

**Special Council Meeting Minutes –Mayors Conference Room, Ely City Hall
November 30, 2017**

PRESENT: Council Members A.Forsman, Omerza, Callen, Debeltz, D.Forsman, and Mayor Novak,
Duluth Mayor Emily Larson, Commissioner Tom Rukavina, Phil Jents
Also Present: Warren Nikkola, Angela Campbell, Keith Vandervort, and Harold Langowski

Mayor Larson stated that she has been touring the County with St. Louis County Commissioners Rukavina, Nelson and Jugovich. She stated that Duluth is strong if St. Louis County is strong and vice versa.

Mayor Novak stated that he is concerned with the misunderstanding on the Duluth Council of the dependence they have on the iron range industry. We need to work together.

Commissioner Rukavina stated that Mayor Larson has lobbied against anti mining issues in Duluth.

A.Forsman stated that Duluth and Ely have a similar identity, mining, timber, manufacturing, and tourism.

Omerza said that she has spent a lot of time in Duluth, roads and transportation is a common issue. The biggest concern is the pull out of the CGMC; Duluth is one of the biggest recipients of LGA. Omerza challenged Duluth to rejoin the CGMC.

Ely does not have the draw of Duluth but we are working on improving our downtown Ely by working with Incredible Ely. We are using Duluth as a model for many things we are doing.

Mayor Larson state that \$88,000 is too much for them to pay for CGMC dues. They would need to prioritize that over staffing. The League of Minnesota Cities dues are \$6,000 and the national league is low as well.

Novak stated that history had shown that the CGMC has been our strongest lobbying force. Individual community lobbyists do not have the same effect.

Mayor Larson said that she does lobbying on her own for Duluth issues. She is open to considering joining the CGMC with the CGMC also having to come to the table.

Callen stated that Ely and Duluth rely on many of the same things. Northeastern Minnesota needs to stick together on the three aspects of the economy. Any disruption to one sector of the economy affects everyone, same as in Ely and Duluth.

D.Forsman stated that Duluth is the bigger sibling to Ely. Arcelor Mittal has around 300 employees with employees coming from Duluth. We need to work towards a level playing field from the Iron Range and Duluth.

D.Forsman commended Duluth on the many great events including the Cruze for Cancer and the drag race event.

D.Forsman and A.Forsman discussed the new Ely event, the Jake Forsman Car Show and Burnout competition. They have set up a scholarship for students going into a trade program. Trade programs are struggling to get students, and there are many opportunities in the trade professions. The event brought many people to Ely on a slow time of year and it will continue.

Debeltz is concerned that a Duluth councilor spoke against mining at a public hearing. Ely is struggling due to only having tourism. We need to have living wage jobs and people need to work together to get well-paying jobs. The Iron Range and jobs in Ely will greatly support Duluth as well. The school has declined enrollment. We need people to work together.

Nikkola stated that tourism is considered a silent sport in Ely. There is a decline in people pulling permits to enter the BWCAW. The system for permits is changing to first come first serve. Many local motor users cannot get day use permits, due to others abusing the system to keep them out. Currently 22,000 of 115,000 users of the BWCAW are motor uses.

Commissioner Rukavina stated that BWCAW permits are being abused.

Angela Campbell thanked Mayor Larson for her visit. Campbell stated that she is on numerous committees and works with Joanne Coombe with the Historical Society. The Ely Heritage Preservation Committee is doing historic walking tours with 44 buildings in Ely's downtown. We look to Duluth for leadership in many ways.

Mayor Larson commented that Ely is ahead of Duluth in this project.

Commissioner Rukavina stated that he is working on a scholarship program to go to one of the four 2-year institutions in St. Louis County. We will need the mayor's support on the Iron Range.

Mayor Novak stated that currently schools are not offering the same shop classes as in the past to spark interest in the trades.

A.Forsman stated in the Jake Forsman Scholarship there is a requirement of a reference from an employer. This requires students to have a part-time job to learn responsibility.

Mayor Larson thanked everyone for their honesty and does not feel Duluth is an older sibling but wants to be a partner and this is why she came today.

Harold R Langowski
Clerk/Treasurer