

**Regular Meeting Ely City Council – City Hall, Council Chambers  
February 20, 2024 – Minutes**

**CALL TO ORDER**

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

PRESENT: Council members Debeltz, Campbell, Bisbee, and Mayor Omerza

ABSENT: Council members A.Forsman, Kess, and Callen

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

**Debeltz/Campbell moved to approve the minutes from the February 6<sup>th</sup>, 2024 Regular Council Meeting. Motion Carried 4-0-3 with A.Forsman, Kess, and Callen Absent.**

**ADDITIONS OR OMISSIONS TO AGENDA:**

- A. Additions 6.B. Reschedule the March 5, 2024 Council Meeting to Tuesday, March 12, 2024 at 5:30pm since the Presidential Nomination Primary is on March 5, 2024 and no public meetings can be scheduled.
- B. Addition 9.E. Memorandum of Understanding between City of Ely and AFSCME Local #1490 Essential and Base Units, Supervisor of Essential Employees and LELS, Local #55 regarding Health Insurance Savings.

**Bisbee/Debeltz moved to approve the additions A and B. Motion Carried 4-0-3 with A.Forsman, Kess, and Callen Absent.**

**MAYOR'S REPORT:**

Mayor Omerza indicated that Ely was named Airport of the Month in Minnesota Flyer magazine. Mayor Omerza stated that she went to the Elected Leaders Institute put on by the League of Minnesota Cities and stated that it was one of the best ones she has attended.

Mayor Omerza stated that a sad incident happened in Burnsville with two police officers and a firefighter/EMS person being shot and killed. Please take a moment and thank Police Officers, Firefighters, and EMS workers for putting their lives in danger. Mayor Omerza took a moment of silence.

**CONSENT AGENDA:**

- A. Motion to waive readings in entirety of all ordinances and resolutions on tonight's agenda.
- B. Reschedule the March 5, 2024 Council Meeting to Tuesday, March 12, 2024 at 5:30pm since the Presidential Nomination Primary is on March 5, 2024 and no public meetings can be scheduled.

**Debeltz/Campbell moved to approve the Consent Agenda items A and B. Motion Carried 4-0-3 with A.Forsman, Kess, and Callen Absent.**

Langowski reminded everyone that the EEDA meeting for next Tuesday is canceled because of the caucuses.

**REQUESTS TO APPEAR:** None

**COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

Standing/Special

Projects Committee: Minutes included in the Council Packet

Langowski discussed the current projects the city is working on. The east end project has the paving of Zups lot remaining. Additional grant funds were received for the housing project at Voyageur North Outfitters for water and sewer services to the cabins. The trailhead project preconstruction meeting was held and construction is anticipated in the spring. The stage II application to USDA RD for the Ambulance and Fire Garage will be completed this week. The renovation of the community center was discussed. The proposed solution to provide parking at the old Ford garage site will be further explored. The Ott's currently own the property and would be interested in selling back to the City. With the current planning of the depot rehabilitation there may be a way to structure a development agreement to include a land swap for property the City owns adjacent to the depot property in exchange. John Fedo and Langowski will continue to work on the details. Discussion on the concepts of a 32-unit apartment building that DW Jones has built in another community. A conference call was held last week with Minnesota Housing to go over the feasibility of a housing project in Ely and it appears that with the current high cost of construction a market rate apartment complex is feasible. The townhouse concept will be shelved for the time being. Joe Hiller will be bringing this concept to the HRA board for discussion. The IRRRB was also involved in the conference call and should be able to provide grant and possible loan money for the project. The MN Housing workforce program is highly competitive and the \$39 million currently available will be given out in one grant cycle this April. There is also Northland Foundation funds that may be available. The City has an ordinance being drafted to establish a trust fund in the HRA that would make \$150,000 in matching dollars available from the state to match the \$350k that the HRA currently has in reserve for such projects.

Airport Commission: Minutes included in the Council Packet

Library Board: Minutes included in the Council Packet

HRA:

Langowski discussed the Housing project. The city plans on going to the IRRR for some of the infrastructure for the water and sewer to the project. The land the project will be built on is city land, we will need to put a value on the land and possibly get an appraisal. j

**DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS:**

Clerk-Treasurer

The Rec Center Ice Rink is currently open, but it will depend on the weather on how long we will be able to keep it open.

Fire Chief

Chief Marshall discussed the current fire and medical calls for the Fire Department. Chief Marshall thanked Mayor Omerza for mentioning what can happen when we go on calls. We always think we will come home to our families when we go on a call, but you never know what can happen.

Library Director

Library Director Heinrich discussed the current programming for the Ely Library which can be found on the Library website.

Police Chief: Not Present

City Attorney

**Debeltz/Campbell moved to accept the Memorandum of Understanding between City of Ely and AFSCME Local #1490 Essential and Base Units, Supervisor of Essential Employees and LELS, Local #55 regarding Health Insurance Savings. Motion Carried 4-0-3 with A.Forsman, Kess, and Callen Absent.**

**Debeltz/Campbell moved to approve the First Reading of Ordinance 375 2<sup>nd</sup> Series- An Ordinance of the City of Ely, Minnesota adding to the Ely City Code, Chapter 2, section 2.66, Ely Housing Fund.**

Langowski indicated that the MN Housing Partnership brought this to the HRA Board and it requires the municipality to approve this ordinance. This is to maximize the effort for funds for the housing project.

**Roll Called: Council members A.Forsman-Absent, Kess- Absent, Debeltz - yes, Callen-Absent, Campbell- yes, Bisbee-yes, and Mayor Omerza- yes. Motion Carried 4-0-3 with A.Forsman, Kess, and Callen Absent.**

City Engineer

**COMMUNICATIONS:** None

**CLAIMS FOR PAYMENT:**

A. City and EUC Claims for February 20, 2024 for \$411,811.30.

B. Invoice #461208 to SEH for \$8,013.19 for the Prospector ATV Trail.

**Debeltz/Bisbee moved to approve the the claims for payment items A and B. Motion Carried 4-0-3 with A.Forsman, Kess, and Callen Absent.**

**OLD BUSINESS:**

**Debeltz/Campbell moved to approve the agreement between the City of Ely and Ely Supervisors of Other than Essential Employees effective Jan. 1<sup>st</sup> 2024-December 31<sup>st</sup> 2026. Motion Carried 4-0-3 with A.Forsman, Kess, and Callen Absent.**

**NEW BUSINESS:**

**Bisbee/Campbell moved to approve the Residential Rehab loan application for Charlotte Ackerley for up to \$10,000 at 226 E Conan St. to upgrade to a propane furnace pending proper paperwork and fees and to direct Attorney Klun to work with the applicant and proceed with the loan application. Motion Carried 4-0-3 with A.Forsman, Kess, and Callen Absent.**

**Bisbee/Debeltz moved to approve Resolution 2024-010 Supporting Grant Application to the MN DNR Federal Recreational Trail Program to Purchase Trail Maintenance Equipment for the Maintenance of the Prospectors Loop Trail. Roll Called: Council members A.Forsman-Absent, Kess- Absent, Debeltz - yes, Callen-Absent, Campbell- yes, Bisbee-yes, and Mayor Omerza- yes. Motion Carried 4-0-3 with A.Forsman, Kess, and Callen Absent.**

**OPEN FORUM:** None

**ADJOURN:**

Mayor Omerza adjourned the meeting at 5:57pm without objection.

Casey Velcheff  
Deputy Clerk