

**Regular Meeting Ely City Council Minutes– City Hall, Council Chambers
September 5, 2023**

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Omerza called the meeting to order at 5:30pm in the City Hall Council Chambers.

PRESENT: Council members A.Forsman, Kess, Debeltz, Callen, Campbell, and Mayor Omerza

ABSENT: Council Member Bisbee

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Debeltz/Campbell moved to approve minutes from the August 15, 2023 Regular Council Meeting. Motion Carried 6-0-1 with Bisbee Absent.

ADDITIONS OR OMISSIONS TO AGENDA:

A. OMIT - Julia Petrzilka – Edible Cannabinoid Dealer License Renewal

B. Addition 7.A Linda Maki – Funding for Senior Center

C. Addition 7.A. Curt Laine – Funding for Senior Center

D. Addition 8.A Updated Budget Minutes

Debeltz/Callen moved to approve the Additions and Omission A-D from the agenda.

Motion Carried 6-0-1 with Bisbee Absent.

MAYOR'S REPORT:

Mayor Omerza indicated that we lost a friend on the Iron Range, Mark Phillips IRRR Commissioner.

A.Forsman stated that Philips made you feel like you were important to him. He was a champion for our entire Iron Range.

A Moment of Silence was had for Philips.

CONSENT AGENDA:

Callen/Kess moved to Motion to waive readings in entirety of all ordinances and resolutions on tonight's agenda. Motion Carried 6-0-1 with Bisbee Absent.

REQUESTS TO APPEAR:

~~OMITTED – Julia Petrzilka – Edible Cannabinoid Dealer License Renewal~~

Linda Maki – Funding for Senior Center

Linda Maki at 19 W Harvey

Maki apologized for not asking for an amount at the budget meeting she attended.

Maki indicated that she is the current treasurer of the Ely Senior Center and is the youngest member of the board at 72. The President of the Senior Center is Theresa Jamnick at 85, the vice-president Virgie Ivancich at 86 and the secretary is Joan Luhta at 92.

In 1986 a group of civic minded individuals formed the non-profit organization Ely Area Senior Citizens, Inc. to promote and advance the interests and welfare of all senior citizens in Ely and the surrounding area and to contribute to the recreational, social, and civic welfare of the community. They acquired Rothman's Garage and gave their personal money, time, and energy to create the Ely Senior Center. Women would come in to bake cookies, serve coffee, entertain, and help each other. Then mothers had to go to work to help support their families. People got busy with their lives and had less time to help each other. But the Senior Center was still needed and is still needed as a place to find help, to enjoy life, and a place where everyone is welcome.

The Ely Senior Center has been self-sufficient, serving the needs of the area's seniors and the entire community for nearly 40 years. We are currently home to the Praise Fellowship Church, house the City's Elections, State of Minnesota driver's license testing, Thai Cuisine by Pann, Northwoods Partner's Memories and Movement and Caregiver's Support meetings, NLAA, Friends of the Library, PTO, and Slovenian Union events, and a wide variety of meetings and activities supporting the whole community. Today they have 200 members supported by only 4 directors and a handful of active members who work tirelessly to keep the doors open. They raise funds by leasing space in our building. They sponsor weekly bingo games, bake sales, raffles, rummage sales and luncheons. They fundraise constantly to provide the \$2000 necessary monthly just to pay the bills and struggle to make much needed repairs to an aging building. They recently remodeled the kitchen, windows, doors, lighting and ceilings at a cost of \$120,000. This month, a new water heater is costing nearly \$20,000. They need a new roof, new bathrooms, new heating system, and they need to save the crumbling storefront. Maki indicated that if they are constantly fundraising just to keep the doors open, they cannot fundraise to help our community. They do not have the time to fundraise so they can replace the senior lunch program recently abandoned by AEOA. They do not have time to help our fellow seniors stay active and involved in the community. They are struggling to keep the Senior Center, and they need help.

Maki indicated that while most senior centers obtain their funding from many different sources, the number one source is local government. They already receive contributions from Morse and Fall Lake Townships. Maki indicated it is time the City of Ely steps up. The median age in Ely is 52, the median age of this council is 58. Maki stated it is time for this council and this community to FULLY support the Ely Senior Center. Maki indicated they need the full monetary support of \$24,000 annually and we need your full personal support. They need every person in this community and surrounding townships to get involved and help keep our Senior Center, a place where everyone is welcome.

