

MINUTES
Eveleth City Council Workshop Meeting
4:15 p.m., January 19, 2021
Council Chambers, City Hall, Eveleth, MN

Councilor John Rauzi, Present
Councilor Brad Hadrava, Absent
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 Tim Koivunen, Public Works Director Jerry Rosati; Alan Johnson, Benchmark Engineering

Mayor Vlasisavljevich called the meeting to order at 4:15 p.m.

1. Rock Ridge School District Eveleth campus demolition plans – Jeff Carey, Rock Ridge Schools

Jeff Carey, Rock Ridge School District, reviewed the demolition plan with the Council. The junior high building and manual arts building have been listed for sale for a couple of years. The district is planning to demolish those buildings this spring. The bus garage is not on the demolition schedule yet, and has fuel tanks buried underground. The new high school campus is scheduled to be complete in the winter of 2023 with students moving onsite the fall of 2023.

Carey asked if the City would be interested in keeping any of the buildings on the Eveleth-Gilbert School campus. He asked if the City wants to preserve the gym, the fields, ball park, etc. The new school will not need these amenities. Carey said the district was given an estimate of \$1 million dollars to keep the gym as a heating plant would need to be added. Pursuant to the agreement with the school, the cost to the City for the land with buildings is \$40,000.

Councilor Lillis suggested the bus garage could be used to store fuel for City vehicles and the building could be used as a firing range for the police department.

The school district will need to know late 2022 to early 2023 of the City's plans for those buildings. Carey said the Virginia elementary students will be moving into the Franklin Building during the reconstruction of the Roosevelt School in Virginia so nothing will be done with the campus until after the students are moved back to Virginia.

2. Update on MnDOT interest in City owned gravel pit

City Clerk Administrator Monahan-Junek updated the Council on the potential purchase of the City owned gravel pit by MnDOT. Monahan-Junek said MnDOT was concerned in moving forward with their project at the gravel pit as there were about 40 disgruntled and influential citizens opposing the new facility. MnDOT is concerned as funding for the facility is through bonding money. They feel there is too much risk involved if the project is not funded due to the citizens voicing their opposition to the development at the gravel pit site. MnDOT will be looking for other property for building the facility.

The Council voiced their disappointment that the site will be not utilized for the new facility. Mayor Vlasisavljevich said the City should look at fencing off the property. Councilor Lillis concurred that the City does have liability issues with people going onto the property.

City Clerk Administrator Monahan-Junek will be working with a real estate agent to list available City properties. She will have the gravel pit included on the list.

3. Update on Fire Consolidation

Councilor Lillis updated the Council on the Fire Consolidation. Lillis said the subcommittee has been meeting to discuss the joint powers agreement with Eveleth and Fayal and have run into a governmental issue. Fayal Township operates on a different fiscal system than Eveleth. At any given year, the citizens of Fayal could vote to not fund the Fire Department. In that event, Eveleth would be completely responsible for the operation of the Fire Department. There is a possibility to try and get legislation to establish a fire taxing district. The taxing district would fund the entire operation of the joint fire departments and distribute the costs equally over the district.

Monahan-Junek suggested the Eveleth City Council meet with the Fayal Town Board to discuss the possibility of a fire taxing district. Councilor Rauzi discussed the idea of exploring interest by Eveleth/Fayal residents of consolidating into one entity. He said it may be time to look at the possibility and to survey residents of both Eveleth and Fayal to get their input.

4. Alice Location fencing project

Benchmark Engineering received a letter from Ed Forconi of Iron Oakes Fence dated January 6, 2021. When the project was bid, Iron Oakes was planning to use their own people to complete the job. They have now learned that they may be required to hire local union workers whose skills are unknown to them. Iron Oakes is requesting the City allow them to use their own workers with the understanding that they will pay prevailing wage.

The City will research this further. Mayor Vlasisavljevich said the project may have to be rebid. If the project needs to be rebid, the City may also add fencing to the City owned gravel pit.

5. Liquor license fee refunds

The Council is in favor of reimbursing liquor license holders for license fees during the shutdown over the holidays due to the Governor's Order.