

MINUTES
Eveleth City Council Meeting
5:00 p.m., May 4, 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 Koivunen, second by Councilor Rauzi to approve the following minutes:

1. *Eveleth City Council Workshop Meeting held April 15, 2021; and*
2. *Eveleth City Council Meeting held April 20, 2021.*

Ayes – All.

D. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

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

E. APPOINTMENTS/PRESENTATIONS

None.

F. VISITOR/PUBLIC PRESENTATIONS

Tom Walton, Eveleth resident, addressed the Council. Mr. Walton said he had talked to Phil Troutwine yesterday making a pitch for Troutwine to rent out the garage if anyone is interested in using it.

Walton asked the Council, “What is happening with the Blackwoods building?” City Clerk Administrator Monahan-Junek explained that the City owns the building. The family of Clark Blackwoods obtained a Court Order which allowed them to get into the building for a set time to acquire personal property. The family took some items; sold some of the valuable assets; and left the remaining possessions. Monahan-Junek said the family has abandoned the remaining property onsite. This leaves the City to work on cleaning out the leftover belongings and selling anything salvageable. The City’s goal is to be able to rent out the site with the hope of eventually selling the building.

Walton asked if there is an email address for the Mayor and Council. City Clerk Administrator explained that the City did have an email set up for the Mayor and Council at one time. However, the email address was eliminated as turned into a lot of work for City staff and the City was receiving inappropriate emails. Monahan-Junek said the City staff would be happy to give the Council any handwritten notes or materials that Walton would like to submit. Walton said he would like to continue speaking at the end of the meeting as it will take longer than the five minutes allowed at the beginning of the meeting.

G. CONSENT AGENDA

1. Approval of Claims – April 2021 in the amount of \$518,420.51

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

H. PUBLIC HEARINGS

None.

I. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None.

J. NEW BUSINESS

1. Recommendation for casual pay

Motion by Councilor Lillis, second by Councilor Rauzi to approve recommendation from the Personnel Committee for the following revised casual pay rates effective May 17, 2021:

<i>Adult Casual</i>	<i>\$16.00/hour</i>
<i>Student Lead Casual</i>	<i>\$15/hour</i>
<i>Student Casual</i>	<i>\$13/hour</i>

Ayes – All.

2. Exhibit B to Resolution 2019-05 – 2022 Roosevelt Avenue & Douglas Avenue Sanitary Sewer Replacement Project

Motion by Councilor Koivunen, second by Councilor Perpich to approve Exhibit B (2022 Roosevelt Avenue & Douglas Avenue Sanitary Sewer Replacement Project) to Resolution No. 2019-05, “Resolution Declaring the Official Intent of the City of Eveleth, Minnesota to Reimburse Certain Expenditures from the Proceeds of Tax-Exempt Bonds or Other Obligations to be Issued by the City.” Ayes – All.

3. Resolution Accepting the Offer of the Minnesota Public Facilities Authority to Purchase a \$555,465 General Obligation Water Revenue Note, Series 2021A, Providing For Its Issuance, and Authorizing Execution of a Project Loan Agreement

Motion by Councilor Rauzi, second by Councilor Perpich to adopt Resolution No. 2021-14, “Resolution Accepting the Offer of the Minnesota Public Facilities Authority to Purchase a \$555,465 General Obligation Water Revenue Note, Series 2021A, Providing For Its Issuance, and Authorizing Execution of a Project Loan Agreement.” Ayes – All.

4. Resolution Accepting the Offer of the Minnesota Public Facilities Authority to Purchase a \$194,297 General Obligation Sewer Revenue Note, Series 2021B, Providing For Its Issuance, and Authorizing Execution of a Project Loan Agreement

Motion by Councilor Koivunen, second by Councilor Lillis to adopt Resolution No. 2021-15, “Resolution Accepting the Offer of the Minnesota Public Facilities Authority to Purchase a \$194,297 General Obligation Sewer Revenue Note, Series 2021B, Providing For Its Issuance, and Authorizing Execution of a Project Loan Agreement.” Ayes - All

5. Approve County State Aid Highway swap

St. Louis County is proposing to build a new county frontage road from Station 44 Road to Progress Parkway (1.49 miles). In addition, St. Louis County would also take over Industrial Park Drive from Progress Parkway to Highway 53 (.73 miles) and Hat Trick Avenue from Highway 53 intersection to Park Avenue (.67 miles).

There is no provision to increase the City’s total CSAH miles, so St. Louis County is proposing that the County and Eveleth swap CSAH roads in Eveleth.

Motion by Councilor Perpich, second by Councilor Rauzi to approve the County State Aid Highway swap as follows:

County (new)

- *New frontage road (Station 44 Rd. to Progress Parkway)* 1.49 mi.
 - *Industrial Park Drive* .73 mi.
 - *Hat Trick Avenue* .67 mi.
- = 2.89 mi.

County back to City

- *County 141 (Douglas Ave. & Douglas Ct.)* .73 mi.
 - *County 144 (McKinley Ave. from Fayal Rd. to Harrison St.; Harrison St. from McKinley Ave. to N. Elba Ave.; Elba Ave. from Harrison St. to Jones St.)* 1.02 mi.
 - *County 145 (Roosevelt Ave. & N. Fayal Ave. from Fayal Rd. to Park Ave.)* .88 mi.
 - *County 148 (Monroe St. from Grant Ave. to Lincoln Ave.)* .12 mi.
 - *County 147 (Jones St. from Grant Ave. to Douglas Ave.)* .06 mi.
- = 2.81 mi.

Ayes – All.

6. Land License for OSI Environmental Inc.

City Clerk/Administrator Monahan-Junek disclosed that OSI Environmental Inc. is using a part of the Alice Location to park their semi-trailers. The City will be rebidding the fencing project at Alice Location and will make sure to keep that portion of the property unfenced so that OSI will have access.