Curt Laine – Funding for Senior Center

Not present at the meeting

Gerald Tyler – Senior Center Funding

Tyler stated he is at the meeting on behalf of Up North Jobs and the Ely Area Development Association. Tyler indicated that funding for the Senior Center is their biggest challenge. Funding for operations cannot come from the IRRR they only fund projects, but it can come from the City of Ely. Tyler hopes that we will be able to get together to discuss operation expenses of \$24,000.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Standing/Special

Projects Committee – Minutes included in the Council Packet

Planning & Zoning Commission & Board of Adjustment

Campbell/Kess moved to approve the recommendation from Planning and Zoning to have a joint Study Session Meeting on September 26th to discuss the updated permissible and conditional uses list. Motion Carried 6-0-1 with Bisbee Absent.

Budget Committee

Matter of Information for Review: Requested 2024 Budget from Department Heads and Boards/Committees

A.Forsman/Campbell moved to approve the recommendation from Budget Committee to approve the purchase of the Radar sign from Radarsign for \$4,415 using the Public Safety Aid. Motion Carried 6-0-1 with Bisbee Absent.

A.Forsman/Campbell moved to approve the recommendation from Budget Committee to include \$7500 for the Senior Center and \$2500 for the Heritage Preservation Commission in the 2024 Budget.

A.Forsman indicated that at the budget meeting a number that was given for what the Senior Center needed. The \$7500 is the recommendation that the Budget Committee came up with. Kess stated that Linda Maki came to the Budget meeting about a month ago, at that time an urgency for the money didn't seem needed. Kess indicated that if more is needed a plan should be put together to see the revenues and expenses of the Senior Center. The \$7500 is a good place to start and maybe we can set up a small committee to go through what is actually needed. The city will be setting out maximum levy soon.

Langowski stated that the next Budget meeting is on September 18th. Langowski indicated that the City did give the Senior Center a Storefront Loan in 2020 and they received \$21,359 of Covid Relief funds. Our maximum levy will be set at the next council meeting, but we will have a budget meeting before that to discuss the maximum levy. Last year the Town of Morse contributed \$400 to the Senior Center.

Linda Maki indicated that the city abandoned the Community Center several years ago and the Senior Center has taken over the Community Center duties with rentals to the community.

A.Forsman indicated that the \$7500 is a placeholder and we can look at it again at the Budget meeting. We also need the support from the surrounding communities also.

Campbell stated that the Heritage Preservation Commission is going on 10 years and has not asked for funds in the past, all projects have been funded by grants or members funds.

Campbell indicated that they had asked for \$10,000 for the current requests are for \$2000 towards the Ely Memorial High School centennial anniversary oral history project, \$5000 for the Historic Downtown Walking Tour, and \$3000 to develop the Historic Ely Driving Tour Brochure. Langowski indicated that the historic preservation commission is also responsible for the federal historical place in Ely which is the Pioneer Mine Site. We are working with the Arts and Heritage Committee to do some improvements to both the entrance, the lighting and the Miners Memorial that has been under construction to be funded for quite some time. The Miners Memorial is a commitment from the city for \$9500 for the concrete and ramp repairs and the lighting through our lighting repair CIP program.

Motion Carried 6-0-1 with Bisbee Absent.

A.Forsman/Kess moved to approve the recommendation from Budget Committee to add \$9,000 to the Ambulance Service for the Ambulance building operations in the 2024 Budget.

A.Forsman indicated that the \$9000 is the City of Ely's share of 32% for building operation expenses for 2024.

Langowski stated that all the funding for the building operations is through the Ely Ambulance Joint Powers Board. We are hoping to have a budget from the Ambulance Service at the next Ely Ambulance Joint Powers Board, then each entity will be billed for their percentage of the

building operations. Then we will have money in an account to pay building operations expenses such as heat, utilities and building maintenance.

Motion Carried 6-0-1 with Bisbee Absent.

A.Forsman/Debeltz moved to approve the recommendation from Budget Committee to receipt Police abandoned property profits to the equipment replacement fund. Motion Carried 6-0-1 with Bisbee Absent.

A.Forsman/Campbell moved to approve the recommendation from Budget Committee to put the Waste Water Treatment Plants 200KW generator up for bids. Motion Carried 6-0-1 with Bisbee Absent.

