

MINUTES
Eveleth City Council Meeting
2:00 p.m., January 21, 2025
Council Chambers, City Hall, Eveleth, MN

A. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Roen called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m.

B. ROLL CALL

Councilor Jim Perpich, Absent
Councilor John Rauzi, Present
Councilor Brian Lillis, Present
Councilor Joseph Koivunen, Present
Mayor Adam Roen, Present

Also present: City Clerk Administrator Jackie Monahan-Junek; Deputy City Clerk Stephanie Friebe; Public Works Director Jerry Rosati; Police Chief Jesse Linde; City Attorney Joel Lewicki; Alan Johnson, Bolton & Menk Engineering

C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion by Councilor Koivunen, second by Councilor Rauzi to approve the following minutes:

1. Minutes of City Council Meeting held January 7, 2025.

Ayes – All.

D. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion by Councilor Rauzi, second by Councilor Lillis to approve agenda with the following revision:

Add: J.15. Discuss Scheduling a Meeting for Department Updates

Ayes – All.

E. PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

F. APPOINTMENTS/PRESENTATIONS

1. Alex Peritz, MnDOT, regarding agenda item J.1.

Alex Peritz, MnDOT, presented an update on the Highway 53 Project. Peritz said the plans are complete and have been advertised with a bid opening scheduled for February 5, 2025. They are hoping to begin construction with demolition of the bridge near Fayal Pond in April. Once school is out for the year, major construction will begin with the detour rerouting traffic via Hat Trick Avenue and Old Highway 53. The construction completion date is set for October 2025.

Once a contractor has been selected, MnDOT will hold a public hearing to inform the public of time frames and a construction schedule. MnDOT will coordinate with St. Louis County to provide the public with an update on the roundabout project.

Peritz referred to the four party agreement with MnDOT, St. Louis County, Eveleth, and Virginia for redevelopment of Highway 53. The City of Eveleth is planning to upgrade utility lines running across Highway 53 at the time of construction. MnDOT has been working with the City of Eveleth to determine certain aesthetic improvements such as benches (for which the City would bear the cost). The sidewalks would be designed to incorporate bench placement in areas designated by the City. The total expenses to the City of Eveleth for the utility lines and the aesthetic upgrades is estimated at \$311,038.94 with 95 percent of the costs being attributed to the utility improvements.

Peritz pointed out that there is some water work to be upgraded under Hat Trick Avenue; however, those costs will be paid by the County as Hat Trick Avenue will now be considered part of the CSAH route.

2. Appointment of Carla Moberg to the Park Commission

3. Appointment of Matt Hiti to the Planning Commission

4. Appointment of Camille Newman to the Golf Course Commission

5. Appointment of Michael Newman to the Golf Course Commission

Motion by Councilor Koivunen, second by Councilor Lillis to appoint the following commission members:

- *Carla Moberg, Park Commission, Term effective 1/21/2025 to 1/31/2027;*
- *Matt Hiti, Planning Commission, Term effective 1/21/2025 to 1/31/2029;*
- *Camile Newman, Golf Course Commission, Term effective 1/21/2025 to 12/31/2027;*
- *Michael Newman, Golf Course Commission, Term effective 1/21/2025 to 12/31/2027.*

Ayes – All.

The City Council expressed their gratitude for these commission members and their service to the City of Eveleth.

G. CONSENT AGENDA

1. Approval of Payroll – January 1-15, 2025 in the amount of \$153,538.40

Motion by Councilor Rauzi, second by Councilor Koivunen to approve the Consent Agenda. Ayes – All.

H. PUBLIC HEARINGS

None.

I. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None.

J. NEW BUSINESS

1. State of Minnesota Department of Transportation and City of Eveleth and City of Virginia and Saint Louis County Cooperative Construction Agreement for 2025 Highway 53 construction

Motion by Councilor Lillis, second by Councilor Rauzi to approve the State of Minnesota Department of Transportation and City of Eveleth and City of Virginia and St. Louis County Cooperative Construction Agreement for 2025 Highway 53 Construction. Ayes – All.

2. Proposed Ordinance Amending the City Code Chapter 2, Section 2.02. Council Meetings – Time and Place

Motion by Councilor Koivunen, second by Councilor Lillis to approve Introduction and First Reading of Proposed Ordinance Amending the City Code Chapter 2, Section 2.02 Council Meetings Time and Place. Ayes – All.

