

**Regular Meeting Ely City Council – City Hall, Council Chambers
November 7, 2023 – Minutes**

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, Bisbee, and Mayor Omerza

ABSENT: None

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Debeltz/Callen moved to approve the minutes from the October 17, 2023 Regular Council Meeting. Motion Carried Unanimously.

ADDITIONS OR OMISSIONS TO AGENDA:

- A. Addition 8.A Library Board
- B. Addition 9.B. Fire Department Minutes and Quarter 3 Summary
- C. Addition 13.F Resolution Authorizing City of Ely to Make Application to and Accept Funds from the FY 2023 Development Infrastructure Grant Program and Community Infrastructure Fund Program

Debeltz/Campbell moved to accept the additions A-C. Motion Carried Unanimously

MAYOR'S REPORT:

Mayor Omerza congratulated the Volleyball team for going to state for the 2nd year in a row.

Also, thanks to the Fire Department and Police Department for sending them off.

Mayor Omerza indicated that herself, Chief Marshall, Clerk Langowski attended a table top discussion regarding wildfires that was organized by Bradley Roy Ely's Emergency Manager.

Several other entities were present including the US Forest Service, MN DNR, and surrounding townships to discuss wildfires in the area.

Langowski stated that it was a good exercise and was good to hear from Greenwood Township of the good and bad that happened during that wildfire. We have had 3-4 fires in the last 20 years that have been close to Ely, it is critical that we have the aircraft at the Ely Airport.

Chief Marshall stated that it was good discussion, especially with the Memorial Weekend fire on the west end of town with the hospital, carefree living, and Sibley and Grahek apartments in that area. Good discussion on evacuation practices and what to do and where to go.

CONSENT AGENDA:

Callen/Debeltz moved to waive readings in entirety of all ordinances and resolutions on tonight's agenda. Motion Carried Unanimously

REQUESTS TO APPEAR:

Frederica Musgrave – would like Ely to adopt Codes of Ethics, Standards of Conduct, Conflict of Interest, Open Meeting Policy – 30 W Shagawa

Musgrave stated that she has witnessed a positive welcoming government since speaking and coming to meetings. She was impressed at how the city handled the city animal ordinance and taking public comment and listening to the public. Musgrave thanked Chief Houde for how he handled the situation after her dog was attacked by another dog.

Musgrave indicated that she would like the city to adopt a code of ethics, standards of conduct, conflict of interest, and an open meeting policy. She has researched through the Ely City Code, Charter and other documents and has not found these policies.

Musgrave indicated that she observed some disturbing words, behaviors and attitudes from the planning and zoning meeting on October 19th. Musgrave stated that council members should devote their official time to problems of basic policy and act as liaisons between the city and the general public. The League of Minnesota Cities suggests to increase citizen input and the reasons why it is important, one way is to increase positive feelings about government is to promote citizen involvement. In observation of the Planning and Zoning Meeting on October 19th she felt like the members felt they were superior to the council and superior to the public. Some of the P&Z members on voiced that they were upset on the outcome of the Public Hearing on the RV Park. Musgrave said her take on it is the P&Z members did not feel that the council should have the ability to overturn their recommendations or discussions. Musgrave indicated that she would like all city meetings to be recorded and broadcasted.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Standing/Special

Heritage Preservation Commission (HPC)

Campbell/Debeltz moved to approve the recommendation from HPC to request the City Council to authorize issuance of the RFP, Heritage Preservation Commission Video/Oral Histories Project, to solicit vendors to provide videography services. Motion Carried Unanimously.

Campbell stated that the HPC is having a History Happy Hour on November 15th at 5pm at the Boathouse. Thanks to Jess Edberg for putting this on.

Library Board – Minutes included in the council packet and additions packet

Planning and Zoning & Board of Adjustment: Minutes included in the council packet

Ely Utilities Commission (EUC)

A.Forsman/Kess moved to approve the recommendation from EUC to accept the engineering proposal from AE2S for professional services at the Water Treatment Plant, estimated at \$33,000 to be paid by the hour. Motion Carried Unanimously

A.Forsman/Debeltz moved to approve the recommendation from EUC to purchase the regular cab ¾ ton Ford from Lundgren’s for \$46,651.64 for the electric department.

