

**Regular Meeting Ely City Council – City Hall, Council Chambers  
November 21, 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, Bisbee, and Mayor Omerza

ABSENT: Council Member Campbell

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

**Debeltz/Bisbee moved to approve the minutes from the November 7, 2023 Regular Council Meeting. Motion Carried 6-0-1 with Campbell absent.**

**ADDITIONS OR OMISSIONS TO AGENDA:**

A. Addition 8.A. Budget Committee

B. Addition 9.D. Zachary Ward Resignation

C. Addition 13. E. Approve Premier Pyrotechnics to shoot the 2023 4<sup>th</sup> of July Fireworks for \$20,000

D. Addition 10.B. Communications from Ely Senior Center

**Kess/Callen moved to approve adding the additions A-D. Motion Carried 6-0-1 with Campbell Absent.**

**MAYOR'S REPORT:**

Mayor Omerza indicated that the Joint Legislative Meeting will be at the Grand Ely Lodge on December 11<sup>th</sup> at 11:30am with Lunch and meeting with the legislatures.

**A.Forsman/Kess moved to make the Joint Legislative Meeting at the Grand Ely Lodge on December 11<sup>th</sup> a special council meeting so all council members can attend if they choose. Motion Carried 6-0-1 with Campbell Absent.**

**CONSENT AGENDA:**

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

**REQUESTS TO APPEAR:**

Cindy Smyka – Presentation regarding event support conducted by the Tourism Bureau  
Smyka indicated that she is here to share some information regarding what the tourism bureau currently does and the plans for the future to continue to support events that take place in the area. The Tourism Bureau works with the Chamber of Commerce for the most prominent website in the Ely area ely.org. The Tourism Bureau manages the Facebook page What's up Ely, they do a podcast series, and manage visitelymn Facebook page and Instagram pages which is the main tourism page. They have a google form for events if event organizers would like their event promoted on VisitElyMN. 2024 will be the 1<sup>st</sup> year they are actively promoting the podcasts; they have had a great success with reaching audiences with the podcasts. In 2024 they will also be launching the Ely Journal; this will be a public email/newsletter that will promote upcoming events.

A.Forsman asked about the Ride the Range Partnership Membership and if the Tourism Bureau would be willing to help with the membership cost. Smyka indicated that she believes they can help out and that is a sponsorship for a recreational avenue that they are interested in expanding upon. Smyka indicated that there is room in the Tourism Bureau's budget to participate in the full level. Langowski indicated that when we started out with our Hidden Valley

Trail system the goal was for it to become a destination trail system, in the industry they state that you need 25 miles to be a destination trail system. This summer we had a trail counter at the Hidden Valley Mt. Bike Trails and almost 10,000 bikes went by the counter this summer. We also have another 6 miles that are mapped out and we are getting ready to submit that to the state for an amendment to our lease at Hidden Valley. The trails are bringing people to town and it is growing considerably.

Mayor Omerza asked if there is a way the Tourism Bureau can help out our local event organizers like the Baseball Association and other events that bring people to town. Smyka indicated that the best way would be to have a sit down with her to see what kind of marketing these organizations need.

**COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

Standing/Special

Police Commission – Minutes included in the Council Packet

Planning and Zoning Commission - Minutes included in the Council Packet

Projects Committee

**Callen/Debeltz moved to approve the recommendation from Projects Committee to direct staff to work with the Ott's to draft a development agreement for the depot project.**

**Motion Carried 6-0-1 with Campbell Absent**

Housing & Redevelopment Authority: Minutes included in the Council Packet

Budget Committee

**A.Forsman/Kess moved to approve the recommendation from Budget Committee to approve the proposed 2024 budget. Motion Carried 6-0-1 with Campbell Absent**

**A.Forsman/Debeltz moved to approve the recommendation from Budget Committee to approve the purchase of the scan tool for the shop for \$4,790.01. Motion Carried 6-0-1 with Campbell Absent**

**A.Forsman/Bisbee moved to approve the recommendation from the Budget Committee to authorize the purchase of a snow bucket for the skid steer at a cost of \$1,590 from L and L rental. Motion Carried 6-0-1 with Campbell Absent**

**A.Forsman/Debeltz moved to approve the recommendation from the Budget Committee to authorize Chief Houde to continue developing a retention and recruitment incentive plan to be submitted to the Council for approval at the December 5<sup>th</sup> meeting. Motion Carried 6-0-1 with Campbell Absent**

**A.Forsman/Debeltz moved to approve the recommendation from the Budget Committee to increase the 2023 Fire Department Budget to reflect the additional \$16,000 received to cover training expenses. Motion Carried 6-0-1 with Campbell Absent**

Other Committee Meetings

Bisbee indicated that Park and Rec Board discussed the DNR Grant, No Child Left Inside that Ely Community Resources is applying for. Park and Rec recommended to send a letter of support for the application.

