

**Regular Meeting Ely City Council – City Hall, Council Chambers
August 6, 2024 at 5:30pm**

CALL TO ORDER:

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

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

ABSENT: Council Member Campbell

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Debeltz/Callen moved to approve the minutes from the July 16, 2024 Regular Council Meeting. Motion Carried 6-0-1 with Campbell Absent.

ADDITIONS OR OMISSIONS TO AGENDA:

- A. Addition 9.D Post for the Police Sergeant Position internally per the LELS Local 55 Union Contract.
- B. Addition 10.H Correspondence from the League of Minnesota Cities Legislator of Distinction for 2024 recognizing Representative Roger Skraba and Senator Grant Hauschild.
- C. Addition 11.D Partial Pay Estimate #2 to Max Gray Construction Inc for \$94,330.46 for the Ely Regional Trailhead Building

Callen/Debeltz moved to accept the additions A-C. Motion Carried 6-0-1 with Campbell Absent.

MAYOR'S REPORT:

Mayor Omerza attended the Summer Coalition of Greater Minnesota Cities Conference last week. Secretary of State Steve Simon was at the conference to discuss voting and elections. There was a lot of good discussion on housing and Senator Hauschild won an award at the conference.

Council Member Campbell welcomed the St Louis County Commissioners to Ely when they had their board meeting here in the Council Chambers.

Acting Mayor Callen welcomed every one to the new community hub at the open house.

Mayor Omerza congratulated the Ely Junior Legion Baseball team for making it to state. They are doing a fundraiser at the Baseball field tomorrow.

CONSENT AGENDA:

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

REQUESTS TO APPEAR: None

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Standing/Special

Heritage Preservation Commission -Minutes included in Packet

Planning and Zoning Commission

Bisbee/Debeltz moved to approve the recommendation from Planning and Zoning to approve new language regarding 355 and 357 W Harvey St. subdivisions to “The existing lots need to remain as they are, moving forward, no additional structures. If the primary structures are removed, they must be rebuilt to current zoning code standards.”

Langowski explained that we received an easement for access from Harvey Street to the Alley, prior to the easement there was not any legal accesses for us or for the residents on that alley to access. There are two homes on the properties, one of the homes was on city property, so with the easement we gave the property owner a parcel of land for the swap with the easement. Then this easement gave the property owner the ability to subdivide this property into two lots for two primary residential structures. This is the final piece to approve the subdivision of the properties.

Motion Carried 6-0-1 with Campbell Absent.

Budget Committee

A.Forsman/Kess moved to approve the recommendation from Budget Committee to add a study session on October 29th, 2024 to discuss civil citation fees and proposed changes.

A.Forsman indicated that normally we approve these fees in January so this will coincide with that.

Kess asked that the clerk distribute the fee schedule ahead of time so the council can review.

Motion Carried 6-0-1 with Campbell Absent.

A.Forsman/Bisbee moved to approve the recommendation from Budget Committee to adopt the 2025 Budget Calendar. Motion Carried 6-0-1 with Campbell Absent.

A.Forsman/Debeltz moved to approve the recommendation from Budget Committee to reclassify a police officer position to police sergeant position into the 2025 Budget.

Motion Carried 6-0-1 with Campbell Absent.

A.Forsman/Bisbee moved to approve the recommendation from Budget Committee to approve a 10% increase to Ely Community Resource funding in the 2025 Budget. Motion Carried 6-0-1 with Campbell Absent.

A.Forsman/Debeltz moved to approve the recommendation from Budget Committee to direct city staff to include a \$7500 contribution for the Ely Senior Center in the 2025 Budget. Motion Carried 6-0-1 with Campbell Absent.

A.Forsman/Callen moved to approve the recommendation from Budget Committee to direct city staff to keep the Ambulance service donations the same in 2025 at \$15.15 per capita with building expenses.

Debeltz asked if what we are currently giving with the building expenses.

Langowski indicated that the building expenses are above and beyond the \$15.15per capita, the intent is to continue the same contribution for both the ambulance building and for subsidy for the actual ambulance joint powers.

Motion Carried 6-0-1 with Campbell Absent.

A.Forsman/Callen moved to approve the recommendation from Budget Committee to make the Planning and Zoning position 32 hours a week. Motion Carried 6-0-1 with Campbell Absent.

A.Forsman/Bisbee moved to approve the recommendation from Budget Committee to approve interest allocation with the funds with negative cash balances not being included.

A.Forsman stated that accounts with negative cash balances, get penalized when you get interest from other accounts. Our Capital Equipment fund was sitting with a negative cash balance, so that would go deeper in the hole, but it is simply us not allocating enough money in those accounts in the first place, so to penalize them did not make sense. We will leave those accounts as a blank and allocate the interest to the accounts with a positive balance.