A.Forsman indicated that we received 4 proposals and this was the best price.

Motion Carried Unanimously.

A.Forsman/Campbell moved to approve the recommendation from EUC to write off old, uncollectable utility accounts.

Langowski indicated that it is around \$36,000 and some of these accounts were really old. Now we do special assessments on delinquent utility accounts and assess the property taxes.

Motion Carried Unanimously.

A.Forsman/Campbell moved to approve the recommendation from EUC to allow operators and commissioners to attend the Wastewater Operations and Collection Facilities Conference November 28-30, 2023 in Brooklyn Park. Motion Carried Unanimously

A.Forsman/Bisbee moved to approve the recommendation from EUC to approve \$347,225.23 payment of EUC September bills. Motion Carried Unanimously

A.Forsman/Campbell moved to approve the recommendation from EUC to pay Anthony Gornik \$175.00 for consulting services. Motion Carried Unanimously.

A.Forsman/Callen moved to approve the recommendation from EUC to pay AE2S \$14,167.25 for WWTF Improvements Project. Motion Carried Unanimously

A.Forsman/Campbell moved to approve the recommendation from EUC to move forward with AMPTEK flow meter wiring installation at the Water Treatment Plant (WTP) for \$5,585. Motion Carried Unanimously

Telecommunications Advisory Board (TAB)

Debeltz/Bisbee moved to approve the recommendation from TAB to approve the purchase totaling \$12,000 from Cablecast following the successful demonstration of the equipment to Todd and Mauro.

Langowski indicated that this will be the conversion to high definition for the Ely TV Channels.

Motion Carried Unanimously

Langowski stated that he has had several people ask about the meeting being live streamed on-line. Midco franchise fees are how we pay for the equipment for Ely TV and for Todds contracted fees for his time.

Langowski stated that Todd is always looking for extra help with filming events like High School games, meetings and other events around town, if anyone is interested let Todd or the Clerk's office know.

Employee Relations

Debeltz/Bisbee moved to approve the recommendation from Employee Relations to hire both Scott Kochendorfer and Janet Dunnom to be trained in for fill in for the Police Department Administrative Assistant. Motion Carried Unanimously.

Range Association of Municipalities & Schools (RAMS): Minutes included in the council packet

DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS:

Clerk-Treasurer

2023 Demolition Bids

Langowski indicated that the City of Ely received two bids for the demolition of two tax forfeited properties located at 726 E Camp and 131 South Central. St Louis County did the clean out of all the personal property, Hazardous Material Assessment and the abatement on one of the properties. We will assess the demolition costs to these properties once they go to auction with St. Louis County. The low bid was G-Men Environmental Services at \$47,882. We have also applied to the IRRR for funding for these demolitions totaling \$16,566.

Callen/A.Forsman moved to award the 2023 Demolition Bid to G-Men for \$47,882.00. Motion Carried Unanimously

Fire Chief

Chief Marshall discussed the recent calls for the fire department. The fire department had their first carbon monoxide call which is a reminder to change the batteries in your smoke detectors. Fire Department Minutes and Quarter 3 Summary- In Quarter 3 they have 88 medical calls, 12 Fire Calls, and 9 other (meetings, training, etc). Marshall indicated that the response rated for

fire calls ranged from a low of 0%(2 members) to a high of 83%. Three other members had 75% of the calls.

Library Director

Comparing hours and staffing across the region – Library Director Heinrich indicated that the topic of the Library Hours does come up periodically and the Library Board does look at it. Currently they are focusing more on weekday hours, they are open Monday through Friday 9am-6:30pm. They are running 47.5 hours per week at that schedule and there are only 3 other libraries in the region that run more than that.

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

Police Chief – Not Present

Mayor Omerza reminded everyone that Calendar Parking is in effect.

