstanding contributions.

Councilor Anderson expressed strong support for the program, adding that he is pleased to step in and supplement the County's contribution to ensure the scholarship program's continued success.

Councilor Olson echoed support for the program and the city's contributions.

Mayor Murray added that it's exciting to be part of training the future workforce.

Motion made by Councilor Anderson to approve as read, seconded by Councilor Baker. On voice call vote, the following councilors voted in favor of said motion: Christensen, Baker, Howland, Olson, Van Beek, Anderson, and Mayor Murray. Mayor Murray declared the motion passed.

(See Secretary's Original Resolution 25-131  
Included with these minutes)

## **H. Resolution 25-132 Authorizing Action on Tax Forfeited Properties – City Requested Properties**

The City is requesting certain properties that, if not able to be sold at the assumed market value. These properties do not meet different building codes, minimum housing standards, and/or can be repurposed for affordable housing with city action or subsidy.

Howland to approve as read, seconded by Councilor Anderson. On voice call vote, the following councilors voted in favor of said motion: Christensen, Baker, Howland, Olson, Van Beek, Anderson, and Mayor Murray. Mayor Murray declared the motion passed.

(See Secretary's Original Resolution 25-132  
Included with these minutes)

## **I. Resolution 25-133 Authorizing Action on Tax Forfeited Properties – Assessments**

The City is requesting the right to reassess debts owed to the City for various reasons, including but not limited to past due utilities, remediation costs, or infrastructure assessments. If sold at auction, the City would or could reapply the amounts listed in the resolution.

Motion made by Councilor Baker to approve , seconded by Councilor Howland. On voice call vote, the following councilors voted in favor of said motion: Christensen, Baker, Howland, Olson, Van Beek, Anderson, and Mayor Murray. Mayor Murray declared the motion passed.

(See Secretary's Original Resolution 25-133  
Included with these minutes)

## **MAYOR AND COUNCIL REPORTS**

First Ward, Councilor Christensen reported:

- Ward Items – None
- Committee Update – Blues Zones will have a booth at the next Wind Down Wednesday and invited everyone to stop by the Hatch for their open house from 4-7 PM.
- Public Announcements – None

Second Ward, Councilor Baker reported:

- Ward Items – Received emails and texts from constituents
- Committee Update – None
- Public Announcements – Spoke of successful recent new businesses in Albert Lea and reiterated the importance of the residents providing support to their community.

Third Ward, Councilor Howland reported:

- Ward Items – None
- Committee Update – Attended the CVB Board Meeting last week. Has received several emails related to cannabis.
- Public Announcements – None

Fourth Ward, Councilor Olson reported:

- Ward Items – None
- Committee Update - None
- Public Announcements – Thanked the community for supporting the Freeborn County Fair

Fifth Ward, Councilor Van Beek reported:

- Ward Items – Wrapping up one ward item.
- Committee Update – Will attend the Human Rights Commission meeting on Thursday. Ride for Heroes will have an event this Saturday at the Armory, offering food, legal services, and school supplies are free to all local Veterans
- Public Announcements – Mentioned the riders on their way to Sturgis, SD, who stopped by Albert Lea and visited restaurants, gas stations, and convenience stores.

Sixth Ward, Councilor Anderson reported:

- Ward Items – Have received several emails from constituents.
- Committee Update - None
- Public Announcements – Described the success of the Relay for Life held last week, where he served as this year's Chair. He commended local businesses for supporting this cause.

#### **MAYOR REPORT:**

Attended the following events:

- ALEDA Project Review Meeting
- Southeast League of MN Cities meeting at Wedgewood Cove
- Freeborn County Fair and 4H Auction on Saturday
- Welcomed a group from the MN Adult & Teen Challenge at a community church service
- On August 6<sup>th</sup>, he attended the ALEDA monthly meeting. He said they have a list of over 100 projects that they have been involved with
- Presented the Farmers Market with a Proclamation recognizing Farmers Market Week.
- Thursdays on Fountain
- Relay for Life
- The Karen Martyrs' Day celebration held in Austin

Mentioned the upcoming events and said they are also listed on the City's website.

#### **CITY MANAGER REPORT**

- Received multiple calls regarding Cannabis.
- He and the Finance Director were on a phone call related to the bond rating
- Staff continues to research various IT solutions, including cloud-based protection
- Budget is being reviewed
- Reviewed a draft of a TIF report last week and anticipates a final report to present in the future
- Continues to work with ALEDA on developments and redevelopments within the community
- A schedule of the Strategic Plan review has been shared with council and staff in preparation for future discussion at a retreat.

- Participated in the Relay for Life

### **APPROVAL OF CLAIMS**

#### **A. Resolution 25-134 Approving Claims**

##### **(1) Presentation of Claims Over \$25,000**

The attached resolution directs the Mayor and City Treasurer to issue the payment of claims as presented in the Detail of Claims report. In addition, Maras displayed a list of claims over \$25,000 for the public's viewing, transparency, and education.

Motion made by Councilor to approve the claims, seconded by Councilor. On voice call vote, the following councilors voted in favor of said motion: Christensen, Baker, Howland, Olson, Van Beek, Anderson, and Mayor Murray. Mayor Murray declared the motion passed.

See Secretary's Original Resolution 25-134  
Included with these minutes)

Councilor Howland motioned for adjournment; Councilor Van Beek seconded. That there being no further business, the Council meeting adjourns until the next regular meeting of the Albert Lea City Council at 7:00 p.m. on Monday, August 25, 2025. On a voice call vote, all councilors voted in favor of said motion.

Mayor Murray declared the motion passed, and the meeting adjourned.

#### **ADJOURNMENT: 9:06 PM**

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Mayor Rich Murray

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Daphney Maras  
Secretary of the Council