

Council Study Session Minutes, February 26, 2013

I. Call to Order:

The Ely City Council Study Session was called to order by Mayor Petersen at 5:30pm on February 26, 2013 at the Ely City Hall.

Present: Council members Debeltz, Kess (arrived 5:32pm), Nikkola, Omerza, Polyner, Shedly and Mayor Petersen (7)

Absent: None

II. Additions or Omissions: None

III. Request to Appear: None

IV. Old Business: None

V. New Business:

A. MnDOT's Traffic Engineer, Rob Egge, discussed the traffic signals in Ely and the proposed construction and modifications to the project for this summer. He stated that in 5 years or less all of the Ely traffic lights would have to be replaced. The cost to replace a light is approximately \$200,000 of which the City would be responsible for half of the cost. At this point in time; they are only looking at the light on 1st Ave to remove completely. (The light on 3rd Ave will remain.) A traffic count was done last summer on 1st Ave. which results showed there was not enough traffic to warrant a traffic light. There will be another study done this summer during May, June and July where they will bag all of the lights at the 1st Ave intersection. Cameras will be placed in order to keep track of the traffic and pedestrian flow.

Council members expressed their concern that without that light on 1st Ave., the traffic will gain too much speed coming down the hill from the 3rd Ave light to the Central Ave light and especially in the winter, there would be danger of sliding through the light at Central Ave. The Mayor also pointed out that there is a lot of activity along Sheridan St with parked cars and people getting in and out of them. He feels the light keeps the traffic at a slower pace. Rob Egge pointed out that the light is not meant to control the speed on a street. A four way stop would not be an option at this intersection because it would create a back up of traffic.

Council member Omerza asked if there was a chance for a traffic light to be installed at the other end of town at 16th Ave. Rob Egge stated a written request for a traffic study at a certain location can always be submitted to MnDOT.

Clerk Langowski stated construction on Sheridan St will begin in late July of this year. One lane will be closed at a time to allow for thru traffic during the construction. It was noted that this should not affect the traffic study.

B. Clerk Langowski discussed in brief the current fund balance and the fund balance policy from the 2011 audit. There are 5 different fund balance items: Non spendable - \$39,423 (Airport fuel inventory, non-cash); Restricted-\$19,777 (lease deposits & employee contributions to health plans); Committed-\$1,125 (Pillow Rock); Assigned-\$0 (used for first six months of next year expenses); Unassigned-\$1,686,852 (44% of 2011 budgeted expenses).

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During the 2012 audit scheduled for the end of March 2013, we will discuss possible recommendations the auditors may have concerning future fund balance designations. Current fund balance policy requires not less than 25% of the next years budgeted expenditures are in unassigned reserves. The League recommends between 35% and 50%. With a fund balance also be set aside as assigned, we may need to adjust the current policy. Any requested changes will be brought to the Council.

Omerza/Debeltz moved to adjourn the meeting at 6:12pm. Motion carried unanimously.

Claire Huisman
Deputy Clerk