

**STATE OF MINNESOTA  
COUNTY OF FREEBORN****DISTRICT COURT – CIVIL DIVISION  
THIRD JUDICIAL DISTRICT**

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Jacob Schlichter, The Smoking Tree LLC,

Case Type: Civil Other/Miscellaneous

Petitioners,

Case No. 24-CV-25-

v.

**VERIFIED PETITION  
FOR A WRIT OF MANDAMUS**

City of Albert Lea, Albert Lea City Council,

Respondents.

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For their Verified Petition for a Writ of Mandamus, Petitioners state as follows:

**INTRODUCTION**

1. Petitioners, Jacob Schlichter and The Smoking Tree LLC, submitted to Respondent the City of Albert Lea an application for a cannabis retail business registration. Petitioners held a license from the Minnesota Office of Cannabis Management (“OCM”) and otherwise qualified for the registration.

2. On July 28, 2025, Petitioners’ application went before the Albert Lea City Council for approval. The City Council neither had nor articulated a basis to deny the application. Nevertheless, in a 4-3 vote, the City Council did deny the application.

3. The City Council’s decision was based purely on politics—specifically, members’ policy disagreements with Minnesota law.

4. Because the City of Albert Lea and the Albert Lea City Council must comply with state law and Albert Lea’s own city ordinance, Petitioners now bring this action to compel the City of Albert Lea and the Albert Lea City Council to meet their obligations to Petitioners.

## PARTIES

5. Petitioner Jacob Schlichter is a natural person who is the proprietor of The Smoking Tree LLC.

6. Petitioner The Smoking Tree LLC, is a Minnesota limited liability corporation. It seeks to operate a cannabis business within the City of Albert Lea.

7. Respondent the City of Albert Lea is a municipal corporation within Freeborn County. 1885 Minn. Special Laws chap. 47. It is a political subdivision of the State of Minnesota.

8. Respondent the Albert Lea City Council is the governing body for the City of Albert Lea. Albert Lea City Charter § 2.01. It is a multimember governing body made up of the mayor and six other members. *Id.* It is charged with approving or denying certain applications to the City of Albert Lea, including cannabis registration applications. Albert Lea City Ordinance § 5.023(b)(3).

## JURISDICTION AND VENUE

9. This Court has personal jurisdiction over this matter because the acts and omissions giving rise to the action occurred primarily in the State of Minnesota.

10. The Court has subject-matter jurisdiction over this mandamus action pursuant to Minn. Stat. § 586.11, which provides that “[t]he district court has exclusive original jurisdiction in all cases of mandamus.”

11. Venue is proper in this county and in this district because, pursuant to Minn. Stat. § 542.03, it is an action against bodies composed of public officers. Further, pursuant to Minn. Stat. § 542.09, Respondents reside, and the cause of action arose, in Freeborn County.

## LEGAL BACKGROUND

12. “In 2023, Minnesota legalized the adult use of cannabis and adopted chapter 342 of the Minnesota Statutes.” *Aranguiz v. Minnesota Office of Cannabis Mgmt.*, A24-1873, 2025 WL 2102352, at \*1 (Minn. App. July 28, 2025). Minn. Stat. chap. 342 sets out a comprehensive framework for the regulation of cannabis in Minnesota.

13. Much of the responsibility for cannabis regulation falls on OCM. Minn. Stat. § 342.02, subd. 2. OCM is responsible for issuing cannabis licenses. Minn. Stat. § 342.02, subd. 2(a)(6). But “[b]efore making retail sales to customers or patients, a cannabis business . . . must register with the city, town, or county in which the retail establishment is located.” Minn. Stat. § 342.22.

14. State law provides for a level of local control over cannabis businesses. Minn. Stat. § 342.13. But state law also provides that “[a] local unit of government *shall* issue a retail registration” to a cannabis business that meets a set of certain, limited requirements. Minn. Stat. § 342.22, subd. 3(a) (emphasis added). “‘Shall’ is mandatory.” Minn. Stat. § 645.44, subd. 16.