3. Discuss Community Meetings to be held at the Auditorium

Mayor Roen would like to move forward with Town Hall Meetings at the Auditorium. Councilor Koivunen recalled around 80 to 100 people at the last community meeting held in August of 2024. Councilor Lillis said he would like to see these meetings begin sooner rather than later. Councilor Rauzi concurred with getting these meetings started right away. Roen suggested the Council plan for two meetings a year with more being added if there is interest. Roen asked City Clerk Administrator Monahan-Junek to schedule an evening meeting at 5:30 p.m. in February. The meeting will be advertised in the newspaper, on the City's website, and possibly as in insert in the City's utility bill.

4. Discuss the Purchase of the former School Property and consider whether or not the Council wants to move forward with the School Campus Concept Plans

Mayor Roen would like the Council to review the concept for the School Property which was created by Consultant Bob Streetar. Roen said he has some concerns with the space and wants to make sure the direction the Council takes is best for the City. He questioned whether or not the City needs 30 to 40 lots (for housing) as it took a long time to fill the lots in West Eveleth. Councilor Koivunen said the City now owns the former Junior High Property which has been broken down into six buildable lots. Koivunen said there is not a list, at this time, of any parties interested in building at the site. Koivunen said he can “see taking baby steps rather than putting all our eggs in a basket.”

Councilor Lillis voiced his concerns on timeliness in how the Council proceeds, if the direction is revamped, as current grant opportunities may become unavailable. Roen clarified a conversation that he had earlier with Monahan-Junek that the City can make changes to the project and still qualify for IRRRB grant funds as long as the whole concept is not changed. Monahan-Junek said the grant money from the IRRRB, for the former high school and junior high property, has not yet been secured. However, it has been made pretty clear to the IRRRB that these are concept plans and there is always room for some movement.

Councilor Koivunen said the multipurpose building on the former school site needs to be put on the City’s radar. Koivunen said the building is there and it needs to be used. Roen would like to Council to have an extended workshop meeting to discuss the school property and the multipurpose building.

Mayor Roen asked Monahan-Junek to schedule a workshop meeting for the Council to continue discussion on this property.

5. Approve final costs from Rock Ridge School District for Multi-Purpose/Fine Arts building preservation

Motion by Councilor Rauzi, second by Councilor Koivunen to approve final costs from Rock Ridge School District for Multi-Purpose/Fine Arts Building preservation in the amount of \$204,635.60. Ayes - All.

6. Approve Statewide Volunteer Firefighter (SVF) Plan Initial Certification for City of Eveleth Fire Department

Motion by Councilor Lillis, second by Councilor Koivunen to approve the Statewide Volunteer Firefighter (SVF) Plan Initial Certification for City of Eveleth Fire Department. Ayes – All.

7. Request from City Administrator to hire McKenzie Clinton for the Utility Clerk position

Motion by Councilor Rauzi, second by Councilor Lillis to approve hiring McKenzie Clinton for the Utility Clerk position. Ayes – All.

The start date for McKenzie will be determined.

8. Authorize posting and advertising for a Library Clerk

The hiring of McKenzie Clinton for the Utility Clerk position creates a vacancy for a Library Clerk position. The Library will now need to fill two part-time Library Clerk positions.

Motion by Councilor Koivunen, second by Councilor Rauzi to authorize posting for the Library Clerk position in AFSCME 484 for 7 days, and if no applicants are received, then authorize advertising publicly for this position. Ayes – All.

9. Change Order 005 from Max Gray Construction in the amount of \$9,236.85 for City of Eveleth Projects

Motion by Councilor Koivunen, second by Councilor Rauzi to approve Change Order 005 from Max Gray Construction in the amount of \$9,236.85 for City of Eveleth Projects. Ayes – All.

The following items were added:

- Library Water Damage - \$4,170.69
- Police Department Front Door Replacement - \$2,010.91
- Auditorium Electrical Work - \$3,055.25.

10. Pay Request No. 2 and No. 3 from DSG Company in the amount of \$307,158.75 and \$6,412.51, respectively, for AMI Water Meter Project

Motion by Councilor Rauzi, second by Councilor Koivunen to approve Pay Request No. 2 and No. 3 from DSG Company in the amount of \$307,158.75 and \$6,412.51, respectively, for AMI Water Meter Project. Ayes – All.

