

**Regular Meeting Ely City Council – City Hall, Council Chambers
June 18, 2024 - Minutes**

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Omerza called the 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:

Campbell/Debeltz moved to approve the minutes from the June 4, 2024 Public Hearing regarding Ordinance 377 and the June 4, 2024 Regular Council Meeting. Motion Carried Unanimously

ADDITIONS OR OMISSIONS TO AGENDA:

Callen/Debeltz moved to Omit 5.A Volunteer of the Year. Motion Carried Unanimously

MAYOR'S REPORT:

Omitted - Volunteer of the Year (couldn't make it due to the storm) Will be presenting at a later date.

Mayor Omerza indicated she was able to meet with the new management team at CareFree Living, they plan to make a few changes to the operations of the facility.

Mayor Omerza thanked the council members and others that were present for the presentation by SafeTech regarding the ambulance service.

CONSENT AGENDA:

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

REQUESTS TO APPEAR:

Margaret Egan – Heritage Preservation Commission – Ely Memorial High School Video/Oral History Project

Pam Turnbull stated that last year the Heritage Preservation Commission received a \$10,000 grant from the Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund through the Minnesota Historical Society for the Ely Memorial High School Centennial Anniversary 1924-2024: Oral History Project. They have interviewed graduates from 1946-2024 about their personal experiences though out their high school years. The premier of the film is on June 26th at the Ely State Theater with a meet and greet at 6:30pm and the film will be shown at 7pm. Turnbull welcomed the council member to attend the film.

Kap Wilkes – Well Being Development – Fiscal agent for grant

Wilkes indicated that Well Being Development (WBD) has an opportunity to apply for a large grant from the Department of Justice (DOJ). To apply the application must come from a township, city, or county entity. WBD is seeking to partner with the City of Ely as the fiscal agent for this grant application. Well Being Development (WBD) is a community-based nonprofit located in Ely, MN that provides education and resources to Ely area community members challenged with chronic mental illness and addiction. Our programs include Northern Lights Clubhouse, Care Facilitation, and a newly developing Recovery Residence.

The grant is being funded by the Federal Department of Justice (DOJ) – Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA). The grant is titled “Comprehensive Opioid, Stimulant, and Substance Use (COSSUP) Site-Based Program.” WBD refers to it as the “DOJ COSSUP Implementation Grant”.

The primary applicant must be a rural township, city, or county. It is expected that the township, city, or county partners with a nonprofit agency. For our circumstance, St. Louis County is not able to be the primary applicant for the WBD project because SLC is too large to be considered rural and also already has a DOJ COSSUP grant. The City of Ely is eligible to be the primary applicant. Well Being Development would be the partnering nonprofit organization and designated as a subrecipient.

Funding up to \$1,000,000 over 36 months, or \$333,333 per year, is available through this grant. If awarded the funds will be available in early October 2024. There will be 24 grants awarded within the rural category of applicants. The rural area that will be included in the WBD proposed grant application includes the cities of Ely, Tower, Soudan, and Babbitt, and surrounding townships. The estimated population for this area, is approximately 12,000 individuals. Well Being Development would, manage and track the project budget and expenses, provide to the City of Ely all monthly expense invoices for reimbursement and all required project reports, hire a Project Manager to manage implementation of the project activities including the application process, supervise all project staff, manage and track the project workplan; meeting project deadlines and reporting requirements, host and facilitate an advisory group for the project , attend all required DOJ grant meetings.

The City of Ely would be responsible for submitting the expense invoices for reimbursement and reports, assign a designated individual to submit the required documents and be familiar with the DOJ online procedures, receive reimbursement for expenses of \$10,000 each year. This amount may increase up to \$20,000 as the final budget is determined, receive a quarterly financial review and project summary, provided by WBD.

This grant is focused on supporting our most vulnerable adults, those that are uninsured or underinsured and are challenged with substance misuse or disorder and/or chronic mental illness. The grant project includes justice involved individuals. Our project is focused on individuals with an association to the Ely area. The big idea, and hope, is to reduce the impact of illicit drugs, stimulants, and other substances on individuals and our community. This includes reducing the number of overdose deaths and lessening the impact on families and our community.

A.Forsman indicated that he thinks everyone here knows of people that have had someone affected by addiction. Forsman thanked them for spearheading this and thinks the city should be able to help you and we are happy to do our share.

Mayor Omerza stated that being in Ely we realize that we are rural and our location can make us far away from the help that people may need. Omerza indicated that she is glad that they are filling the gap and willing to help people.

A.Forsman/Bisbee moved for the City of Ely to be the Fiscal Agent for the grant that Well Being Development is going to apply for through the Department of Justice. Motion Carried Unanimously.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Standing/Special

Heritage Preservation Commission (HPC): Minutes included in the Council Packet

Library Board

Debeltz/Campbell moved to approve the recommendation from Library Board to appoint Tom Conaway to the Gardner Trust Board as the Library alternate to replace Scott King. Motion Carried Unanimously.

Matter of Information: July 3rd Library Board is Canceled; Next meeting will be August 7th.

Projects Committee

Callen/A.Forsman moved to approve the recommendation from the Projects Committee to request MNDOT retain signalized intersections at Central Ave and 3rd Ave East on HWY 169/Sheridan Street in Ely.

A.Forsman indicated that there was a good representation from the council at the public meeting yesterday held by MnDOT to get public comment on the Intersection Study, and seemed like all were supportive of keeping the lights. Forsman indicated that we know how to get around town when it is busy with the lights, whether you are driving or walking.

