

**Regular Meeting Ely City Council – City Hall, Council Chambers  
January 2, 2024 – Minutes**

**CALL TO ORDER**

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

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

ABSENT: None

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

**Debeltz/Bisbee moved to approve the minutes from the December 19, 2023 Regular Council Meeting. Motion Carried Unanimously.**

**ADDITIONS OR OMISSIONS TO AGENDA:**

A. Additions 5. Arendelle Proclamation

B. Additions 7.A Frederica Musgrave – Fiscal Responsibility & Accountability

C. Additions 12.A. Updated Short Term Rental List

**A.Forsman/Campbell moved to approve the adding additions A-C. Motion Carried Unanimously.**

**MAYOR'S REPORT:**

Council Committee Representatives – Mayor Omerza told the council to either get in touch with her or the clerk's office if they would like to change committees then at the next council meeting we will vote on them.

Arendelle Proclamation -Mayor Omerza read the proclamation and proclaimed that January 19, 2024 through January 21, 2024 our city will be known as Arendelle as we complete our year of Frozen.

**CONSENT AGENDA:**

A. Motion to waive readings in entirety of all ordinances and resolutions on tonight's agenda.

B. Call for sealed bids for the 2024 legal newspaper

**Kess/Debeltz moved to approve the Consent Agenda items A and B. Motion Carried Unanimously.**

**REQUESTS TO APPEAR:**

Frederica Musgrave at 30 W Shagawa Rd – Fiscal Responsibility & Accountability

Musgrave indicated that the goal when speaking to the council is to make you think about what you are doing for the city. Think about some of the motions on expenditures that come up and they just get rubber stamped. Musgrave mentioned the TV screen in the back of the Council Chambers and asked if that was a necessary expenditure.

Musgrave discussed accountability with people on commissions and with the people that have personal agendas that are serving on commissions. The commissioners should represent the whole city and not just certain items, there should also be diversity of the commissioners.

Musgrave stated that the committees should get their agendas and documents ahead of time so the commissioners can be more accountable by reading the agendas and documents ahead of time rather than paging through the documents at the meetings.

Mayor Omerza stated that the council is fiscal responsible, a lot of the items that seem to be just "rubber stamped" have gone through committees or are budget line items in the budget. As for

the diversity of the committees, the council can only appoint people that apply, a lot of times we have openings on some committees for months or only one person will apply for the open seat. We have gone out and tried to encourage people to apply to be on these committees.

**COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

Standing/Special

**Park and Recreation Board**

Bisbee indicated that Park and Rec had a presentation regarding the North Country National Scenic Trail which will be coming to Ely connecting the Kekakabic Trail connecting to Bearhead State Park. Eventually the city will need to do a MOU to be considered a Trail Town.

**Ely Utilities Commission (EUC)**

**A.Forsman/Kess moved to approve the recommendation from EUC Customer Relations Committee to move forward with reimbursing the customer for their original \$2,500 Water and Sewer Availability Charge (WAC & SAC) by direct payment for a leaking curb stop. Motion Carried Unanimously.**

**A.Forsman/Bisbee moved to approve the recommendation from EUC to move forward with purchasing the \$14,793.13 replacement unit if the VFD repair by Mielke Electric does not work. Motion Carried Unanimously.**

**A.Forsman/Debeltz moved to approve the recommendation from EUC to approve the \$387,607.86 payment of EUC November Bills. Motion Carried Unanimously.**

**A.Forsman/Campbell moved to approve the recommendation from EUC to move forward with the recommended 2024 EUC budget. Motion Carried Unanimously.**

**A.Forsman/Debeltz moved to approve the recommendation from EUC to pay AMPTEK, \$1,064.00 for the air compressor troubleshooting and repair at the Water Treatment Plant. Motion Carried Unanimously.**

**A.Forsman/Callen moved to approve the recommendation from EUC to pay AE2S \$18,999.44 for the WWTF Improvements Project and \$1,675.50 for the WTP Improvements Project. Motion Carried Unanimously.**

**A.Forsman/Campbell moved to approve the recommendation from EUC to Pay Mick Shusta \$500 for A Operator Services. Motion Carried Unanimously.**

**Planning and Zoning Commission**

**Campbell/A.Forsman moved to approve the recommendation from Planning and Zoning Commission to have two meetings a month January – May on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday's of each month at 5:30pm.**

Langowski indicated that the meetings may only be as needed for the second meeting. The second meeting can be for hearings or if P&Z is working on a project.

**Motion Carried Unanimously**

**Housing and Redevelopment Authority: Minutes included in the Council Packet**

**DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS:**

Clerk-Treasurer

Mini Excavator Purchase for \$86,250.00

Langowski indicated that this mini excavator would be split between the Cemetery Korpi Trust Funds, Public Works, and Utilities Departments. In the past we have rented a mini excavator, but we have realized that we are needing a machine like this more and more.