15. Chapter 5 of Albert Lea’s city ordinances regulates cannabis to approximately the greatest extent that state law allows a municipality to do so.

16. Crucially, the chapter creates a registration and application procedure, Albert Lea City Ordinances § 5.023, creates an exclusive list of reasons that the City may deny or revoke a registration, Albert Lea City Ordinances § 5.029, and provides that “[t]he City of Albert Lea will register cannabis businesses on a first-come, first-served basis, which will be based solely on a time-stamped State of Minnesota, OCM issued license,” Albert Lea City Ordinances § 5.030.

## FACTUAL BACKGROUND

17. On July 17, 2025, OCM issued Petitioners a cannabis microbusiness license with a retail operations endorsement.

18. Also on July 17, 2025, Petitioners submitted to the City of Albert Lea a complete application for a cannabis retail business registration.

19. Upon information and belief, Petitioners' application had first priority under Albert Lea City Ordinances § 5.030.

20. Petitioners' application was placed upon the agenda for the Albert Lea City Council's July 28, 2025 meeting.

21. Petitioners' application was the only one on the July 28, 2025 meeting agenda, and Albert Lea had not yet issued any cannabis retail business registrations.

22. A recording of that city council meeting is available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dIQP8xRK-QE>.

23. At the Albert Lea City Council's July 28, 2025, in introducing the agenda item, city manager Ian Rigg noted the carefully limited authority that the Minnesota Legislature has granted cities to refuse or regulate cannabis, including by denying cannabis registrations.

24. Among other comments noting that carefully limited authority, Mr. Rigg stated that "we have heard the concerns from the public and weighed those as much as we could within the powers that we did have, that the state has given us. And our only option [other than granting the registration] is to defy the state and see lawsuits."

25. A city council member moved to approve, and another seconded the motion to approve, the cannabis business registration.

26. The council proceeded to discuss the motion. Several city council members openly considered defying both state law and Albert Lea's own ordinance, purely as a matter of disagreement with the policy the legislature has enacted.

27. For example, councilmember Larry Baker stated that

I just, you know, I get tired of control being taken by, whether it's state or federal government, in things that they know nothing about. And so I'm not for this. It has nothing to do with who, what, or where, in my opinion, for my decision. But I'm not going to support this just for this simple reason. I don't believe in the fact that as local people who are involved in this, we know what's best for us, that we, that we get that taken away from us.

28. City Attorney Joel Holstad predicted this very action, stating that "I'm assuming that if we defy the state for whatever legitimate reasons we choose to identify, we will be in litigation to compel our compliance with statute."

29. Mr. Rigg later stated "I agree with Councilor Baker. Local control is important and we need to be vocal about it. But we, until it's restored or it's preserved, we, we do have our, we do have our, I hate to say it, but we have our orders. So."

30. One council member asked Mr. Rigg "to clarify, once the Office of Cannabis Management approves a person by our own statute, they are approved through us because we had to take first-come, first-serve. So we don't issue any approvals. It's them. Is that correct?" Mr. Rigg responded, "correct."

31. Mayor Rich Murray ended the conversation by stating

Well, I've not been a fan of this since the subject first came up a year ago. It seems like just two years ago we were locking people up for this very thing, smoking cannabis, and now we're promoting it. I do not like the way that the state legislature and the governor has rammed this down our throats without, very little say in the whole process. All because they're hungry for more revenue. Not only are they hungry for more revenue, but in those last days of the legislature, I believe they increased the amount of revenue they're going to take out of this by 50% . . . . So, not a fan. I don't think two

is the right number. As I've said before, I believe zero is the right number, and I'm just not a fan of this whole, this whole deal. With that said, we're going to go ahead and take our vote.

32. The city council then denied the motion, and thus the application, by a vote of four nays to three ayes. Mayor Murray and Councilmember Baker both voted against the motion.

33. The city council did not discuss Petitioners' application on its own merits. Its discussion was exclusively focused on whether the city council, and thus the City, would comply with state law and its own ordinance.

