

**Council Minutes - October 20, 2020**  
**Regular Meeting Ely City Council – City Hall, Council Chambers**

1. CALL TO ORDER

The regular City Council Meeting on October 6, 2020 was called to order by Mayor Novak at 5:30pm.

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

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

**Campbell/Debeltz moved to approve the minutes from the October 6, 2020 Regular Council Meeting. Motion Carried 6-0-1 with Omerza absent.**

4. ADDITIONS OR OMISSIONS TO AGENDA:

- A. Addition 6.C. Reschedule the November 3<sup>rd</sup> Council Meeting to Tuesday, November 10, 2020 since the Elections are on November 3<sup>rd</sup>.

**Addition A was added without objection.**

5. MAYOR'S REPORT

Mayor Novak indicated that the governor is supposed to sign the bonding bill tomorrow which includes \$1,500,000 for phase 2 of the new trailhead.

Swearing in ceremony for Police Officer Maxwell Brewer

6. CONSENT AGENDA:

- A. Motion to waive readings in entirety of all ordinances and resolutions on tonight's agenda  
B. Special Council meeting on October 27, 2020 at 5pm for Sale of the Bonds for the refunding of City Hall and Library and Business Assistance for the CARES Act Funding Applications.  
C. Reschedule the November 3<sup>rd</sup> Council Meeting to Tuesday, November 10, 2020 since the Elections are on November 3<sup>rd</sup>.

**Debeltz/Campbell moved to approve the Consent Agenda items A-C. Motion Carried 6-0-1 with Omerza absent.**

7. REQUESTS TO APPEAR

- A. Carol Orban and Betty Firth – Resolution asking City Council affirming support of a free and fair election.

Betty Firth read the resolution Orban and Firth brought forward:

Be It Resolved:

The Ely, Minnesota City Council resolves that our democratic system rests upon the innate dignity and worth of every citizen. Its laws provide equal protection to all.

The Ely, Minnesota City Council opposes any threats to destabilize any election, including any actions that undermine citizens' trust in the integrity of our electoral system. Ely officials involved in any stage of the electoral process assure that the vote of every citizen – whether they vote in-person, drop box, or absentee ballot – will be counted.

Firth indicated that they are concerned about the reports they have heard. Firth asked if the council is prepared to protect the citizen's vote.

Orban indicated that they are not concerned with the City Clerks or the Election Judges not counting votes. Orban asked if the city has a plan if something would go wrong with the elections.

Mayor Novak indicated that Yes, the city has a plan. Mayor Novak indicated that with Roberts Rules of Order the City Council cannot approve a resolution without it having the proper numbers from the Clerks Office.

Kess asked if we can make a motion with the same wordage of the proposed resolution from Firth and Orban. Mayor Novak indicate that would be fine.

**Kess/A.Forsman moved that the Ely, Minnesota City Council resolves that our democratic system rests upon the innate dignity and worth of every citizen. Its laws provide equal protection to all. The Ely, Minnesota City Council opposes any threats to destabilize any election, including any actions that undermine citizens' trust in the integrity of our electoral system. Ely officials involved in any stage of the electoral process assure that the vote of every citizen – whether they vote in-person, drop box, or absentee ballot – will be counted.**

Kess appreciates the information the Clerk Langowski provided. Langowski indicated in his memo that we take the role of election administrator very seriously. Langowski included a copy of the oath that the election judges swear to at each election. Langowski also included information from the Secretary of State's Office concerning pole watchers and challengers. Both Casey Velcheff and Langowski complete 4+ hours of training to be election administrators. On Election Day at the polling place Katie Richards and Velcheff are the head judges and complete three hours of training and the remaining election judges complete two hours of training that is provided through the St. Louis County Auditor's office and administrated by Velcheff and Langowski. We remain in constant communication with the County Auditor's Office and Secretary of State's Office during the election cycle to be up to date on all current training, issues and procedures. Covid-19 represents some new issues and challenges for everyone and the City of Ely is well prepared for the election.

A.Forsman indicated that he doesn't feel like there is a need for this motion/resolution, we have a outstanding staff for the city and the election judges are well trained and take an oath for a free and fair election.

Mayor Novak indicated that by passing this motion we are reaffirming what we are already doing.

