

**MINUTES**  
**Eveleth City Council Workshop Meeting**  
**2:00 p.m., March 12, 2025**  
**Council Chambers, City Hall, Eveleth, MN**

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

Also present: City Clerk Administrator Jackie Monahan-Junek; Public Works Director Jerry Rosati; Police Chief Jesse Linde

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

**1. Bob Pazzelli, US Hockey Hall of Fame Museum Board Member**

At the last City Council meeting, Bob Pazzelli, Cal Cossalter, and Doug Palazzari asked to attend this workshop to answer any questions they have. Councilor Koivunen asked “When did all this start transpiring?” Bob Pazzelli replied it started mid-January 2024. Councilor Koivunen stated this is first he is getting something.

Councilor Perpich stated: he heard of the meetings and that the City Clerk Administrator and former Mayor Bob Vlasisavljevich had attended a meeting, and that Mayor-elect Adam Roen attended a meeting; the chain of command was dropped; it should have been passed on to them sooner; this is a fist fight - bring it on; St. Paul and the WILD are trying to pull the hall out of Eveleth and bring it to St. Paul.

Cal Cossalter stated: this started with the Wild bringing up the idea of attaching the hall to the Excel; the US Hockey Hall of Fame Museum Board put together a 5-person committee to be involved with the Wild; the Board was asked to keep it under wraps; as of January 2025, they would have a proposal and continue to talk and the talk would be non-binding; the Wild owner met with the Board regarding his idea to move the hall, an annex in St. Paul and share exhibits, State of Hockey in St. Paul and the hall in Eveleth; each would have a display to reciprocate each other’s State of Hockey and the hall in Eveleth.

Councilor Perpich said the preliminary ideas for Hat Trick for the corridor are preliminary and asked where the money come from. Bob Pazzelli wonders too about the money and stated we don’t have anything except the hall, ATV trails, Trail Hawks, and the local taxpayer should not have to pay for this. Councilor Koivunen said, “I don’t know why they think they just take it from us.”

Cal Cossalter stated: there was a preliminary drawing last summer done by the city; why not have the hall and city go the legislature ourselves; we have not been told who will pay for the new building, there are a lot of variables; and the Wild doesn't have a definite spot for the US Hockey Hall of Fame Museum.

Bob Pazzelli stated he doesn't know where the funding will come from to renovate the building for the US Hockey Hall of Fame Museum. Councilor Koivunen said we are talking five or six years down the line.

Bob Pazzelli stated they have a verbal agreement with the IRRRB for \$100,000 for consulting fees; if a NO vote is taken, then this money can be used for the Eveleth site; Federal funding may be available; we could develop a renovation/update plan. Pazzelli invited the city council to come and visit the hall. In response to Mitch Brunfelt's email, Pazzelli said there has been two new exhibits – wounded warrior and sled hockey; the hall has been cleaned up by volunteers; regarding women's hockey, they did not know what their logos are, but now the logos are on order; inductees were at the hall for a prior event; remodeled the entrance with new signs – looks very good; have held a golf tournament for the past 10 years – have 150 golfers – raised over \$500,000 over these; put in a new heating and cooling system; reading in the email that nothing has been done is not true.

Councilor Perpich stated: he knows what work has been done up there and that he did some of the work; it is an outright lie that the hall has not done anything; friends have visited the hall and said what a nice place it is; let's get advertising, etc. in a 5-year plan; dismayed the Council is getting this in 2025, and not in 2024.

Bob Pazzelli said regarding the purpose of the corporation, it was drafted in 2007 with USA Hockey and the city.

Councilor Lillis asked when the vote will happen. Cal Cossalter replied in the next three weeks.

Councilor Koivunen asked if they need anything from the Council.

Mayor Roen stated: he was in St. Paul yesterday; he and Al Becicka from the IRRRB were just faces at the table and we have no persuasion at the table; ideas were given if the hall was not here; at the end of the day, the city council does not decide if the hall stays, the Board does. The Mayor met with Senator Farnsworth and Representative Warwas and told them when the hall stays here, we will need some help from the State and need their help to support it.

Bob Pazzelli stated: they have a list of people to succeed them as the Board transitions; feels that Dante Tomassoni is good for the Board and has connections with legislators.

Councilor Perpich requested a proclamation/resolution of support for the US Hockey Hall of Fame Museum at the next city council meeting. Mayor Roen stated he thinks that the City Council's comments at the last meeting are sufficient.

Councilor Koivunen said: how long has Mitch Brunfelt has been on the Board?; has a problem that Mitch Brunfelt was the city attorney and seems to not care about us; I will handle it my own way. Response from the audience was: that a Board of 8 was formed and Cal Cossalter and Mitch Brunfelt traveled to St. Paul with the former Board; the local Board did not have the resources to hold the induction.

Bob Pazzelli said he talked to Dante Tomassoni about a resolution and Dante thinks it would be helpful to have a resolution moving forward.

Mayor Roen asked: If 9 of the board members want to keep the Board here, then why is it escalating? Bob Pazzelli replied that Board members could be swayed.