Kess asked if Kori Trust was ok with this purchase. Langowski indicated that this purchase will help to do the foundation work for the Columbarium's and will help to do less damage to the grass and grave stones when digging full burials. Rather than contracting out to do the foundation work for the Columbarium's the Public Works department will be able to do it in house and save money.

**Kess/Bisbee moved to approve of the purchase of the Mini Excavator from L&L Rentals for \$86,250.00. Motion carried Unanimously.**

Sewer Inspection at 535 E Boundary St

Langowski indicated that we received a sewer inspection for 535 E Boundary St from Gary Kovall and it failed for needing a sump pump installed. Langowski talked with the contractor that performed the inspection and it was indicated that the drain tile was connected to the sanitary sewer and needed to be directed outside. Kovall has indicated that in order to install the sump pump and have it directed outside they will have to tear up their finished basement floor which would cost them over \$5000. Kovall is requesting an exemption from any requirement to install a sump pump.

A.Forsman asked if a video was received that was reviewed.

Langowski indicated that a video was received and he talked to the contractor and a sump pump is required.

A.Forsman indicated that the point-of-sale sewer inspection was developed was to prevent the flow of water through the sewer line and end up at the Waste Water Treatment Plant. This was our solution to fix this problem. This homeowner had the inspection done 15 months ago and is now it is within a month of them closing on the house.

**A.Forsman/Bisbee moved to deny the request for a waiver on the requirement to install a sump pump and have it directed outside at 535 E Boundary St. Motion Carried Unanimously.**

Fire Chief

Chief Marshall discussed the recent calls for the fire department.

Library Director

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

Police Chief

Chief Houde indicated that the City Dog licenses for 2024 or the new lifetime licenses are now available. They can be purchased at the Ely Police Department at City Hall.

City Attorney

**A.Forsman/Debeltz moved to approve the Note and Mortgage for the Residential Rehab Loan for James and Brittney Thorstenson at 122 E Harvey St for \$10,000 for a new energy efficient propane furnace. Motion Carried Unanimously.**

City Engineer

**COMMUNICATIONS:** Matter of Information  
Correspondence from the St Louis County Fair

**CLAIMS FOR PAYMENT:**

**Campbell/Callen moved to approve the City and EUC Claims for Payment for January 2, 2024 for \$91,814.07. Motion Carried Unanimously**

**OLD BUSINESS:**

Number of Short Term Rentals  
Updated Short Term Rental List

Langowski indicated that this was posted in the paper and was reported on last month. The number of Short Term Rentals is set by resolution by the council. As of this morning we had 24 short term rentals in R-1, R-2, RT and SMU. The current resolution on the agenda is for 25 short term rentals in R-1, R-2, RT, and SMU.

**Bisbee/Debeltz moved to approve Resolution 2024-001 Resolution Authorizing the Number of Short Term Rentals in the City of Ely. Roll Called: Council Members A.Forsman – Yes, Kess- Yes, Debeltz – Yes, Callen – Yes, Campbell – Yes, Bisbee – Yes, and Mayor Omerza – Yes. Motion Carried Unanimously.**

**NEW BUSINESS:**

**Kess/Campbell moved to approve 2024 official city depositories: Frandsen Bank & Trust, Highland Bank and 4M Fund. Motion Carried 6-0-1 with Omerza abstaining since her husband works at Frandsen Bank.**

**Debeltz/A.Forsman moved to approve Resolution 2024-002 Resolution Adopting the 2024 City of Ely Fee Schedule. Roll Called: Council Members A.Forsman – Yes, Kess- Yes, Debeltz – Yes, Callen – Yes, Campbell – Yes, Bisbee – Yes, and Mayor Omerza – Yes. Motion Carried Unanimously.**

**Campbell/Debeltz moved to schedule a public hearing to review the Fire Apparatus Building and the Ely Area Ambulance Garage on January 16, 2024 at 5pm.**

Langowski indicated this is required part of the USDA Rural Development grant. We will have preliminary plans available for review and information about the project.

**Motion Carried Unanimously**

**OPEN FORUM:**

Jason Gillson at 45 E Boundary St

Gillson apologized for the ways he has conducted himself with the fire at his house. Gillson questioned when a meeting was going to be happening regarding his house. Gillson indicated that he has spoken with Mr. Whitney and left messages with Mr. Omerza at Frandsen Bank, Mr Omerza has talked to his step father regarding the house and insurance. Gillson indicated that he would like to know if there is a meeting happening at all.

**ADJOURN:**

Mayor Omerza adjourned the meeting at 6:34pm without objection.

Casey Velcheff - Deputy Clerk