**Motion Carried 6-0-1 with Omerza Absent.**

8. COMMITTEE REPORTS:

A. Standing/Special

Cemetery Committee – Minutes included in the council packet

Heritage Preservation Commission

**Campbell/A.Forsman moved to approve the recommendation from the Heritage Preservation Commission that the City ask \$79,000 for the Ely Community Center when the building is advertised for sale.**

Mayor Novak asked how they came up with the price of \$79,000

A.Forsman indicated that the asking price we had before the Yoon's purchased it was \$79,000

Langowski indicated that the building was appraised when it went up for sale before.

**Motion Carried 5-1-1 with Omerza Absent and Campbell abstaining.**

Campbell presented the motion from the Heritage Preservation Commission, and abstained from the motion.

Projects Committee

**Callen/Debeltz moved to approve the recommendation from the Projects Committee to forward the request for work force housing to the HRA for consideration. Motion Carried 5-0-1 with Omerza Absent.**

Housing & Redevelopment Authority- Minutes included in the Council Packet

Community Economic Development Joint Powers Board-

Mayor Novak indicated that they are planning on the legislative meeting at the Grand Ely Lodge in December. They are planning the legislatures and government entities would meet first then community members and legislatures after to follow with social distancing guidelines.

9. DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS:

A. Clerk-Treasurer

Community Center Tank Removal –

Langowski indicated that following the removal of the heating oil tank at the Community Center the MPCA required additional soil testing. That soil testing discovered contamination in a larger area near the Community Center and surrounding areas. This area once had numerous buried tanks and we are certain this contributed to the findings. Attached is a proposed and supplemental change order for drilling and sampling. This work is 90% reimbursable by the MPCA. NTS \$26,573 and \$2,293 for a total of \$28,866.

**A.Forsman/Callen moved to approve the proposal for \$28,866. Motion Carried 6-0-1 with Omerza Absent.**

B. Fire Chief

C. Library Director

Library Director Heinrich discussed curbside pickup and programs they are doing at the library which can be found on the Library website.

D. Police Chief

Chief Houde reminded everyone that Calendar Parking starts on November 1<sup>st</sup>.

Chief Houde Thanked the other agency's and the Ely Police Department for the critical case that we had in Ely last week.

E. City Attorney

**i. Campbell/Kess moved to approve the Note and Mortgage for the Residential Rehab Loan for Dean Hanninen for 417 E Pattison St for a new propane furnace for \$6000. Motion Carried 6-0-1 with Omerza absent.**

- ii. **Debeltz/Callen moved to approve the Note and Mortgage for the Commercial Renovation Loan for E. Chapman Street Properties, LLC for 115 E Chapman St for the Chapman Street Pocket Park for \$17,500.**

Langowski stated that the contractors started yesterday and are hoping to get done in the next couple of weeks. The City received a \$50,000 Beautification grant from the IRRRB, the City of Ely will provide some in-kind services for the lighting and E. Chapman St Properties will pay for the rest.

**Motion Carried 6-0-1 with Omerza absent.**

- iii. **Callen/A.Forsman moved to approve the Mortgage Satisfaction for Serson Enterprises, Inc., Peter J Serson and Judith M. Serson recorded on August 21, 2018 as Document No. 01338973. Motion Carried 6-0-1 with Omerza absent.**

F. City Engineer

10. COMMUNICATIONS:

- A. St Louis County – Get Help with Housing Costs due to Covid-19 Hardships
- B. MN Mayors Together Executive Committee Broadband Letter
- C. RAMS – Legislative Session Information
- D. Habitat for Humanity – Habitat Highlights
- E. Ely Community Resource Quarter 3 Progress Report

Kess commented regarding the RAMS Legislative Priorities, he feels that LGA is very important as a legislative priority.

**Kess/Campbell moved to let RAMS know that a priority from the City of Ely is to preserve the Local Government Aid (LGA). Motion Carried 6-0-1 with Omerza Absent.**

11. CLAIMS FOR PAYMENT:

- A. **Debeltz/Callen moved to approve City and EUC claims for October 20, 2020 for \$312,896.18. Motion Carried 6-0-1 with Omerza Absent.**

12. OLD BUSINESS:

13. NEW BUSINESS:

14. OPEN FORUM

15. ADJOURN

Mayor Novak adjourned the meeting at 6:10pm without objection.

Casey Velcheff  
Deputy Clerk