

Ely City Council Regular Meeting September 15, 2009

The Ely City Council regular meeting was called to order by Mayor Skraba at 6:30 p.m. on September 15, 2009 at the Ely City Hall.

PRESENT: Council members Debeltz, Nikkola, Omerza, Salerno, Sheddy, Zupec, and Mayor Skraba.
ABSENT: None

Mayor Skraba thanked everyone for being at the meeting and reported that it was truck night at the high school and the farmer's market was taking place in Whiteside Park.

Approval of the minutes of the September 1, 2009 Regular Meeting and September 8, 2009 Special meeting will be moved to the next meeting agenda.

Additions or omissions to tonight's agenda:

1. OLD BUSINESS: Added-D: Festival Site; Deleted A – P & Z Administrator position & B – Fire Chief Position.
2. City Attorney: Deleted Item 2-Archibald land dispute; Added-Charter Commission; and Independent Accountant Consultant Contract, Mary Lee Erickson; End of Agenda – Closed Session to discuss union strategy.
3. City Operations Director passed out a memo with regard to item #2 on his report, sale of city equipment.

Moved by Salerno supported by Zupec to approve the additions and deletions to the agenda as presented above. Motion carried unanimously.

Mayor's Agenda

Mayor Skraba reported that Muffin Nelson will be working with the Ely Chamber of Commerce and the City of Ely on an event to be held Thursday, October 1st at Whiteside Park for the organizing committee of the 2016 Olympics. This event will be used to recognize all volunteers in the City of Ely. The family event will be held at the band shell from 4 to 6 with food, drinks, games, etc. (providing the weather is nice). Council member Omerza will review request for city participation with Director Langowski.

Mayor Skraba reported the Biomass Project has received funding approval from IRR and Blandin on the grant applications. He will be going to Grand Marais (the City's partner in the joint biomass grant application) to coordinate progress with them, and develop a strategy on moving forward if the grant from the Department of Energy is approved. The grant is for a total of \$24 million. Eric Mayranen has researched the amount of wood biomass available to the city of Ely and has found sufficient sources within a 25 mile radius.

A. Consent Agenda Items:

1. LMC Regional Meeting – Attack of Killer Budget Cuts- Virginia, September 30, 2009 (authorize staff/council to attend)
2. George Burger, MN APA Conference, Brooklyn Park 9/17/09
3. Thank you to Ely Fire Dept for fireworks donation of \$3,318.86
4. Thank you to Ely Jaycees for fireworks donation of \$1,299.33

Moved by Salerno supported by Shedly to approve consent agenda items 1-4 as presented above. Motion carried unanimously.

REQUESTS TO APPEAR

Chuck Novak stated this is the second time his name has appeared on the Agenda and he has not requested to appear. He will be back at a later date with regard to the Ely Area Ambulance Service.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Omerza reported on Iron Range Youth in Action Partners Board – 8-9 senior high school students worked on the berm at the cemetery and the recreation area. Flower beds were planted in conjunction with Cemetery Committee and Greenstone Nursery. Students will also be helping with the installation of the flooring at the Recreation Center on Thursday.

EADA business mixer will be Wednesday, October 7, 2009 from 5 to 7:00 p.m.

Omerza was named to serve on the board of directors for the Coalition of Greater Minnesota Cities and will also serve as co-chair of CGMC's energy and environment subcommittee.

Nikkola reported that the budget committee has completed reviewing the budget and is ready to present it to the council as a whole.

Harvest Moon Festival was successful for sales of the Ely 2010 calendars by Zupec and Debeltz.

Director Langowski reported on the problem of trees on Sheridan Street. There are 8 trees which most likely had died and been removed. Replacement costs are \$250 per tree. He proposed removing the grates and pouring concrete to fill holes. The grates could be sold but cost approximately \$1,000. MNDOT used to help with the tree replacement but will no longer replace the trees for the City of Ely. Skraba suggested the business owners, chamber and the city need to discuss options for improving Sheridan Street.