34. A true and correct copy of the minutes of the meeting, as provided by the City of Albert Lea, is attached as **Exhibit A**.

35. Petitioners have been damaged by Respondents' failure to issue them a registration, which has prevented them from realizing the revenue and profit expected from operating a business that sells cannabis.

### **PETITION FOR WRIT OF MANDAMUS**

36. Petitioners re-allege and incorporate the preceding paragraphs as if fully set forth herein.

37. Pursuant to Minn. Stat. chap. 586, Petitioners hereby petition the Court to issue a peremptory writ of mandamus ordering Respondents to issue a cannabis retail business registration to Petitioners as applied for.

38. In the alternative, Petitioners hereby petition the Court to issue an alternative writ of mandamus and to require Respondents to show cause why they should not be required to issue a cannabis retail business registration to Petitioners as applied for.

39. Mandamus relief is "an extraordinary remedy that is available only to compel a duty clearly required by law." *N. States Power Co. v. Minnesota Metro. Council*, 684 N.W.2d 485, 491 (Minn. 2004) (internal citation omitted). *See also* Minn. Stat. § 586.01. "[T]o obtain

mandamus relief, a petitioner must show that the defendant: (1) failed to perform an official duty clearly imposed by law; (2) that, as a result, the petitioner suffered a public wrong specifically injurious to the petitioner; and (3) that there is no other adequate legal remedy.” *N. States Power Co.*, 684 N.W.2d 491; *see also* Minn. Stat. § 586.02.

40. Mandamus is an appropriate remedy because, as described above, Respondents failed to perform an official duty clearly imposed by law in that Respondents failed to grant Petitioners’ application despite Petitioners having met the requirements for the registration’s issuance and Respondents having no grounds upon which to deny the application.

41. Petitioners have also obtained a writ of certiorari from the Minnesota Court of Appeals and are litigating that case against Respondents. However, Respondents’ decision may not be quasi-judicial in that the Court may find that Respondents did not, and do not, have discretion to deny Petitioners’ application except as set forth in Albert Lea City Ordinances § 5.029, and Respondent did not purport to, and does not, have such a reason.

42. Damages are available to a plaintiff prevailing on a mandamus action. Minn. Stat. § 586.09.

### **PRAYER FOR RELIEF**

Petitioners respectfully request that this Court:

1. Grant a peremptory writ of mandamus in the form attached hereto requiring Respondents to issue a cannabis retail business registration to Petitioners as applied for.
2. In the alternative, grant an alternative writ of mandamus in the form attached hereto requiring Respondents to show cause why they should not be required to issue a cannabis retail business registration to Petitioners as applied for;

3. Award Petitioners their damages, attorney fees, costs, and disbursements, to the extent permitted by law; and

4. Grant such other and further relief as the Court deems just and proper.

Dated: September 7, 2025

**GODWIN ADKINS**



David L. Liebow, #392585

david@godwinadkins.com

James A. Godwin, #392020

james@godwinadkins.com

Christopher T. Porter, #504586

chris.porter@godwinadkins.com

Attorneys for Petitioners

300 1st Ave. NW, Suite 306

Rochester, MN 55901-2830

(507) 218-8383

#### **ACKNOWLEDGMENT**

By signing above, the signing attorney hereby acknowledges that sanctions may be awarded pursuant to Minn. Stat. § 549.211 for a party acting in bad faith or asserting a frivolous claim.

JUDICIAL  
BRANCH

**VERIFICATION**

STATE OF MINNESOTA     )  
                                      ) SS.  
COUNTY OF FREEBORN    )

I, Jacob Schlichter, a duly authorized representative of The Smoking Tree LLC, have read the foregoing statements and know the contents thereof. I declare under penalty of perjury that the factual allegations contained in the above are true and correct, save those stated on information and belief and as to those I believe them to be true, and do so verify on behalf of myself and on behalf of The Smoking Tree LLC.

Dated: September 7, 2025

/s/ Jacob Schlichter

Jacob Schlichter

MINNESOTA  
JUDICIAL  
BRANCH

**REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING  
CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS, CITY OF ALBERT LEA  
July 28, 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 Deputy City Clerk Karla Tukua.

