

MINUTES
Eveleth City Council Workshop Meeting
9:15 a.m., June 17, 2021
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; Police Chief Jesse Linde; Public Works Director Jerry Rosati; City Attorney Mitch Brunfelt; City Attorney Karl Sundquist; Alan Johnson, Benchmark Engineering; Dana Hiltunen, Virginia HRA & Eveleth HRA

Mayor Vlasisavljevich called the meeting to order at 9:22 a.m.

1. Housing Inspections

Mayor Vlasisavljevich observed that Eveleth has a lot of rentals in town, and those properties should be kept safe. Vlasisavljevich would like to see landlords get their properties inspected, and submit a report to the City declaring the units are safe. He said the main concern is for underage children living in hazardous conditions. Vlasisavljevich said that adults can pick where they live, but kids need protection as they have no choice.

Councilor Perpich agreed with Mayor Vlasisavljevich's concerns. Perpich said he would like to ensure that the proper safety protocol is being followed such as fire alarms installed, compliant electrical wiring, etc. He said a lot of these structures are old homes, and these rentals have the potential to put a lot of pressure on emergency personnel with probable risk. He highlighted the chance of fire which could be detrimental to a neighborhood and commented that the houses are so close together that, "If one goes, they all go."

Mayor Vlasisavljevich said there are responsible landlords who should be getting the business; and the City should use Clay Court Housing as a benchmark for safety standards. He suggested the City adopt an ordinance which requires landlords to obtain a safety inspection at their own expense. City Attorney Brunfelt agreed that the safety standards could be set out in the ordinance and that the League of Minnesota Cities more than likely has some models that Eveleth could modify.

City Clerk Administrator said Gilbert may be interested in a partnership for an inspector. The City of Virginia has implemented more detailed requirements than Eveleth would want to impose. City Attorney Brunfelt suggested banding together with other communities to

have one inspector. It would also be a way to eliminate problem landlords throughout multiple communities.

Councilor Lillis said there have been cases of citizens coming in to report carbon monoxide issues which need to be addressed. Mayor Vlasisavljevich said that some of the tenants renting subsidized properties do not feel they have a choice. He would like to provide them with options.

Dana Hiltunen, Executive Director for Virginia HRA & Eveleth HRA, works with the Section 8 Program and the Virginia HRA handles Special 8 vouchers in Eveleth. The Virginia HRA also manages Clay Court in Eveleth. Hiltunen said that HUD requires a standard inspection annually of Clay Court. She said they depend on tenants reporting issues, but many times they are reluctant. Hiltunen likes the idea of working together with other communities to set the standard.

Mayor Vlasisavljevich expressed his frustration when the landlord is getting paid directly from the tenant for utilities and does not pay the bill. This results in the water getting shut off for the renter.

City Attorney Brunfelt said the next step is to draft an ordinance. It would be valuable to get other communities to join together and pass a uniform ordinance area wide.

2. City owned clinic building

Keith Harvey, CEO for Scenic Health Services, contacted City Clerk Administrator Monahan-Junek to inform her that the Scenic Health Services Board has approved making the Eveleth Clinic a permanent clinic site. Monahan-Junek will work with Harvey to determine what type of improvements will need to be made at the facility.

3. Update on discussions with Bois Forte

Mayor Vlasisavljevich informed the Council that Bois Forte had a feasibility study done with Cenex, and they would like to move ahead with their plan for a gas station convenience store on Station Road 44. Bois Forte will continue to work on the site plan which is projected to include a gas station/convenience store, deli and carwash.

Alan Johnson, Benchmark Engineering, is working with a logging company on the forestry job for the City's 22 acres located on Station Road 44. Bois Forte will need to verify the amount of land they will use out of the 22 acres for the gas station.

Item J.5 was discussed prior to Item J.4

The closed sessions commenced at 10:03 a.m.

5. Closed session pursuant to Minn. Stat. 13D.03 – Labor negotiations under PELRA

The City Council, City Clerk Administrator Monahan-Junek, Attorney Brunfelt and Attorney Sundquist went into closed session pursuant to Minn. Stat. 13D.03, to discuss Labor negotiations under PELRA.

4. Closed session pursuant to Minn. Stat. 13D.05, subd. 3(b) – Attorney-client privilege

The City Council, City Clerk Administrator Monahan-Junek, Attorney Brunfelt and Attorney Sundquist continued with the closed session to discuss legal options, under Minn. Stat. 13D.05, subd. 3(b), which may include litigation, regarding demolishing the building located at 1104 McKinley Ave., Eveleth.

City Attorneys Brunfelt and Sundquist left the closed session at 10:35 a.m.

The closed session continued with Attorney Josh Davaney, Kennedy & Graven, via phone, under Minn. Stat. 13D.05, subd. 3(b) to discuss a recent petition for Writ of Mandamus.

The closed session concluded and the meeting adjourned at 11:07 a.m.