Mayor Skraba reported on funding for Mesabi Trail will be in three phases: 1) Soudan to the cell tower between Ely and Soudan will be the next link to be completed with funding help expected from Congressman Oberstar; 2) In 2012 when highway 169 is abandoned the trail will go from the cell tower to the City of Ely and 3) the final link will be from Embarrass to Tower. The trail has been completed in Itasca County and runs from Marble to Grand Marais.

Mayor Skraba met with the Emergency Preparedness Group regarding N1H1. It was suggested that Miner's Dry could be a possible location for community flu center if the hospital is inundated and could function as a triage center. Director Langowski said we would need two days in advance for heat, electric and plowing, and would need to get sprinkler system operational.

Moved by Shedly and supported by Debeltz to approve Miner's Dry be used as a location for community flu center providing all costs with the operation are paid for by the hospital. Motion carried unanimously.

Mayor Skraba requested a link be added to the city's website for N1H1 information for the public.

Chief Saw reported Officer William Hawley has received deployment orders from the MN Air National Guard for an unspecified period of time. He will be gone potentially 6-8 months.

City Attorney

City Attorney Klun reported on the need to determine ownership of the Lucky Boy parcels in order for the city to log that property. In 2006 it was determined that the city owned 29/32 of Government Lot 2, and all of lots 3, 4 and 5. Currently the city owns 30/32 of Government Lot 2.

Moved by Salerno supported by Nikkola to authorize Attorney Klun to update the abstracts on Lucky Boy Property, Government Lots 2-5 as presented. Associated costs will be paid out of the future sale of timber from the property. Motion carried unanimously.

Attorney Klun presented a letter from the Charter Commission letter dated August 19, 2009 as to the city's bidding process for health insurance coverage. Mayor Skraba reported that the process will be addressed at the Clerk/Treasurer's review. Attorney Klun will attend the next meeting of the Charter Commission and report on the council's response to their letter.

Attorney Klun presented the Independent Accountant Consultant contract. Mary Lee Erikson is requesting authorization to hire a sub-contractor while she is out recuperating from surgery during the month of October. The Employee Relations Committee recommends amending the contract.

Moved by Nikkola supported by Salerno to authorize Attorney Klun to draft an addendum to the Independent Accountant Consultant contract allowing her to hire a sub-contractor and authorizing the Mayor and Clerk to sign the addendum. Motion carried unanimously.

DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS

Clerk-Treasurer

Moved by Zupec supported by Nikkola to approve payment of the City and EUC Bills and payroll for the 1st half of September, 2009. Motion carried unanimously.

Moved by Zupec supported by Nikkola to advertise for the Clerical Assistant and Assistant Treasurer positions for 3 weeks through Friday, October 16, 2009. The positions will be published in the local paper and posted on the League of MN Cities website. The Employee Relations Committee will be defining the process for the hiring of these two positions. Motion carried unanimously.

City Operations Director

Director Langowski reported on the cost of replacing the dishwasher at the Community Center. The dishwasher currently in place is approximately 50 years old and was moved over from the hospital in the early 70's. Over the years the element has burned out due to no safety fail switch being installed. Cost of replacing the element is between \$1,700-1,900.

Cost or replacing the dishwasher would be approximately \$8,000. The budget committee will discuss this issue. Potentially a booster heater could be installed or the use of a chemical rinse may work. Langowski will review the options with staff and bring findings back to the council.

Bids were received for the sale of used City equipment as follows:

1. Western Plow (blade only): Tim Carlson \$321.49; Harold Langowski \$333.33; and Rusty Wetzel \$250.50.
2. 1996 Ford one ton truck with plow: Tara Shock \$5,000.00; Tim Carlson \$1,763.19; and Mauro Caruso \$2,000.00.

Moved by Sheddy supported by Salerno to accept the bids from Harold Langowski of \$333.33 for the Western Plow (blade only) and from Tara Shock of \$5,000.00 for the 1996 Ford one ton truck with plow. The proceeds will be credited to account 101-43100-581 for these sales. Motion carried unanimously.