**ABSENT:** City Clerk Daphney Maras

**ADDITIONAL STAFF PRESENT:** Sergeant-at-Arms-Police Chief Darren Hanson, Fire Chief Jeff Laskowske and Building/Zoning Official Wayne Sorenson.

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

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

**CEREMONIAL ITEMS**

Oath of Office – Darin Palmer, Deputy Police Chief

Oath of Office – Tim Harves, Lieutenant

Police Chief Darren Hanson introduced Deputy Police Chief Darin Palmer and Lieutenant Tim Harves and gave Mayor and Council a brief history of their background with the Police Department.

Deputy City Clerk Tukua administered the Oath of Office for Deputy Police Chief Darin Palmer and Lieutenant Tim Harves.

**PUBLIC FORUM**

Dave Moline spoke against the proposed Cannabis business. He spoke about his experience living in the Phoenix suburbs for 10 years and dealing with the ramifications of cannabis being legal there. He questioned what a lawsuit would look like if the City denied this and what the cost would be. He doesn't want this in our community, stating there's nothing good that will come out of the City approving this.

Charlotte Nelson-Schroeder spoke against having a cannabis business in Albert Lea and gave her reasons behind this. She stated the city currently has a limit of 2 licenses, but some council members want to expand on this. She made it known she is against adding any additional licenses. She wants the citizens to have a right to vote for this.

Bruce Manwarren let council know about the farmers progress on prices for corn and soybeans.

Jacob Schlichter spoke as the owner of The Smoking Tree and thanked everyone from the City, the State and local businesses that have helped him get to this point. He explained that he got into the cannabis business because of his concern for addiction and seeing his best friend die from a fentanyl overdose. He said he's worked with legislatures and doctors that are scientist and psychologists in regards to substance abuse disorder. He stated that marijuana is no more addictive than sugar or caffeine. He does understand the concern from the audience and said it's in the forefront of his mind. He is bringing his expertise, experience and his first-hand life experience with him in the running of his store.

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

- A. Approve Minutes of the July 14, 2025 Regular Council Meeting
- B. Approve Minutes of the July 14, 2025 Work Session
- C. License & Permits
- D. Resolution Accepting Minnesota Pollution Control Agency Chloride Reduction Grant – Job 2519
- E. Resolution Approving Professional Services Agreement with Bolton and Menk Inc. for Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) Chloride Reduction Grant – Job 2519
- F. Resolution Accepting Minnesota Pollution Control Agency Planning and Design Grant for Perfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS) – Job 2520
- G. Resolution Approving Professional Services Agreement with Bolton and Menk Inc. for Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) Perfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS) Grant – Job 2520
- H. Resolution Declaring Intent to Reimburse From Proceeds From Tax Exempt Bonds for the Freeborn Bank Parking Lot Paving Project (Job 2504) and Eberhart Street & Utilities Improvement Project (Job 2413)
- I. Resolution Approving Application to Conduct Off-Site Gambling – Albert Lea Amateur Hockey Association

Motion made by Councilor Christensen, to remove the specific item, Cannabis Microbusiness – The Smoking Tree, from the Consent Agenda, Item C, Licenses and Permit, and to move this item to New Business. Christensen then moved that council approve the consent agenda as amended, seconded by Councilor Van Beek. On a roll 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 25-115 through 25-120  
Included with these minutes)

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

### **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

- A. **Ordinance 25-142 Amending Chapter 2, Administration, Article IV. Departments – Division 2. Purchases & Contracts – (2<sup>nd</sup> Reading)**

This is the final reading of an amendment that revises the authorization language to allow the City Manager or a designated representative, rather than the City Manager and the Mayor, to execute deeds and conveyances. This revision does not change requirements of preapproval by Council

and is recommended by the City Attorney.