Motion Carried 6-0-1 with Campbell Absent.

A.Forsman/Debeltz moved to approve the recommendation from Budget Committee to approve purchase of a 2010 F-150 from St. Louis County for \$3600 and the disposal of the City's 2003 F-150 by posting bids. Motion Carried 6-0-1 with Campbell Absent.

Telecommunications Advisory Board (TAB)

Debeltz/Bisbee moved to approve the recommendation from the TAB Committee to approve Treehouse Broadband to install fixed base wireless in Whiteside Park for \$2,320.00 and for a service fee of \$160.00 per month for 1 Gig of service.

Langowski stated that this will be used for our web cameras in Whiteside Park.

Motion Carried 6-0-1 with Campbell Absent.

Debeltz/Callen moved to approve the recommendation from the TAB Committee to approve a fee of \$400 for this summer's festivals that utilize WIFI and for events planned in 2025 the fee be set at \$7.00 per vendor space for each event.

Langowski indicated that it will be the festivals organizers that will charge the vendors the per vendor fee, then the organizers will reimburse the city. This fee will cover the investment for the infrastructure for the equipment and the eventual replacement and upgrades.

Motion Carried 6-0-1 with Campbell Absent.

Debeltz/Callen moved to approve the recommendation from the TAB Committee to purchase necessary equipment to complete HD Conversion not to exceed \$1,000.00. Motion Carried 6-0-1 with Campbell Absent.

Debeltz/Callen moved to approve the recommendation from the TAB Committee to pay Ely Area Television \$250.00 for additional filming in May. Motion Carried 6-0-1 with Campbell Absent.

Employee Relations

Hiring Committee –

Debeltz/A.Forsman moved to approve the recommendation from the Hiring Committee to hire Troy Oelke as Public Works Foreman and to step up Neil Lepisto and Eric Mattila to Equipment Operator 2. Motion Carried 6-0-1 with Campbell Absent.

Ely Utilities Commission (EUC)

A.Forsman/Callen moved to approve the recommendation from EUC to approve the Commercial Electric Rate Classification Policy.

A.Forsman indicated that we had an electrical rate study performed by Dave Berg Consulting. During the study Berg realized that there were some inconsistencies with the commercial billing, and who was getting charged demand charge. This policy will help us straighten that out, within the coming year.

Langowski indicated that this does not affect our existing rates, it just affects how our commercial customers are classified, for demand billing and the general commercial rate. The rates are based on the previous calendar year for the demand rate.

Motion Carried 6-0-1 with Campbell Absent.

A.Forsman/Callen moved to approve the recommendation from EUC to approve MOU regarding Water/Wastewater Chief Operator Step up pay for the current Water Operator II. Motion Carried 6-0-1 with Campbell Absent.

A.Forsman/Debeltz moved to approve the recommendation from EUC to approve attendance to the MPCA Operators School October 8-10th in Minneapolis. Motion Carried 6-0-1 with Campbell Absent.

A.Forsman/Callen moved to approve the recommendation from EUC to approve \$477,953.86 for payment of June EUC bills. Motion Carried 6-0-1 with Campbell Absent.

A.Forsman/Debeltz moved to approve the recommendation from EUC to approve \$871.36 to Frontier Energy for payment of residential rebates.

A.Forsman indicated that Frontier Energy handles our rebates for home or businesses.

Motion Carried 6-0-1 with Campbell Absent.

DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS:

Clerk-Treasurer

Bids for Train Depot Excavation and Disposal of Contaminated Soils

Langowski indicated that we called for sealed bids for the excavation, stockpiling and disposal of the contaminated material around the foundation of the depot building. This work is being applied for reimbursement from the IRRR Commercial Redevelopment fund and any other cost associated with it will be paid by the property owner. The city will be the fiscal agent for the funds. The recommendation that the work be awarded to Low Impact Excavators.

Debeltz/Callen moved award the Train Depot Excavation and Disposal of Contaminated Soils Project to Low Impact Excavators for \$186,870.00. Motion Carried 6-0-1 with Campbell Absent.

Fire Chief

Chief Marshall discussed the current fire and medical calls for the Fire Department.

Fire Department Minutes and 2024 Quarter 1 and 2 Summaries

Chief Marshall discussed the Quarter 1 and 2 summaries: In Quarter 1 there were 80 medical calls, 7 fire calls, and 19 others (meetings, trainings, etc). The department average response rate was 43% and 6 members had 70% or better response rate. In Quarter 2 there were 51

medical calls, 12 fire calls, and 13 others (meetings, trainings, etc). The department average response rate was 39%.

The fire department had a great weekend at the Blueberry Arts Festival, they had several medical calls in the park and it was good to have the tent in the park for people to get out of the heat.

