

Ely City Council Study Session July 28, 2009

The Ely City Council study session was called to order by Mayor Skraba at 6:00 p.m. on July 28, 2009 at the Ely City Hall.

PRESENT: Council members Debeltz, Salerno, Shedly, Zupec and Mayor Skraba (5)

ABSENT: Council members Nikkola and Omerza (2)

Council members Salerno presented the 2010 Historical Ely Calendars and are now on sale at the City Clerk's office for \$10.00. Salerno thanked Mike Jankovec, Mary Cich, David Kess and the Ely Winton Historical Society for their help in putting the calendar together.

The Council held a joint meeting with Ely Police Commissioners Tom Erchull, Mauro Caruso, Kerry Perushek and Ed Marsolek. Dave Johnson was absent. The Council reviewed their Mission Statement as presented:

- To conduct ourselves with integrity and honesty in the decision making process.
- To work with/guide and help the Ely Police Department in a fair and unbiased decision making manner.
- To serve as a liaison between the Ely public and the Police Department.
- To make decisions as a collective body to advice the Ely City Council on a course of action that affects every day Police Officer duties.

The Commission reported that they are creating a handbook to be reviewed by the Council when it is completed. They are waiting for a confidentiality clause from the City Attorney which will be added to the handbook.

Mayor Skraba stated that the Commission is in charge of hiring, firing and discipline for the Police Department. If the Commission wants to do more, i.e. hiring policy, etc. the Council would like the ideas presented to them for review. The Commission has been getting compliments from the public. Citizens appreciate the publication of weekly reports and the Police Department is doing a good job with public relations. The Commission has addressed complaints received from Richard Watson regarding noise ordinance violations. Mr. Watson did not attend the last Commission meeting.

Shedly suggested that the council appoint a council liaison to the Police Commission. Salerno volunteered to be the council liaison to the Police Commission.

Chairman Erchull thanked Clerk Boese for her assistance to the Police Commission in the recent hiring processes.

Chief Saw reported that the city did not receive funding in the first round of the COPS grant program but is still in the running for potential 2010 grant monies.

The Council met with Ely Utilities Commissioners Robert Wilmunen, Richard Zahn and Tony Colarich.

Director Langowski reviewed the process the Commission went through for the Brisson's Point annexation request. He put together a cost estimate for the annexation and sent surveys to the existing utility customers in this area. Survey results showed 8 homeowners who are interested in annexation and 8 who do not want to be annexed. The utility commission has reviewed the information and recommends the council decide whether they should extend service to the entire area or only the property owners who have requested service. President Wilmunen recommended the council engage Morse Township in a discussion of annexation in this area. Mayor Skraba stated the township supervisors do not have a problem in going with an uncontested annexation to preserve the lake with respect to the existing septic systems on these substandard size lots and this area is already urban in nature. The sewer in this area can be gravity fed to the existing lift station.

Mayor Skraba recommended the council schedule a meeting with Morse Township to discuss annexation, the hydrant contract and numerous other issues.

It was suggested that a joint meeting be scheduled with Morse Township on August 13th. Mayor Skraba will check with the Township if they would be available to meet on that day.

The council reviewed the Street and Infrastructure Resolution 1991 – 32 PUC. The commission would like to explore expanding collection of fees to include all properties not just rate payers. Currently there are 330 vacant houses that are not paying this fee due to having disconnected meters. This money is used as a match for any street and/or sidewalk project annually. Potentially properties could be assessed by parcel code.

Ordinance #144, 2nd Series relating to Municipal and Public Utilities – Regulation of Rates, Charges & Collections was reviewed. It appears that Subd. 11 Franchise Fee expired on 12/31/07. Director Langowski will review to see if the ordinance has been updated since 12/31/07.

The commission has tasked Attorney Klun to research the ability to collect legal fees for processing delinquent utility bills.

The council reviewed the unallotment information for 2009-2010 received from the League of MN Cities as presented by Clerk Boese. The council will review the preliminary budget on August 11th.

Director Langowski informed the council that the Army Corp of Engineers Section 569 grant application was submitted today for \$1.1m.

OLD BUSINESS

No action was taken on the Council's Goals and Objectives.

No action was taken on the Investment Action Plan.

The council reviewed the amended reimbursement agreement between the City and ISD #696. The building assessment committee will make a presentation in early August on the city buildings. Council member Zupec recommended the city look at ideas to generate revenue through user fees, etc. before proposing constructing new buildings. He would like to see the

creation of a Boundary Waters History Center located in the Community Center. A business plan would have to be created along with a marketing plan. Director Langowski suggested the city look at the number of buildings they currently own and determine if changes should be made. The Semer's park buildings are in a dilapidated condition and could be repaired through user fees. Zupiec stated the city needs to develop a long range plan. Mayor Skraba suggested council members begin by talking to Klobuchar, Oberstar, Franken, Mark Van Avery and Jim Sanders to discuss user fees which could be used by the City of Ely. Council member Debeltz stated there is a potential of grant monies through the Arts Foundation. Mayor Skraba and Director Langowski will be meeting with Ely Greenstone to propose an agreement for the use of Miner's Dry.

Moved by Salerno supported by Debeltz to adjourn the meeting at 7:45 p.m. Motion carried unanimously.

Terri Boese
Clerk/Treasurer