A.Forsman/Callen moved to approve the recommendation from Budget Committee to purchase the 2016 Ford Explorer from the Ambulance Service for \$15,500 for the Utility Department. Motion Carried 6-0-1 with Bisbee Absent.

A.Forsman/Callen moved to approve the recommendation from Budget Committee to get bids on a new pickup truck for the Electric Department. Motion Carried 6-0-1 with Bisbee Absent.

Matter of information – Future budget meetings will be held at 4pm instead of 4:30pm on the 3rd Monday of the month.

Ely Utilities Commission (EUC)

Recommendation from EUC to dispose of an old generator from the Wastewater Treatment Facility by putting it up for sale. – Approved Under Budget Committee

Recommendation from EUC to purchase the SUV from the Ely Ambulance Service for \$15,500. – Approved Under Budget Committee

Recommendation from EUC to request quotes for a new truck for the Electric Department based on specifications. – Approved Under Budget Committee

A.Forsman/Callen moved to approve the recommendation from EUC to purchase a new line tracer for the Electric Department for \$4,790.00. Motion Carried 6-0-1 with Bisbee Absent.

A.Forsman/Campbell moved to approve the recommendation from EUC to approve the Substantial Completion of the Waste Water Treatment Facility Project.

A.Forsman indicated that the EUC Commissioners toured the new waste water facility to see the improvements that were made. A.Forsman stated he took the tour before these improvements were done and to see the improvements that have been made and how it is going to handle our waste and our inflow from storms it has been able to handle. This was money well spent, and 96% of money for the project came from grants.

Motion Carried 6-0-1 with Bisbee Absent.

A.Forsman/Callen moved to approve the recommendation from EUC to approve the Waste Water Treatment Facility Project Change Order #19 for \$1,897.04 and Change Order #20 for \$11,556.89. Motion Carried 6-0-1 with Bisbee Absent.

A.Forsman/Campbell moved to approve the recommendation from EUC to pay Butch Gornik \$450.00 for consulting services. Motion Carried 6-0-1 with Bisbee Absent.

A.Forsman/Debeltz moved to approve the recommendation from EUC to approve a lighting rebate to Circle K for \$1,363.70 and residential AC/Heat rebates for \$400.00 to Roy Anderson and \$400.00 to Derek Jenson. Motion Carried 6-0-1 with Bisbee Absent.

Telecommunications Advisory Board (TAB): Minutes included in the Council Packet
Langowski stated that we are working on converting over to hi def with Midco for the Local Ely TV channels. The current equipment is from 2007. We are working on updating the equipment along with Midco's help.

Employee Relations (ER)

Debeltz/Campbell moved to approve the recommendation from ER to form a negotiating committee for the Supervisors of Other than Essential Workers contract that starts on January 1, 2024. Motion Carried 6-0-1 with Bisbee Absent.

Negotiating Committee will consist of Mayor Omerza, Council Member Campbell and Debeltz and Back-up Council Member Callen.

Ambulance Joint Powers Board

Invoice 2023-050 to the Ely Area Ambulance Joint Powers for the 2023 Operating Subsidy for per capita of \$15.15 for 48,616.35.

A.Forsman/Kess moved to short pay invoice 2023-050 to the Ely Area Ambulance Joint Powers as budgeted for the \$34,300.

A. Forsman stated that last month the council provided the opportunity for the other Joint Powers members to step up and to help pay down what the Ambulance Service needed this year. Forsman suggested that we should stick with what we decided last month, which was to pay what we had budgeted. In 2022 through at least May 2023, the City of Ely and the Joint Powers has requested budgets from the Ambulance Service and justifications and we have not received anything yet, we had no idea what we were being requested for payment from the Ambulance Service.

Motion Carried 6-0-1 with Bisbee Absent.

DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS:

Clerk-Treasurer

Donation of Dock from Nan and Gerald Snyder to be used at the North end of Miner's Lake.

Debeltz/Campbell moved to accept the donation of an Aluminum dock with composite decking from Nan and Gerald Snyder with an estimated value of \$6000 to be used at the Northeast end of Miner's Lake. Motion Carried 6-0-1 with Bisbee Absent.

Debeltz stated he would like to send a letter of thanks to the Snyder's for their donation.

