

MINUTES
Eveleth City Council Workshop Meeting
4:30 p.m., February 1, 2022
Council Chambers, City Hall, Eveleth, MN

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; City Attorney Karl Sundquist; Public Works Director Jerry Rosati; Police Chief Jesse Linde

Mayor Vlasisavljevich called the meeting to order at 4:35 p.m.

1. Joint Rec Board Program

Mayor Vlasisavljevich thanked Rock Ridge Superintendent Dr. Noel Schmitt for attending the meeting. Councilor Perpich (Joint Rec Board Eveleth Council Liaison) talked about the Joint Rec Board Bylaws which states each entity (Cities of Eveleth & Gilbert, Fayal Township, School District) involved is to give a 365-day notice prior to withdrawing from the Joint Powers Agreement. Perpich indicated that notice has not been given. There has been talk suggesting the School District will be taking over all activities and the Cities can't do anything about it.

Dr. Schmitt acknowledged that there is a Joint Powers Agreement in affect that lasts for at least another year. Schmitt stated that two school districts (Eveleth-Gilbert and Virginia) have become one, and after merging now have two activity directors. Part of the job responsibilities of the two activity directors include running the Community Education Program. The State of Minnesota gives money to the Community Education Program (which offers athletics, arts, crafts, etc.). Schmitt clarified that the Rock Ridge School District is not trying to take anything over that the Cities are doing. He said the goal is to ask the municipalities and townships if they are happy with the way their programs are running. Conversations were started to see if the entities want to do anything differently. Youth hockey and baseball have already branched off and will be running their own clubs.

Councilor Perpich said the baseball program has been absorbed by the new consolidated baseball club. He asked, "Where does this leave us as a community?" He questioned the future of other programs such as basketball.

Schmitt suggested maybe slowing down and taking a step back in the process. He said some things (such as Boys High School Hockey) have joined faster than expected during the consolidation, but other things may take more time.

Perpich recommended some sort of charter to make sure there is equal representation from each entity. Perpich also commented on the upkeep of the baseball fields.

Dr. Schmitt said there are certain rules which must be followed in order for Community Ed to receive state funding. Perpich said, "It's all for the kids. There is nothing wrong with Community Ed." He repeated the importance of having everyone equally represented.

Councilor Koivunen asked Councilor Perpich if the Joint Rec Board will continue. Perpich said the Board needs direction and the Joint Rec Board Director Craig Homola will be retiring soon. An interim director may be considered to fill this position.

It was suggested that the School meet with representatives from the Cities of Eveleth and Gilbert and Fayal Township to discuss the future of the program. Dr. Schmitt said the purpose would be to take a genuine look at the programs to determine the best thing to do for the kids in the area. Dr. Schmitt would initiate the meeting.

Councilor Lillis reiterated that the agreement is still in place for a year. Mayor Vlasisavljevich said the whole process of joining the school districts is very complicated, and not just about buildings. He proposed taking a step back and advancing slowly as Dr. Schmitt suggested.

Councilor Rauzi said success of the programs hinge on everyone's due diligence and communication. Rauzi said there are some things that need to be figured out and agreed with moving forward cautiously.

Perpich said the consolidation process has had people confused. He wants to see kids active, and one way to participate is getting them involved in athletics.