11. Consider approving the Golf Course Managers Contract

Councilor Koivunen recapped a recent Golf Course Commission Meeting where the contract with John Rinne for the Golf Course Manager was discussed. Koivunen said that Rinne has done an excellent job managing the golf course for 20+ years. The Golf Course Commission is recommending Rinne's contract be renewed prior to the expiration date (contract set to expire in September 2025) to allow Rinne time to start ordering golf carts for the upcoming seasons.

Mayor Roen pointed out that at the Council made a decision to post for the last two independent contracts (zoning administrator and ambulance director) prior to renewing next year. Roen said he has nothing against Rinne's work at the golf course, but wondered if the Council should also consider posting for this position to keep things consistent. Councilor Rauzi said it would only be fair to treat the contracts equally. Councilor Lillis asked if the Golf Course Commission has gone out for proposals for the manager's position.

Public Works Director Rosati said that Rinne has been serving as the Golf Course Manager since 2005. Rosati explained that Rinne takes care of all the merchandise, food, beverages, etc. He said that Rinne has always done a great job and has gone above and beyond, especially in the clubhouse. Rosati said the City does not want to lose him. Councilor Lillis revealed that the proposed contract would expire in 2028.

Motion by Councilor Koivunen, second by Councilor Lillis to approve the Eveleth Golf Course Clubhouse Agreement with John Rinne for 2026-2028 and to consider posting for this position once the contract expires in 2028. Ayes – All.

Mayor Roen thanked John Rinne for doing a fantastic job at the Golf Course.

12. Resolution Accepting Donation from Eveleth Elks Lodge 1161 for the Ambulance Service

Motion by Councilor Koivunen, second by Councilor Lillis to adopt Resolution No. 2025-02, "Resolution Accepting Donation from Eveleth Elks Lodge 1161 for the Ambulance Service" and to send a letter of thanks. Ayes – All.

The Elks Lodge donate \$250.00 to the Eveleth Ambulance Service for a table skirt and handouts for public events.

13. Resolution Accepting Donation for K-9 Unit (Bonnie McDowell)

Motion by Councilor Rauzi, second by Councilor Lillis to adopt Resolution No. 2025-03, "Resolution Accepting Donation for K-9 Unit (Bonnie McDowell)," and to send a letter of thanks. Ayes – All.

Bonnie McDowell donated \$100.00 to Eveleth's K-9 Unit.

14. Application for Exempt Permit for Iron Mining Association of Minnesota, at Curl Mesabi at Range Recreational Civic Center, February 21, 2025

Motion by Councilor Koivunen, second by Councilor Lillis to approve the Application for Exempt Permit for Iron Mining Association of Minnesota, at Curl Mesabi at Range Recreational Civic Center on February 21, 2025. Ayes – All.

15. Discuss Scheduling a Meeting for Department Updates

Mayor Roen requested that a meeting be scheduled to review the projects and departmental operations of the City. City Clerk Administrator Monahan-Junek will schedule this meeting for the Council.

K. COUNCIL PRESENTATIONS/COMMITTEE REPORTS

Councilor Lillis reported on a recent HRA Meeting he attended. Lillis said the Board was updated on the current affairs of the housing development. An issue with a tenant alleging they had a problem with mold and bugs was directed to the management of the facility. The Board is satisfied with the management's handling of the situation.

Lillis said the HRA replaced all facility doors last year. A majority of the doors were defective resulting in condensation issues. The manufacturer has begun replacing the doors. They will start with installing a small number of doors to see how they hold up in cold weather.

Councilor Koivunen recently attended a Golf Course Commission in which John Rinne's contract was discussed.

Mayor Roen announced that the City will be posting a calendar of Commission/Board Meetings on the City's website. Roen encouraged members to inform Deputy City Clerk Friebe of any changes or additions to meetings so that the calendar can be kept up to date.

L. ADMINISTRATIVE PRESENTATIONS

Public Works Director – Director Rosati informed the Council that the cold weather has been hard on City equipment. He will be updating the Council with the need for new equipment and repairs.

M. ADJOURN

The meeting adjourned at 2:49 p.m.