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

(See Secretary's Original Ordinance 25-142  
Included with these minutes)

### **NEW BUSINESS**

#### **A. Ordinance 25-143 Amending Chapter 46 – Vegetation, Article II. – Weeds and Tall Grass (1<sup>st</sup> Reading)**

The present ordinance limits the ability to establish alternative landscaping beyond 9 inches in height. This amendment would allow for options to traditional turf-type landscape requirements, as is in the present ordinance. And would allow for planned, intentional, and maintained landscape vegetation alternatives as specified in the proposed amendment.

Rigg stated that the reason for the change to this Ordinance is due to a State Supreme Court ruling allowing people to have pollinator gardens. The City wishes to regulate this by requiring a permit to know what is an intentional garden vs. just overgrown weeds and grass.

Building/Zoning Official Wayne Sorensen displayed the ordinance with the changes in red for Council to review. One point he noted, was that there is now a definition as to what a flower garden is and stated nothing will change in regards to flower gardens. A typical flower garden and vegetable garden is an exemption to needing to mow down to the 9-inch rule. He explained the ordinance addresses the set-back to roads and property lines for pollinator gardens. He continued to go through the additional exemptions and requirements. The city is requiring a permit for anyone wanting to establish a pollinator garden, so that it can be regulated. He noted any violations of any of the requirements would result in revocation of the natural landscape permit by the city.

Rigg added if there was still a need to clarify number ten (10) of the ordinance changes requiring City Engineer authorization as mentioned at the work session, he ask someone to make a motion for this clarification by the second reading.

Motion made by Councilor Howland to amend the original motion to provide a definition for conservation or scenic easement areas, 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 25-143  
Included with these minutes)

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

Recent public and council requests have prompted a staff review of this ordinance concerning chickens. A thorough review by staff concerning cost, health concerns, land use, and related items has resulted in the attached revision possibility. This is not a City Code that has Planning Commission reviews. This ordinance revision is an alternative to the present wording and is presented as an alternative by staff.

Building/Zoning Official Wayne Sorensen displayed the ordinance with the changes noted in red. He covered the changes with council and reasons for these changes. He explained there was an added definition of a residence, to give clarification of where the structure setback would need to be from. Sorensen noted the changes made to (c) Locational requirements with the coop being sixty (60) feet from any residence, also adding it can be no closer than ten (10) feet from a property line. He noted the last recommended change was to the maximum number of chickens allowed. This was reduced from ten (10) down to five (5). Sorensen displayed the pros and cons of having chickens for council and the public's review and he covered the highlights of this listing.

Motion made by Councilor Baker, seconded by Councilor Anderson with a 60-foot setback. 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)

#### **C. Resolution 25-121 Authorizing Broadway Ridge Grant at 146 W. Clark Street**

SRFD Enterprises, LLC submitted a Broadway Ridge Grant for reimbursement up to 50% of costs associated with a complete roof replacement as well as new windows at 146 W Clark Street. The total improvement cost is \$80,249.93 which will provide a matching grant of \$40,124.97. The current balance of the Broadway Ridge Grant Fund is \$295,232.22 (this amount does not include the grant for 146 W Clark). All improvements have been completed and reviewed by the City's Zoning and Building Official for compliance with application requirements.

Motion made by Councilor Baker, 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 25-121  
Included with these minutes)

#### **D. Resolution 25-122 Approving Purchase of Fire Rescue Command Vehicle**

Albert Lea Fire Rescue is seeking authorization to purchase a replacement Command Vehicle CIP - FIR-V-25-02 \$112,500. This new command vehicle (901) will replace the existing (902), a 2015 Ford F-150 Command Vehicle that has reached end of life for emergency response and will be sold on MNBid, a competitive bidding platform. The new Command Vehicle will be a full EV

2026 Rivian R1S with an emergency lighting package, graphics, and command module. The SUV style was chosen moving forward to protect the equipment carried from the weather and dust. This vehicle will have a lower operating cost than an equivalent internal combustion engine. This purchase also meets our Cities Climate Action Plan TL 3-2 and TL 3-3. The purchase for the vehicle will be direct with Rivian, LLC in the amount of \$88,690.00 through state bid, and the upfitting will be done by Alta Emergency Response Vehicles as a sole source vendor with Rivian in the amount of \$23,810.00.