Four new members will be starting tomorrow at the fire meeting, and the annual family picnic is this weekend at Semers.

Library Director

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

Police Chief

Debeltz/Kess moved to post for the Police Sergeant Position internally per the LELS Local 55 Union Contract. Motion Carried 6-0-1 with Campbell Absent.

Chief Houde stated that the Blueberry Arts Festival went smoothly, and the Police Department tried to keep traffic flowing around the park. Chief Houde reminded everyone to slow down, we had a child hit by a car last week, the child is ok, but please be aware of your surroundings and slow down.

Public Safety Night will be on Wednesday, September 25th from 3-6pm at the Ely Fire Hall.

City Attorney: Nothing to Report

City Engineer: Not Present

COMMUNICATIONS:

- A. Correspondence from the Ely Chamber of Commerce thanking for the support for the 2024 Blueberry Arts Festival
- B. Correspondence from the Coalition of Greater Minnesota Cities
- C. Correspondence from the Arrowhead Regional Development Commission (ARDC) regarding the 2025 Tax Levy.
- D. Correspondence from RAMS regarding a Lunch and Learn Session on August 8th.
- E. Correspondence from Northwoods Partners
- F. Burntside Ridge Trail Association Treasurer's Report and Minutes
- G. Correspondence from Barbara Jones of Ely Climate Group to get City of Ely to be an active Green Step City again.
Langowski stated that if anyone is interested in helping let him know.
- H. Correspondence from the League of Minnesota Cities Legislator of Distinction for 2024 recognizing Representative Roger Skraba and Senator Grant Hauschild.

Debeltz/Kess moved to send a letter of congratulations to Roger Skraba and Grant Hauschild. Motion Carried 6-0-1 with Campbell Absent.

CLAIMS FOR PAYMENT:

- A. City and EUC Claims for August 6, 2024 for \$78,566.66
- B. Partial Payment Estimate #1 to Mesabi Bituminous for \$44,137.00 for the Trailhead Site Re-bid project
- C. S.E.H Invoice # 470819 for \$23,760.00 for the Prospector ATV Project
- D. Partial Pay Estimate #2 to Max Gray Construction Inc for \$94,330.46 for the Ely Regional Trailhead Building

Debeltz/Callen moved to approve the Claims for Payments A-D. Motion Carried 6-0-1 with Campbell Absent.

OLD BUSINESS:

Committee Seats

Park and Recreation Board - (1 Mid-Term Seat Open – Term Expiring 1/31/2027)

New Applicants: Resident or Non-resident Steven Toddie – Non-Resident and Kristen Anthony – Resident

Bisbee/Kess moved to conduct interviews with the two applicants to see their interest in Park and Recreation. Motion Carried 6-0-1 with Campbell Absent.

NEW BUSINESS:

Debeltz/Callen moved to approve the Temporary Liquor License for Ely Rotary for August 16, 2024 at Miners Dry. Motion Carried 6-0-1 with Campbell Absent.

Callen/Debeltz moved to approve the Temporary Liquor License for the Ely Winton Rod and Gun Club for August 31, 2024 at Miner’s Dry. Motion Carried 6-0-1 with Campbell Absent.

Callen/Bisbee moved to approve the Temporary Liquor License for the Dorothy Molter Museum for September 20th and 21st at Whiteside Park. Motion Carried 6-0-1 with Campbell Absent.

Bisbee/Debeltz moved to approve the Residential Rehab Loan application for Morgan Sauls for \$10,000 at 518 E Pattison St to waterproof the basement and for mold treatment pending proper paperwork and fees and to direct Attorney Klun to work with the applicant and proceed with the loan application. Motion Carried 6-0-1 with Campbell Absent.

Debeltz/Callen moved to approve the 2024-2025 Liquor License Renewals pending proper paperwork, insurance and fees. Motion Carried 6-0-1 with Campbell Absent.

Callen/Debeltz moved to approve the 2024-2025 Cannabinoid Dealer Licenses pending proper paperwork, insurance and fees. Motion Carried 6-0-1 with Campbell Absent.

Debeltz/Callen moved to approve the Ely Homecoming Parade for October 4th, 2024 at 1pm. Motion Carried 6-0-1 with Campbell Absent.

A.Forsman/Bisbee moved to Schedule a Study Session on August 27th to discuss the study completed by Ely Bloomenson Community Hospital concerning the Ambulance Service and invite all interested parties from the surrounding communities and boards. Motion Carried 6-0-1 with Campbell Absent

OPEN FORUM: None

ADJOURN:

Mayor Omerza adjourned the meeting at 6:20pm without objection.

Casey Velcheff
Deputy Clerk