Mayor Roen stated: that he was invited (to attend a meeting) just after he was elected and was told to keep it quiet while the package of information was put together; he has his own idea of what Eveleth would need if the hall left; he talked with Cal, Bob, and Doug at the hall, and said he did not want to lose Eveleth's seat at the table (like being invited to the kids' table); he suggested a multi-purpose building. Bob Pazzelli stated the Wild said they would not pay \$5 million to build a new building in Eveleth.

Bob Pazzelli stated, in closing, that most hall of fames are in a small city; an example is the football hall of fame was awarded to Canton Ohio and Eveleth was awarded the US Hockey Hall of Fame.

Doug Palazzari stated: some things are true and some are not true; have added a women's display which are spread around the hall and are on the outside.

Cal Cossalter stated that Mitch Brunfelt has not been to the hall for years.

Councilor Koivunen stated that if he is on the Board, shouldn't he go up there?

Mayor Roen stated that he will not be reading Mitch Brunfelt's letter at this time, but it is part of the agenda packet and is available.

## **2. Trail Hawks Snowmobile Club – John Masters, Tom Cossalter**

John Masters stated that Gary Skerjance put together a letter what their topics are. Trail Hawks was formed in early 1970s for corridor trail 59 from Duluth to International Falls. Most trails are maintained by clubs on a volunteer basis – starts south of Melrude along 53 to the ICO on the north side of Virginia. Had a trail from the gas plant, behind Super 8 on the city's water line road, pop out towards the landfill, and use the tunnel to the Rukavina bridge.

They have regained an easement from school and are doing some work, and hope to have it open by next year. From Station 44 Road to road behind super 8, there used to be an easement and they are trying to get it back.

City Clerk Administrator Monahan-Junek stated that during the Jack Pine Business Park planning, finding a location to connect the new snowmobile trail (alongside the new Progress Parkway) to the west is on the table.

City Attorney Lewicki will complete the addendum to the agreement John Masters provided (for use of city property from Station 44 Road to behind the Super 8 to connect to the easement from the school) for the next City Council meeting

John Masters stated the Trail Hawks want a trail on the south side of the city to the downtown area. Public Works Director Rosati has reached out to mining company about getting a trail on the north side of the mining company fence.

### **3. Public Input - Citizens are invited to talk with the City Council**

Sara Matuszak from Contented Critters (Connie and Bob from the Board of Directors were in the audience) spoke. They had a facility in Makinen with no drainage and ventilation. The cost to renovate was high and it was hard to find volunteers and workers. They moved to their current location using a private party's pole building in Ely. Their contract will expire in November 2025. They take 30-40 pets from Eveleth each year. They take personal surrenders, which outnumber the take of 30-40. Most of the animals come through surrender. They starting offering a spay and neutering program. Their contract in Ely is coming to an end and are looking for a location closer to the Range where there is more need for animal control. Hibbing wants to be able to give animals to Contented Critters. They are asking for more support, in the form of a city building they could lease or purchase or plots of land. They operate off grants and donations. They will need to fundraise more. Their operating costs are \$200,000/year. They are asking if there are any spaces available in Eveleth; want to be within city limits with utilities. They want to offer animal shelter and in-house veterinarian for them and for low-cost services for the public. They need a 50 x 70 building, along with area around the building, and want four or five 10 x 30 separate runs (larger than a back yard). They can stay in the current building for now, but would have to decrease the number of surrenders they take. Also, they don't want to invest in a private party's facility, but want to invest in their own facility. They need to be on the edge of town so as to not bother the neighbors; but they do have protocols for letting dogs out, etc. They have until November 2025 to renew their current contract.

Councilor Koivunen mentioned the WDIO land. Mayor Roen mentioned 18<sup>th</sup> Avenue. Councilors will brainstorm location ideas for Contented Critters.

### **4. Brian Zadnikar, Big Stick Meatz LLC**

Brian Zadnikar owns Ed's body shop located next to the former laundry and Blackwoods. Brian Zadnikar said: there were key things that should have been addressed as a group and not individuals; he would like one month...lots of financing available; wants our city to grow and the shop to show our history; met with SBDC and obviously there would be growth; people could buy meat, stop at liquor store, big stick, buy gas downtown; he needs one month to get with two groups on financing for new equipment and a new building; has well known butchers ready to go; can't go on a preliminary contract; needs something more firm because it will cost him \$20,000; he is talking to the IRRRB about a low interest loan.

Brian Zadnikar also said: he does not want a preliminary development agreement; he wants a development agreement and wants to work directly with the city council.

Mayor Roen stated he and Councilor Koivunen will work with Brian Zadnikar.

## **5. Discuss new lawn mowers for parks**

Public Works Director Rosati distributed lawn mower estimates for new lawn mowers. We currently have mowers with 72-inch decks. He prefers a larger mower.

Mayor Roen asked if our issue is people power. Rosati replied that yes people power is a problem and over the years it is getting harder and harder to hire summer casuals.

The meeting adjourned at 4:05 p.m.