Christensen questioned if the City was getting the maximum battery for this unit. Rigg called on Fire Chief Laskowske to answer. Laskowske said that they were getting the medium battery and in response to Christensen's follow up question on the cost, he said it comes with the additional chargers needed for the vehicle and comes with the level two charger to wire into the station. Howland thanked the Fire Department for going with EV.

Motion made by Councilor Howland, 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 25-122  
Included with these minutes)

#### **E. Resolution 25-123 Accepting Donations as Presented to the City of Albert Lea**

The City of Albert Lea is generally authorized to accept donations pursuant to Minnesota Statutes Section 465.03 for the benefit of its citizens. Staff recommends acceptance of the following donations as submitted for Council review and approval.

- Alden Area Activities Association donated \$300 to Albert Lea Police Department Reserves for Morin Lake Day Parade.

(See Secretary's Original Resolution 25-123  
Included with these minutes)

#### **F. Action to Approve The Smoking Tree Cannabis License.**

Rigg mentioned the concerns brought up at the public forum from residents and what the city has heard from the public through e-mails and phone calls. He said that when the State first mentioned they would make cannabis legal, he looked at how the City could maintain local control. He explained that this process did not involve local control, where almost all authority was given to the Office of Cannabis Management. Rigg let the public know that the City's authority was restricted to where the business could be located, the setback of these businesses and the number of cannabis businesses the City could allow. Within these guidelines, the City set the setbacks to the maximum setback allowed by the state and the number of licenses was set to the minimum allowed. Also noting the setbacks were to schools, churches, parks and daycare businesses.

Rigg said the City has heard the concerns from the public and has weighed those concerns by the power that the State has given to the City.

He gave examples of how the state could penalize the City if we defy the State. Noting the State could withhold government aid, which is one-third of our general fund. There could be lawsuits both from the business owner and from the state. He said if the public is concerned, they should contact the OCM, their State Legislators and the Governor.

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

Councilor Baker noted his concern with the States control over local issues. He feels the City should have a say on how we enforce this.

Councilor Christensen thanked the City Manager for being so clear on what the City has done on the zoning and where cannabis can be consumed. She mentioned that the threat of the City losing money is a danger, but she also doesn't want to approve this because of comments from her constituents.

Councilor Anderson said he'd like to say no too, but he wants to do the responsible thing. He asked the City Manager how much our LGA funding is, to which Rigg stated its six million, clarifying it won't be the full amount, it could be just five percent. This would amount to a possible \$300,000 penalty. Anderson asked the City Attorney to speak on the possibility of litigation against us.

Attorney Holstad stated it's an important consideration because the state is requiring equal access to cannabis. Adding in that even if the City said no, they wouldn't register any retail operation, we could still get Tribal operations as dictated from the State, without City approval. Holstad spoke on what the State's requirements are and what control the City has. Holstad said if we would block cannabis businesses the City would likely be sued without a probability of winning.

Anderson asked the City Manager to speak on who gets approved for these licenses through the state and our ordinance. City Manager Rigg stated the only way to objectively approve these licenses is to do it as a first come, first serve. Once the Office of Cannabis Management approves an individual, then the City would need to approve through our own ordinance.

### **MAYOR AND COUNCIL REPORTS**

First Ward, Councilor Christensen reported:

- Ward Items – None
- Committee Update – Budget committee is working on the 2026 budget. The Blue Zones walking moais have started and last Thursday they met at Eastgate Park and walked up to Thursdays on Fountain. It was a fun group and good to get exercise at the same time.

Second Ward, Councilor Baker reported:

- Ward Items – None

- Committee Update – Attended an HRA meeting last week, they reviewed expenditures and discussed having the HRA getting bids on building a house. The board is in approval of this and will be moving forward on this. He will be meeting with Executive Director Phillip Johnson with ALEDA to discuss two different proposals from one company to put up a modular home.

