

**Council Minutes - February 18, 2020**  
**Regular Meeting Ely City Council – City Hall, Council Chambers**

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Novak called the Ely City Council Meeting to order at 5:30pm.

2. PRESENT : Council members A.Forsman, Kess, Omerza, Callen, Campbell, and Mayor Novak  
ABSENT: Council Member Debeltz

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

**Campbell/Callen moved to approve the minutes from the February 4, 2020 Regular Council Meeting. Motion Carried Unanimously.**

4. ADDITIONS OR OMISSIONS TO AGENDA: None

5. MAYOR'S REPORT

Mayor Novak indicated that several council members are going to be gone for the rescheduled March 10<sup>th</sup> Council Meeting.

**Kess/Omerza moved to reschedule the council meeting to Wednesday, March 4, 2020 at 5:30pm. Motion Carried Unanimously.**

6. CONSENT AGENDA: None

7. REQUESTS TO APPEAR: None

8. COMMITTEE REPORTS:

- A. Standing/Special

Heritage Preservation Commission: Minutes included in the agenda packet

Projects Committee: Minutes included in the agenda packet

Housing & Redevelopment Authority of Ely: Minutes included in the agenda packet

9. DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS:

- A. Clerk-Treasurer

- B. Fire Chief

- C. Library Director

Library Director Heinrich also gave an update of the upcoming events at the library which can be located on the Library Website.

- D. Police Chief

- E. City Attorney

**Omerza/Callen moved to approve the Mortgage Satisfactions for Nancy and Richard Petrzilka recorded on October 11, 2017 as Document No. 01319685 and recorded on September 14, 2016 as Document No. 01293526. Motion Carried Unanimously.**

F. City Engineer

10. COMMUNICATIONS: None

11. CLAIMS FOR PAYMENT:

**A. Omerza/Callen moved to approve the City and EUC claims for February 18, 2020 for \$376,127.99. Motion Carried Unanimously.**

12. OLD BUSINESS:

A. 2020 Committee Seats – Library Board

**Omerza/A.Forsman moved to approve David O'Donnell for the library board term expiring 1/31/2023. Motion Carried Unanimously.**

13. NEW BUSINESS:

**A. Omerza/Kess moved to approve the Election Judges for the Presidential Nomination Primary Election on March 3, 2020. Motion Carried Unanimously.**

**B. A.Forsman moved to approve the 2020 Ely Utilities Water, Sewer, and Electric Rate Recommendations of \$.50 per month increase on the Water fixed charge, \$1.00 per month increase on the Sewer fixed charge, and a 1% increase across all categories for Electric. Motion Carried Unanimously.**

C. Police Chief Job Description

Mayor Novak asked every council member to bring any changes they might have to the police chief job description to the clerk's office before the next council meeting.

14. OPEN FORUM

Carol Orban stated that Mayor Novak spoke last Friday about Senator Bakk moving his fundraiser from Fortune Bay Casino and called for a boycott of Fortune Bay. Our Mayor said "Thank you Senator Bakk for canceling your annual event at Fortune Bay and moving it to Giants Ridge. IRRRB and the trades should follow suit. The Fun Run should follow suit." Orban said she had another quote from Mayor Novak, "We want people to get good jobs and spend their money. Why would they go and spend their money to profit an organization that doesn't support their way of life?"

Mayor Novak asked where those quotes came from.

Orban indicated that they came from the Hibbing Paper.

Mayor stated that there are a few misquotes in there, he never said Canadian Waters was against mining. Mayor Novak indicated that he is not sure where a lot of the quotes came from.

Orban asked if Novak stated that "they shouldn't spend their money to profit an organization that doesn't support their way of life?"

Novak stated that he possibly said something like that in a different context. Novak stated that he stands behind a statement like that, because if I'm working in the mines and you don't support my job, I'm not going to spend money there.

Orban stated that our neighbors have every right to want their water, hunting grounds, fishing grounds, and wild rice grounds to be protected. They have every right to advocate for their point of view.

Becky Rom indicated that the city should make a public statement that the city does not support the boycott of any business or the boycott of Fortune Bay. Rom indicated that we do not want

the head of our city government promoting and advocating for the boycott of any business, but particular with a tribe that has a government to government relationship.

Betty Firth stated that she concurs with the statements of Carol and Becky. Firth stated it was outside the domain of the City Mayor and Council to make these statements. It's at the heart of seeking peace in our communities that we need to do whatever we can to eliminate racism. Firth stated that this is underlying with racism, which often we do not recognize, we may think it is other issues. Firth stated that she does not accept that the mayor is supporting labor and jobs. Do you want to put yourself in position of boycotting businesses and our fellow Native American neighbors?

Peta Barrett stated that she was appalled with reading the quotes from our Mayor in the Hibbing Paper and felt like it was a racist move to suggest that we should promote a boycott of the Bois Forte Band. It's a slap in the face to our six sovereign nations that signed the letter of support opposing copper-nickel mining. They have a right to speak their mind just like we do. To advocate that the rest of us should jump on board with that is not right, as a business owner on main street, I wonder if I'm next, is Piragis next? We should support all residents. Barrett stated that these sovereign nations have a right.

Steve Piragis indicated that whether you are a casino run by an Indian tribe or a small business owner run by a family we don't appreciate the comments of boycotting. The council should consider making a public statement not supporting boycotts.

Carol Orban indicated she will send the article from the Hibbing Daily Tribune to the Clerk to forward to the Council.

15. ADJOURN

Mayor Novak adjourned the meeting at 6:02pm without objection.

Casey Velcheff  
Deputy Clerk