Kess indicated he is in favor of retaining the lights with adjusting the timing of them.

Langowski indicated that MnDOT is in the Discovery Phase right now looking at the intersections, talking comment at to what people feel are concerns, and issues. MnDOT will be doing a study over the summer looking at traffic movement and pedestrian movement at each individual intersection. The projected date for any improvements, there is not one right now. First, they will have to come up with a project plan, then they will have to determine the cost, how to get it funded and then get a program for what year the project might be completed. So, this will be a few years down the road at the very soonest. There will be cost implications to the city, the North and South leg on 3rd Avenue would be at the City's expense, fortunately at Central Avenue it is a county road that is going North to South and state road going East to West.

Campbell indicated that the original lights were placed at their location in 1942.

Chief Houde stated that the police department is in favor of keeping both lights.

A.Forsman indicated that after the funding is approved it can take up to 4 years to implement the project.

Motion Carried Unanimously.

Planning and Zoning Commission

Matter of information- approved a Subdivision Variation at 357 W Harvey St

Campbell/Debeltz moved to approve the recommendation from Planning and Zoning to approve the Cannabis Cultivation Zoning only in Industrial (M) and Commercial (C) zoning with an IUP (Interim Use Permit) within the Permissible Uses List.

A.Forsman indicated that he has an issue with the Commercial area being used for cultivation of Cannabis.

Langowski indicated that this would need to be done through ordinance process and the chart of uses would need to be adjusted, more of the request is this what the council would like to look towards, providing zoning and conditional uses for the cultivation of cannabis within the city limits. This will take more than just a motion by the council at this point, it will take more directive from the council to develop an ordinance. The question is do we want to change the zoning for this.

A.Forsman stated that with the cannabinoid licensing we started with a moratorium on the sales of cannabinoid in the community and it might be good to take the similar approach with the growing of cannabinoids.

Kess/Bisbee moved to table the motion. Motion Carried Unanimously.

Attorney Klun indicated that we would need a motion relative to a moratorium if the council wishes to go in that direction. We have probably one or two more meetings prior to the date certain.

Kess/A.Forsman moved to direct Attorney Klun to draft a 1-year moratorium for Cannabis Cultivation.

Campbell stated up to a year, but if it can be resolved before the year that would be better.

Attorney Klun indicated that the council could lift a moratorium by majority vote of the council lift a moratorium.

Motion Carried Unanimously.

Recommendation from Planning and Zoning to include Palcher's Letter to the City Council regarding clearing of trees on City Property.

Attorney Klun indicated that this will be discussed under New Business with Hills Request.

DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS:

Clerk-Treasurer

Langowski indicated that we continue to have severe weather moving though, when there is severe weather don't drive through the water in the streets, you never know what the water where you can't see it. Also do not go near an electrical wire if it is down, presume all electrical is live.

Fire Chief

Chief Marshall discussed the current fire and medical calls for the Fire Department. Chief Marshall stated that they tested over 13,500 feet of hose on Sunday and during the testing not one hose failed which is really good.

Chief Marshall indicated that there was a tornado warning today, there was rotation over Robinson, Burntside and Basswood Lakes and it was appropriate to blow the severe weather siren. Marshall indicated that when the severe weather siren goes off everyone should seek shelter and seek additional information from the National Weather Service.

Library Director

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

Police Chief

Chief Houde also reiterated information regarding severe weather, when the severe weather siren goes off you should seek shelter, not go outside and look at the sky. Chief Houde stated that when he was driving around checking on thing when the siren was going off it seemed like everyone came outside rather than seeking shelter.

City Attorney

Debeltz/Campbell moved to approve the Purchase Agreement for Lot 11, Block 1, East Spaulding First Addition between Thomas M Holzmer and City of Ely. Motion Carried Unanimously

COMMUNICATIONS: Matter of Information

- A. Coalition of Greater Minnesota Cities (CGMC) Regional Range Meetings for Cities
- B. Minnesota State Demographic Center- annual population and household estimates

CLAIMS FOR PAYMENT:

- A. City and EUC Claims for June 18, 2024 for \$56,548.76
- B. SEH Invoice #467704 for the Prospector ATV Trails for \$557.70
- C. Ely Community Resources Quarter 3 payment for \$5125.00

Callen/Debeltz moved to approve the claims for payment items A-C. Motion Carried Unanimously

OLD BUSINESS:

Kess/A.Forsman moved to approve the Amended and Restated Joint Powers Agreement – Ely Area Lodging Tax Board (Final). Motion Carried Unanimously

NEW BUSINESS:

Debeltz/Campbell moved to approve the In-Kind Services for Young Life to host the activities in Whiteside Park on the 4th of July. Motion Carried Unanimously.

Andy & Paula Hill request to remove balsam trees

Langowski indicated that the City Public Works crew does tree removal for the city. This area is full of dead balsam and we are looking at taking these down for Firewise. We are also looking at doing a turnaround in this area.

Callen/Kess moved to approve the Temporary Liquor License for Ely Winton Rod and Gun Club for July 1st & 2nd at Miners Dry and on July 13th at Miners Dry. Motion Carried Unanimously

OPEN FORUM: None

ADJOURN:

Mayor Omerza adjourned the meeting at 6:21pm without objection.

Casey Velcheff
Deputy Clerk