Motion by Councilor Koivunen, second by Councilor Perpich to approve the Land License between the City of Eveleth and OSI Environmental Inc. Ayes – All.

7. Resolution Accepting Donation for City-Wide Rummage Sale Expenses

Motion by Councilor Rauzi, second by Councilor Lillis to adopt Resolution No. 2021-16, “Resolution Accepting Donation for City-Wide Rummage Sale Expenses” and to send the Town of Fayal a letter of thanks for their \$100.00 donation. Ayes – All.

8. Request from CN Railroad

City Attorney Brunfelt explained that these requests are often made, and that is under City’s discretion as to whether or not the Council would like to support the railroad’s request.

Motion by Councilor Koivunen, second by Councilor Lillis to send a letter to U.S. Economic Regulator, Surface Transportation Board, in support of CN Railroad acquiring the Kansas City Southern Railroad. Ayes – All.

K. COUNCIL PRESENTATIONS/COMMITTEE REPORTS

Councilor Rauzi attended the HRA meeting yesterday. Rauzi reported that the HRA is operating well within budget. The biggest issue right now is finding a replacement for the maintenance man who will be retiring. The current employee has agreed to continue workings on a part-time basis until a replacement can be found.

Mayor Vlasisavljevich suggested the City start logging the property on Station Road 44. Vlasisavljevich estimated there is around 22 acres of property for potential development. City Clerk Administrator Monahan-Junek recommended some permanent stakes for wetland delineation be installed. This would allow potential buyers to visualize where the wetlands are located. The temporary flags keep getting removed so it would also be a good idea to post no trespassing signs.

Councilor Perpich commented on the City's fishy smelling water supply. Perpich said there is a definite odor and the City should be thinking about a project to have filters installed. Public Works Director Rosati indicated the City does have a temporary building set up for running activated carbon through the water supply when the smell is heavy. Rosati said he was unaware of water complaints at this time. Councilor Perpich said the water is a problem and asked if there is a way to upgrade the system.

Director Rosati reported that the City had previously considered a permanent structure for activated carbon. Due to the high cost for a permanent structure (estimated at \$300,000 to \$400,000) the Council, at that time, decided to continue with the temporary structure. Rosati reported that the City starts to run activated carbon through the system when they receive complaints regarding the water. The issue with the temporary structure is that it is not feasible to run the activated carbon consistently through the system as the material ends up at the wastewater plant. If the structure was permanent the activated carbon would be run through the system continuously. Rosati also pointed out that the organic smell comes from decaying leaves and plant substance. It is not harmful to drink or use the water, but there can be an unpleasant scent.

Councilor Koivunen said he will be attending a meeting at the RRCC tomorrow. They are hoping to determine when they will reopen. The RRCC building is currently being as a facility for COVID vaccinations. Koivunen said that Jon's Drug and Scenic Rivers are also giving vaccinations.

L. ADMINISTRATIVE PRESENTATIONS

City Engineer – Alan Johnson, Benchmark Engineering, reported that reconstruction of Garfield Street has started. Residents may be experiencing some temporary water shut offs.

Johnson also noted that the construction company had around \$10,000 worth of brass material stolen from their site in Eveleth.

Clerk-Administrator – Monahan-Junek reported that the City Auditorium will be used for COVID vaccinations beginning next week as the RRCC is hoping to reopen to the public soon. The City-Wide Rummage Sale will be held this weekend. Around 65 people have signed up for the event.

The Mayor allowed for public comments at the end of the meeting. Bill Aho, owner of Super 8 Hotel in Eveleth, commented on the City's water. He referred to two particular guest complaints over the years. He said his employees will not drink the water and bring their own supply from home. Aho agreed with Mayor Vlasisavljevich's idea of clearing the property on Station Road 44. Aho, also an EDA Board Member, reflected back years ago when he offered to clear a parcel in West Eveleth. Aho said that if you have something to sell you have to make it presentable. Monahan-Junek reported that there is only one remaining lot in West Eveleth for sale. All of the other lots have been sold.

Tom Walton, Eveleth resident, said he is retired and has a lot of time to research. Walton has been researching color revolution. Since early April he has been working to get a speaker on the Iron Range (Walton distributed a bio on a speaker). Walton encouraged the Council to attend the event set for May 13th at Kunnaris in which the speaker will address the critical race theory. Walton said he recently came across a four-page letter dated in June of 2020 signed by 26 staff members and teachers of Rock Ridge School District. Councilor Perpich suggested Walton take the matter up with the school. Walton indicated he has also been trying to get on the school board agenda. Walton said his concerns are raised by this letter as the statements are not factually correct concerning arrests of black Americans. He felt the letter was smearing officers who have or had not yet been convicted of wrongdoing. Walton went on to express his concern of the critical race theory and worried about people (including his grandkids) being indoctrinated. He said that they are making an assertion of white supremacy without the facts. Walton urged the Council to get involved. He said everyone needs to be aware, and "Look at Minneapolis—it's turning into Portland!" Walton believes that the people who are pushing these views do not want a constitution because it does not fit their narrative. Mayor Vlasisavljevich said that no one wants to talk about a solution. Walton agreed that without a debate there will not be a solution. He hoped the Council will get involved.

Mayor Vlasisavljevich said it would be interesting to see if the school board will allow Walton to speak at their May 10th meeting. Vlasisavljevich said the Council does not have the resources to get involved in a big way, but that he will leave it up to each Council Member to decide if they will attend the meeting. He also thanked Walton for his interest in the vacant properties around town.

The Council thanked Walton for sharing his concerns.

M. ADJOURN

The meeting adjourned at 5:49 p.m.