

MINUTES
Eveleth City Council Meeting
5:00 p.m., April 6, 2021
Council Chambers, City Hall, Eveleth, MN

A. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Vlasisavljevich called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

B. ROLL CALL

Councilor Jim Perpich, Present
Councilor John Rauzi, Present
Councilor Brian Lillis, Present
Councilor Joseph Koivunen, Present
Mayor Robert Vlasisavljevich, Present

Also present: City Clerk Administrator Jackie Monahan-Junek; Deputy City Clerk Stephanie Friebe; Police Chief Jesse Linde, Public Works Director Jerry Rosati; City Attorney Mitch Brunfelt; Alan Johnson, Benchmark Engineering

C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

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

1. Eveleth City Council Meeting held March 16, 2021.

Ayes – All.

D. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion by Councilor Koivunen, second by Councilor Lillis to approve the agenda. Ayes – All.

E. APPOINTMENTS/PRESENTATIONS

None.

F. VISITOR/PUBLIC PRESENTATIONS

None.

G. CONSENT AGENDA

1. Approval of Payroll – March 1-15, 2021 in the amount of \$114,764.22
2. Approval of Claims – March 2021 in the amount of \$636,599.61

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

H. PUBLIC HEARINGS

None.

I. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None.

J. NEW BUSINESS

1. Declare 1104 McKinley Avenue a nuisance – Mayor Vlasisavljevich

Mayor Vlasisavljevich pointed out that the City has been dealing with the property at 1104 McKinley Avenue for years. The police department has issued numerous blight citations. Vlasisavljevich said the current inhabitants are squatting on the property. It has been reported that they have thrown bucketfuls of human waste off the deck, during this last winter, as there is no running water or sanitary sewer hooked up to the home. He voiced his concerns of public safety for the neighbors, and suggested having the soil tested for contamination and sending a bill to the owners of the property.

Councilor Koivunen said the property owners should be doing something as the occupants have been living at the house for over a year without water. The neighbors are concerned to speak up as they fear retaliation.

City Attorney Brunfelt said the issue relates to a contract for deed. The deed vendor passed away and the asset has never been probated. Their office has been trying to work with the living heirs, but Brunfelt warned it will continue to be a long, cumbersome process. Brunfelt suggested the Council use the procedures set forth in the City Code to vacate the property. Eveleth City Code Section 10.21 and 10.22 refers to Maintenance of Private Property and Hazardous Conditions. Under City Code, the Council can order the property be abated and those squatting in the house vacate the premises. There would be a formal process to follow which would take approximately 20 to 30 days to be able to abate the nuisance property.

Mayor Vlasisavljevich said the people who do the right thing are not getting respect under the law. He said the violators seem to get all of the rights. Vlasisavljevich remarked that, “These aren’t a bunch of college students going to school.” He said it has been a bad situation for years, and it is time to take the gloves off and kick them out—for their own safety and the safety of the neighbors.

Councilor Rauzi concurred that the City needs to alleviate this problem and get these people to safety. Rauzi agreed with going through the process in the City Code.

Motion by Councilor Koivunen, second by Councilor Lillis to initiate the process under Eveleth City Code Section 10.21 and 10.22 to have the property at 1104 McKinley Avenue declared a nuisance and hazardous condition and to seek to have the property abated. Ayes – All.

Councilor Lillis asked if the City would be able to evict the residents. City Attorney Brunfelt said that the City Council will have the authority to order the property be vacated and anyone on the property would have to leave.

Mayor Vlaisavljevich accused the residents at 1104 McKinley of theft and confirmed with Police Chief Linde that the police department confiscated a key which was being used by the occupants to gain access to water after the City had turned the water off due to nonpayment.

2. Professional Services Proposal from Architectural Resources to meet State of Minnesota requirements for Capital Budget Projects (2020 bonding bill award of \$1,000,000)

Motion by Councilor Perpich, second by Councilor Rauzi to authorize professional services proposal from Architectural Resources to meet State of Minnesota requirements for Capital Budget Projects (2020 bonding bill award of \$1,000,000). Ayes – All.

3. Resolution Approving Refuse Rate Changes

Motion by Councilor Rauzi, second by Councilor Koivunen to adopt Resolution No. 2021-13, “Resolution Approving Refuse Rate Changes.” Ayes – All.

Public Works Director Rosati explained the increase is coming from the County which will impact residents \$1.25 per month. Commercial property increases will depend on the property value. The City Council has decided to increase the refuse rate to \$2.00 per month for residents with \$1.25 going as a pass through to the County and the remaining 75 cents going to the City. Commercial customers will also receive a 75 cent City charge along with the County increase (to be determined by their property value).

4. Authorize Dan Nitz (water/wastewater operator) to attend Minnesota Rural Water Association Conference, April 7-8, 2021 in Ranier, MN

Motion by Councilor Perpich, second by Councilor Koivunen to authorize Dan Nitz (water/wastewater operator) to attend Minnesota Rural Water Association Conference, April 7-8, 2021 in Ranier, MN. Ayes – All.

5. Approval to hire additional EMTs

Motion by Councilor Lillis, second by Councilor Perpich to approve hiring of five (5) additional EMTs by City Administrator and EMS Operations Supervisor. Ayes – All.

6. Resignation letter from Andrew Carlson, EMT

Motion by Councilor Perpich, second by Councilor Lillis to accept resignation from the following EMTs and to send letters of thanks for their service: Andrew Carlson, Kathryn Parks and Kayla Brandmeier. Ayes – All.

Councilor Lillis thanked all EMTs for their service. He said it is common to have them serve for a while and then transfer to other careers. Mayor Vlasisavljevich said Eveleth Ambulance has been a great opportunity for many to get on the job training before moving on. Councilor Koivunen thanked the Ambulance, Fire and Police Departments. He said they all work together and are a good group of people.

7. Resignation letter from Kathryn Parks, EMT

This item was addressed above.

8. Resignation letter from Kayla Brandmeier, EMT

This item was addressed above.

9. Request from Kraus-Anderson Construction Company to use City property in Progress Park for parking

Motion by Councilor Perpich, second by Councilor Koivunen to approve request from Kraus-Anderson Construction Company to use City property in Progress Park for parking. Ayes – All.

K. COUNCIL PRESENTATIONS/COMMITTEE REPORTS

None.

L. ADMINISTRATIVE PRESENTATIONS

Public Works Director – Director Rosati reported that the City made \$12,000 on very expired equipment which was auctioned off.

City Engineer – Alan Johnson, Benchmark Engineering, said there will be a preconstruction meeting next week at City Hall to discuss the Garfield Street reconstruction project.

M. ADJOURN

The meeting adjourned at 5:36 p.m.