City Attorney

Discussion on Condition and Disposition for 45 E Boundary St

Attorney Klun stated that on September 13th our Building Official first inspected the dwelling after it had been subject to a fire and posted the dwelling as uninhabitable. The notice included a number of structural issues that need to be corrected in order for the structure to become habitable. This notice was served via mail and allowed 30 days for corrective action; we have not seen any corrective elements to the parcel. A second inspection was done on November 1, 2023, there was a concern that a small wood stove was placed in the property and was being vented out through a broken kitchen window, and next to that was a plastic gas can and a 20-pound propane tank on the kitchen floor. Attorney Klun indicated it would be best to get another inspection report come from the Building Official, one issue is whether or not the Building Official can get in the structure, we cannot assess what damage was done from the exterior of the structure. Attorney Klun indicated that it would be good to have another inspection report by the November 21st council meeting. If there is no compliance we should schedule a hearing for the December 19th council meeting, giving all the notice requirements.

Langowski indicated that we are going to try to get access to the property, so we can get an updated inspection. Building Official Whitney has been talking to the insurance company. How does the city make corrections to the property if we are not the owner. Hopefully by the next meeting we have an updated inspection and have word from the insurance company.

Building Official Whitney indicated that the owner's parents have scheduled two meetings to meet with him, but have not shown up. Whitney indicated that the last time he was in the building with the wood stove issue, the stairway was covered with nails, nuts and bolts, so walking around in there might be interesting. We might have to work with the owner to get some pictures of the interior. The owner has not made a claim with the insurance company yet, so there has not been an adjuster to determine the scope of work that has been done, and no contractor has been hired, at this point it is just sitting there.

City Engineer

COMMUNICATIONS: Matter of Information

Ely Community Resource Quarterly Progress Report – Quarter 3

Ely Bloomenson Community Hospital Notice of Annual Meeting of Members

CLAIMS FOR PAYMENT:

Debeltz/Callen moved to approve the City and EUC Claims for November 7th, 2023 for \$682,372.59. Motion Carried Unanimously.

OLD BUSINESS: None

NEW BUSINESS:

Debeltz/Kess moved to approve Resolution 2023-027 Resolution Authorizing Application of the Ely Igloo Snowmobile Club to Conduct Lawful Charitable Gambling at Kwazy Wabbit. Roll Called: Council Members A.Forsman – Yes, Kess- Yes, Debeltz – Yes, Callen – Yes, Campbell – Yes, Bisbee – Yes, and Mayor Omerza – Yes. Motion Carried Unanimously

A.Forsman/Debeltz moved to approve the Sunday Liquor License for Kwazy Wabbit at 11 N Central Ave. Motion Carried Unanimously.

RAMS – Notice of Nominations for RAMS Board of Directors

Campbell/Debeltz moved to nominate Paul Kess to the RAMS Board of Directors for 2024-2025. Motion Carried Unanimously

Kess/Callen moved to approve the Temporary Liquor License for the Ely Folk School on December 5, 2023 at Semer’s Park. Motion Carried Unanimously

Callen/A.Forsman moved to approve Resolution 2023-028 Resolution Authorizing the Application of the Knights of Columbus Council 3238 to Conduct Bingo. Roll Called: Council Members A.Forsman – Yes, Kess- Yes, Debeltz – Yes, Callen – Yes, Campbell – Yes, Bisbee – Yes, and Mayor Omerza – Yes. Motion Carried Unanimously

Debeltz/Callen moved to approve Resolution 2023-029 Authorizing City of Ely to Make Application to and Accept Funds From the FY 2023 Development Infrastructure Grant Program and Community Infrastructure Fund Program. Roll Called: Council Members A.Forsman – Yes, Kess- Yes, Debeltz – Yes, Callen – Yes, Campbell – Yes, Bisbee – Yes, and Mayor Omerza – Yes. Motion Carried Unanimously

OPEN FORUM: None

ADJOURN:

Mayor Omerza adjourned the council meeting at 6:41pm without objection.

Casey Velcheff
Deputy Clerk