Third Ward, Councilor Howland reported:

- Ward Items – None
- Committee Update – Attended the Park and Rec Board meeting where they toured the arena. He stated the public will be pleased and it was great to see the progress made.

Fourth Ward, Councilor Olson reported:

- Ward Items – Has a parking issue in his ward, that he's working on.
- Committee Update – Attended an Airport Advisory meeting where they discussed the new airport weather automated observation system. They also discussed getting a new tractor for snow removal, and the Federal Aviation Department will pay for ninety-five percent of the cost of the new tractor.

Fifth Ward, Councilor Van Beek reported:

- Ward Items – He's working on a couple of ward items.
- Committee Update – He attended the HRA meeting last week and will be attending the Human Rights Committee meeting in a couple weeks.
- He thanked the Mayor for coming out and supporting the Nation of Patriots ride that came through last week.

Sixth Ward, Councilor Anderson reported:

- Ward Items – None
- Committee Update – He attended the HRA meeting and he's excited about putting a house up. There are still details to work out. He attended a budget meeting, mentioning that Kristi and Ian do a great job of keeping track of it. They work hard on doing what they can to keep the levy and property taxes down.
- Public Announcement – He's the chair for Relay for Life Committee and Relay for Life will be August 8<sup>th</sup> at the fairgrounds. Anderson listed some of the different activities, noting one is being able to throw a wet sponge at a City Official. There are activities for all ages and he invited the public to check it out.

## **MAYOR REPORT**

Attended the following meetings:

- Chamber after hours on July 15<sup>th</sup>
- Met with SMIF (Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation) on July 16<sup>th</sup>, Tim Penny who retired as president and CEO was there along with Benya Kraus who is the new president and CEO of SMIF.
- Attended the Hatch open house last Wednesday
- Attended Thursday's on Fountain
- Hung out with Councilor Van Beek at Harley Davidson for the American Legion Patriot Riders.

They brought in the Nation of Patriots Flag and their next stop was Mason City, IA.

- Attended the Chamber Golf Outing
- Thursday the 24<sup>th</sup> he attended the BESS, (Battery Energy Storage System) meeting through the Minnesota Department of Commerce. They held hearings with individuals from the County and City to discuss this program. There will be another meeting in August and September.
- Met with the Charter Commission
- Attended an ALEDA project review meeting.

Mentioned the upcoming events and said they are also listed on the city's website. He also let residents know of the upcoming City cleanup day which is Saturday, April 26<sup>th</sup>, again stating they can find information on this on the city's website.

Last he read a letter he had just received from the Board of Peace Officer Standards and Training. It stated on July 16<sup>th</sup> 2025, there was a review of the Albert Lea Police Department. The letter stated after a comprehensive review of mandated employee training and department policies, they are pleased to announce the Albert Lea Police Department passed the review. Mayor Murray congratulated the Police Department.

#### **CITY MANAGER REPORT**

- He's currently working with staff on IT solutions.
- Working on the 2026 Budget, finishing up on the Capital Improvement Plan
- Working on the Strategic Plan
- Charter Commission met and there will be a public hearing and ordinance review on amending the Charter.
- He has a meeting tomorrow with SEMLM (Southeastern Minnesota League of Municipalities)

The mayor clarified that SEMLM is a group of people from different communities in Southeastern Minnesota. They will be looking at various ways as cities that they can work together and help each other.

#### **APPROVAL OF CLAIMS**

##### **A. Resolution 25-124 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, Tukua displayed a list of claims over \$25,000 for the public's viewing, transparency and education.

Motion made by Councilor Howland, seconded by Councilor Christensen. On roll 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 25-124  
Included with these minutes)

Councilor Howland motioned for adjournment; Councilor Van Beek seconded. That there being no further business, the Council meeting adjourn until the next regular meeting of the Albert Lea City Council at 7:00 p.m. on Monday, April 28, 2025. On voice call vote, all councilors voted in favor of said motion.

Mayor Murray declared the motion passed and the meeting adjourned.

**ADJOURNMENT: 8:29 P. M.**



Karla Tukua  
Secretary Pro Tem

  
Mayor Rich Murray

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