**Bisbee/A.Forsman moved to send a letter of support for the No Child Left Inside Grant that Ely Community Resources is applying for. Motion Carried 6-0-1 with Campbell Absent.**

**DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS:**

Clerk-Treasurer

Fire Chief

Chief Marshall discussed the recent calls for the fire department. Chief Marshall indicated that the fire department did some training in one of the demolition buildings last week.

Library Director

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

Tricia Flake finished her Masters of Science Degree.

**Debeltz/Kess moved to send Tricia Flake a letter of Congratulations for receiving her Master of Science Degree. Motion Carried 6-0-1 with Campbell Absent.**

Police Chief

**Debeltz/Callen moved to accept the letter of resignation from Zachary Ward and to send a letter of thanks. Motion Carried 6-0-1 with Campbell Absent.**

Chief Houde indicated that Ely did not receive the School Resource Officer grant, very few departments in Minnesota were awarded the grant.

Officer Courtney Olson will be starting next week and we will do the swearing in ceremony in December.

City Attorney

**A.Forsman/Debeltz moved to approve the Mortgage Satisfaction for Ely Steakhouse, Inc recorded on December 13, 2019 as Document No. 01369516 for their Storefront Rehab Loan. Motion Carried 6-0-1 with Campbell Absent**

City Engineer

**COMMUNICATIONS:** Matter of Information

Northwoods Partners Fall/Winter 2023 Newsletter

Senior Center funding for furnace repair – Discussion was had that the Senior Center needs assistance for funding for their heating system. Langowski indicated that we have been over there to see what they need and will help them out how we can.

**CLAIMS FOR PAYMENT:**

A. City and EUC Claims for November 21<sup>st</sup>, 2023 for \$311,313.23

B. 2024 RAMS Membership Dues for \$840.00

C. Invoice #456787 to Short Elliott Hendrickson(SEH) for the Ely MN Prospector ATV for the Prospector ATV P2 Connect Four for \$21,187.99

D. Invoice #90935 to AE2S for the WWTF Improvements Project for \$10,818.90  
**Callen/Debeltz moved to approve the Claims for Payment items A-D. Motion Carried 6-0-1 with Campbell Absent**

**OLD BUSINESS:**

**NEW BUSINESS:**

**Callen/Debeltz moved to approve Resolution 2023-030 Resolution of Support for the CSAH 156 (Harvey Street) Reconstruction Project – CP 0156-299087. Roll Called: Council Members A.Forsman – Yes, Kess- Yes, Debeltz – Yes, Callen – Yes, Campbell – Absent, Bisbee – Yes, and Mayor Omerza – Yes. Motion Carried 6-0-1 with Campbell Absent.**

**Kess/Callen moved to approve the Amended and Restated Joint Powers Agreement with the Ely Area Lodging Tax Board**

Kess indicated that this is an important document outlining and setting the process and control. St Louis County reviewed the document for two years.

Mayor Omerza asked if there were any major changes. Cindy Smyke indicated that St Louis County and several Unorganized Territories were added to collect lodging tax.

**Motion Carried 6-0-1 with Campbell Absent**

**Debeltz/Callen moved to approve Resolution 2023-031 Resolution of the City of Ely, City Council regarding the application for the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program for the Ely Water System Improvement Project. Roll Called: Council Members A.Forsman – Yes, Kess- Yes, Debeltz – Yes, Callen – Yes, Campbell – Absent, Bisbee – Yes, and Mayor Omerza – Yes. Motion Carried 6-0-1 with Campbell Absent.**

Proposed 2024 Budget – was previously approved under the Budget Committee

**A.Forsman/Kess moved to approve Premier Pyrotechnics to shoot the 2024 4<sup>th</sup> of July Fireworks for \$20,000. Motion Carried 6-0-1 with Campbell Absent.**

**OPEN FORUM:**

Frederica Musgrave – 30 W Shagawa Rd

Musgrave indicated that at the Study Session next Tuesday that is combined with Planning and Zoning she would like discussion to take place on the sound ordinances. She could not find anything in the City Code regarding the decibel levels that are acceptable and not acceptable regarding developments in the city. Musgrave indicated that dog barking is not as annoying and disturbing as snowmobiles, lawn mowers, and ATVs. She would like the sound ordinance updated with specifics on decibels, so when new developers come to town they will know about the noise levels permitted.

Mayor Omerza wished everyone a safe, healthy and Happy Thanksgiving!

**ADJOURN:**

Mayor Omerza adjourned the meeting at 6:33pm without objection.

Harold R Langowski  
Clerk/Treasurer