

The Ellsworth City Council met in regular session at 6:00 p.m. at City Hall on March 10<sup>th</sup>, 2025 with Mayor Yager presiding, and the following council present: Laube, Sogard, Phipps and Olson. Absent: Funk. Also in attendance were EJS Police Chief David Turpen, Kris Groth, South Hamilton Elementary Principal Steve Neuburger, and Nate Summers with UMB Bank.

	February Receipts	February Disbursements
General Fund	49930.62	17830.79
Road Use Fund	5125.57	31205.25
Employee Benefit Fund	37.33	0.00
Emergency Fund	0.00	
Local Option Sales Tax Fund	4516.34	
Tax Increment Finance Area 1	0.00	
Tax Increment Finance 1 Amend	0.00	
Bingo Fund	3413.22	2620.50
Debt Service Fund	19.98	0.00
Capital Project-Strm Water		
Capital Project-Water Tower		
Water Fund	37134.26	19307.66
Water Sinking Fund		
Sewer Fund	12669.24	6751.27
Electric Fund	54192.78	17915.58
Electric Sinking Fund		
Storm Water Fund	3203.10	62.99
Storm Water Sinking		
	\$170242.44	\$95694.04

**AGENDA APPROVAL:** Motion by Sogard, seconded by Olson to approve the agenda. Roll call votes 4-0. Motion carried.

**CONSENT AGENDA:** Motion by Olson, seconded by Laube to approve the following items listed on the consent agenda:

- a. Motion to approve February 25<sup>th</sup>, 2025 council minutes.
- b. Motion to approve February payment of claims.

Roll call votes 4-0. Motion carried and claims hereby made a portion of these minutes.

**PUBLIC FORUM:** Kris Groth inquired as to which city shed had approved removal/replacement and alerted the council to a light being on in one of the previously abandoned downtown buildings.

**SH SCHOOL BUS STOP SIGN ON 175:** Mr Neuburger was present to discuss with council the close call incident of two students almost being hit by a car passing a stopped school bus on Hwy 175 two weeks prior. The buses have now all been set up with external cameras as well as bus routes changed to eliminate children having to cross roads to get on the bus. There’s been a call by many constituents to have a bus stop both east bound and west bound on Hwy 175. Motion made by Sogard to make an inquiry to DOT to request signs for 175. Seconded by Laube. Roll call votes 4-0. Motion carried.

**ELLSWORTH COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION:** Marcy Olson updated council on upcoming ECA events and made a request to use the park shelter house for an ice cream social event on August 2<sup>nd</sup> from 3pm to 9pm. Mayor Yager requested there be another, non-council seat, representative at the next council meeting to make this request. Discussion and motion will be moved to March 25 council meeting.

**CITIZEN COMPLAINT FORM 2-25-25 FOLLOWUP:** Copies of the nuisance ordinances have been sent to council persons, council members will pursue compliance. City Clerk Eckers will reach out to the complainant to communicate that council members will be looking into the matter and will follow through on abatement as necessary.

**FIRE/EMS:** None Present

**LIBRARY:** None Present

**WATER RATE INCREASE:** Ellsworth financial advisor, Nate Summers of UMB Bank, was present to discuss potential water rate increases to pursue the needed debt approval amounts for the new watertower project. Packets were dispersed to all council persons, staff and Mayor. These packets are available for viewing at city hall for the general public. Included in the water rate study were comparisons to 12 other surrounding communities providing water service to their residents. City Clerk Eckers will continue to work with Mr Summers as well as Amy Bjork of Dosey and Whitney for any proposed changes to the water rate ordinance.

**TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH-CHURCH IN THE PARK:** A request was made by Pastor Jon Rollofson via email to use the open shelter at the Ellsworth City Park for church services on June 1, July 6 and August 3. Motion was made by Sogard and seconded by Laube to allow the church use of the open shelter as well as to have the shelter house building available for use of restrooms. Roll call votes 4-0. Motion carried.

**POLICE BOARD:** EJS Police Chief Turpen was present to update the council on his recent resignation from the EJS Police Department at the March 6<sup>th</sup> Police Board Meeting. Council discussed the specific needs and issues that arise from a public safety perspective in Ellsworth and what the city's needs are from law enforcement in the future. Mayor Yager addressed the council and alerted them to a potential agreement the city could make with the Hamilton County Sheriff Department for less of a cost than the current rate being paid to the City of Jewell for its contribution to the EJS Department annually. A few specific questions were raised by council members for Mayor Yager to bring to Sheriff Alex Pruismann prior to making any agreements or a decisions on changing Ellsworth's law enforcement presence. Public works employees also addressed the council in favor or pursuing an agreement with the Hamilton County Sheriff's Department. These questions will be answered at the March 25<sup>th</sup> council meeting where Sheriff Pruismann will be present. The council thanked Chief Turpen for his years of dedicated service in the protection of Ellsworth's residents.

**25/26 BUDGET DISCUSSION:** City Clerk Eckers discussed progress on the budget prep. Clerk Eckers has proposed budget numbers from EMS/Fire/Library and public works. Proposed Tax Levy was submitted on time thanks to the help from Jewell City Clerk Regina Beaune. Clerk Eckers will reach out to Clerk Beaune for assistance in entering the 25/26 proposed budget into the Department of Management system early April.

**CITY HALL UPDATES:** Clerk Eckers asked the council for advice on whether comp time for the three full time employees should be paid out prior to the end of the current fiscal year or if it should be carried over. The council discussed and recommended for less impact to a future budget, the comp time be paid out at the end of each fiscal year. Clerk Eckers has reached out to county conservation and DNR forestry services for Iowa to inquire about grant opportunities that would be available to convert some of the storm water ditch and other waterways/public spaces to pollinator pathways in addition to a recommended tree planting plan as a result of the massive removal of so many ash trees within city limits in the previous several years. Clerk Eckers will keep the Council apprised of the progress on this matter.

**PUBLIC WORKS UPDATES:** Supervisor Vanlangen and PW staff Knickerbocker were present to update council on several projects. There is a quote in hand for replacement of the old city shed, this will be added to the proposed budget for FY 25/26. There is a quote in hand from short circuit electric to replace all lights in the community center. Council gave the go head for the lights to be replaced, Bingo funds will be used as a donation to cover the expense.

**ADJOURNMENT:** Mayor Yager adjourned the meeting at 7:40 pm.

/s/ Dolorus Yager, Mayor

/s/ Heidi Eckers, City Clerk