1st Class Boilers license service to ISD 696 on an interim basis
Langowski indicated that currently the school does not have a 1st Class Boilers License operator. In order for the school's boilers to legally run they need to be covered by a 1st Class Boiler Operator. Bob Anderson the city's Building Engineer is a 1st Class Boiler Operator and is willing to have the city contract with the school on an interim basis.

A.Forsman/Debeltz moved to contract with the school for Bob Anderson to cover the 1st Class Boilers License on an interim basis with the city invoicing for the services. Motion Carried 6-0-1 with Bisbee Absent.

Fire Chief

Chief Marshall discussed the recent calls for the fire department. Marshall indicated that the 1983 Seagrave Ladder Truck will be going out to Auction.

September 27th from 4pm-7pm is the Public Safety Open House

Library Director

Library Director Heinrich discussed the current programing at the library which can be found on the library website.

Police Chief

Debeltz/Campbell moved to approve the Memorandum of Understanding between LELS Local 55 and the City of Ely regarding Part-Time Officers. Motion Carried 6-0-1 with Bisbee Absent.

Chief Houde stated that today was the first day of school, and thing went well for drop off and pick up. Harvest Moon is this coming weekend, be aware of the extra traffic in town and around the park. We will be doing the emergency messages again to sign up send a message to 888777 – HarvestMoon and you will receive messages regarding Harvest Moon this weekend.

City Attorney

Debeltz/Callen moved to approve the Note and Mortgage for the Residential Rehab Loan for Josh Brang and Sarah Murn at 931 E Harvey St for \$10,000 for a new propane boiler. Motion Carried 6-0-1 with Bisbee Absent.

City Engineer

COMMUNICATIONS: None

CLAIMS FOR PAYMENT:

- A. City and EUC Claims for September 5th, 2023 for \$197,325.41.
- B. League of Minnesota Membership dues for 2023-2024 for \$4018.00
- C. Minnesota Mayors Association Membership for 2023-2024 for \$30.00
- D. Coalition of Greater MN Cities 2024 membership dues for \$6153.00.

Debeltz/Callen moved to approve the Claims for Payment items A-D. Motion Carried 6-0-1 with Bisbee Absent.

E. Minnesota Association of Small Cities 2023-2024 membership dues for \$1,644.05

A.Forsman/Kess moved to decline Claims for Payment item E.

A.Forsman indicated that in the past we have not been a member of Minnesota Association of Small Cities.

Mayor Omerza stated that the Executive Director of Minnesota Association of Small Cities came to Ely recently and talked with Langowski.

Langowski indicated that the Executive Director came to discuss the things that the Minnesota Association of Small Cities work on, our issues don't always line up with what League of Minnesota Cities and the Coalition of Greater Minnesota Cities because those entities are larger. Langowski indicated that we can consider this membership in future budgets.

OLD BUSINESS:

NEW BUSINESS:

Campbell/Callen moved to approve Resolution 2023-018 Resolution Authorizing to Execute Minnesota Department of Transportation Grant Agreement for Airport Improvement Excluding Land Acquisition. Roll Called: Council Members A.Forsman – Yes, Kess- Yes, Debeltz – Yes, Callen – Yes, Campbell – Yes, Bisbee – Absent, and Mayor Omerza – Yes. Motion Carried 6-0-1 with Bisbee Absent.

Debeltz/Kess moved to approve the in-kind request from Chamber of Commerce for the Harvest Moon Festival. Motion Carried 6-0-1 with Bisbee Absent.

Kess/A.Forsman moved to approve the renewal of Stinky Pete's Edible Cannabinoid Dealer License for 2023-2024 pending proper paperwork, insurance, fees and certificate of occupancy.

A.Forsman indicated that there was an issue with their certificate of occupancy and this motion is dependent on them receiving their certificate of occupancy through our building department. Chief Houde indicated that Building Official Whitney will be working with them to get their Certificate of Occupancy, but Houde indicated that he has been in communication with the owner of the business as well.

Langowski indicated that if we do not get a Certificate of Occupancy there will not be a license issued.

Motion Carried 6-0-1 with Bisbee Absent.

A.Forsman/Callen moved to task the City Attorney to update the City Code on Exclusive Liquor Stores to coincide with MN State Statutes. Motion Carried 6-0-1 with Bisbee Absent.

OPEN FORUM: None

ADJOURN:

Mayor Omerza adjourned the council meeting at 6:36pm without objection.

Casey Velcheff
Deputy Clerk