Langowski reported that the city has met all of the MPCA MPDS permit requirements and the effluent standards. Everything is operating well. The council thanked the plant operators and Terry Jackson.

EUC Consent Agenda Items.

1. MN Power July bill for \$130,065
2. Payment of the KBM, Inc. Invoice #070916 for \$292.95

Moved by Debeltz supported by Zupec to approve payment of items 1-2 of the EUC consent agenda as presented above. Motion carried unanimously.

CLAIMS FOR PAYMENT

- A. RLK Inv #10 \$19,214.00 for 2nd Ave W Utilities Project
- B. Terrys Operational Services August bill \$600.00
- C. League of MN cities Insurance Trust Quarterly 4th installment \$31,584.75
- D. dsgw Architects Invoice #6 \$3,244.91
- E. Klun Law Firm Inv#15577 \$65.00 Storefront Loan for Blissful Body/Bish
- F. Klun Law Firm Inv# 15578 \$65.00 Storefront Loan for Matthew Roderick
- G. Klun Law Firm Inv# 15595 \$107.95 for August general matters
- H. Walker, Giroux & Hahne Inv# 38611 \$120.00 for research client sick leave
- I. VIC Inv# 7700001016 \$1,200.00 for Site: Lot 3, Block 1 Ely
- J. Patrick Conery August 31, 2009 statement \$5,346.61
- K. League of MN Cites membership Dues Invoice \$3,130.00
- L. Fahrner Asphalt Sealers Inv#9782 \$28,900. for Airport Cracked Seal
- M. Nardini fire Equip Co Inv# 351630 \$100 for Sato Building

Moved by Salerno supported by Nikkola to approve the claims for payments A-M as presented above. Motion carried unanimously.

OLD BUSINESS

Moved by Omerza supported by Debeltz to waive readings in entirety of all ordinances and resolutions. Motion carried unanimously.

Langowski reported he had spoken to Tony Mancuso of St. Louis County regarding the county's Request for Proposal for office space and Mr. Mancuso would like to be included in the city's discussions regarding proposed options. Langowski will submit notice to the county that the city will be reviewing the building assessment plan at the study session on September 29, 2009 and invite Mr. Mancuso to attend.

Council member Zupec requested the council entertain acquisition of a site for festivals from the state. Mike Jankovec and Mary Cich of the Boundary Waters Blues Festival presented a document with the requirements for a music festival site. Mayor Skraba reported that no date for a meeting with Morse Township has been scheduled yet.

Motion made by Zupec supported by Debeltz to begin process to acquire the Homer property for a festival site from the State of MN. Motion withdrawn by Zupec and second withdrawn by Debeltz until a meeting can be scheduled with Morse Township.

NEW BUSINESS

Moved by Nikkola supported by Omerza to hold a special meeting Friday, September 18, 2009 at 6:00 p.m. for union strategy. Motion carried unanimously.

Moved by Debeltz supported by Salerno to approve the interim use permit as recommended by the Planning & Zoning Commission for the 3rd annual Wolftrack Classic Sled Dog Race to be held March 6-8, 2010 on Miner's Drive and local trails. Joe Russell, event organizer, stated the event was previously held at Hidden Valley and has outgrown that site. Mr. Russell presented an overview of the event and stated they will not be erecting a warming tent. Ham radio operators will be setup along the trail routes and they will need to set up a main transmission area. He would like permission to setup a construction trailer for this purpose at the organizers cost. Mr. Russell requested the use of city cones and barricades. Motion carried unanimously.

An eight minute recess was taken prior to closing the meeting to discuss union strategy.

Meeting reopened at 8:28 p.m.

Moved by Nikkola supported by Salerno to hire union negotiator, Louis Russo. Motion carried unanimously.

Mayor Skraba reported that a special meeting will be held with Morse Township next week at the Joint Maintenance Facility and once the time and date are established the meeting will be posted.

Moved by Nikkola supported by Omerza to adjourn the meeting at 8:30 p.m. Motion carried unanimously.

Terri Boese
Clerk/Treasurer