

The Ellsworth City Council met in regular session at 6:00 p.m. at City Hall on MARCH 25, 2025 with Mayor Yager, and the following council present: Funk, Sogard, Laube, Olson. Councilman Phipps arrived at 6:08 p.m. Members of the public present: Sheriff Alex Pruismann, Officer Kaleb Morton, Ashley Platt, Linda Clark, Jeanne Shader, Gary Johnson, Barry Anksorus.

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

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

- a. Motion to approve March 10 Minutes.
- b. Motion to approve March payment of Claims.
- c. Motion to approve quote to replace media in water plant sand filters to HydroKlean for \$31,960.00.

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

PUBLIC FORUM: None

EJS/HAMILTON COUNTY SHERIFF DEPARTMENT: Mayor Yager opened discussion giving history on current difficulties with the EJS Police Board, including but not limited to the recent request that Jewell be allowed three votes to Ellsworth's two and Stanhope's two; as well as the recent resignation of EJS Police Chief David Turpen. Mayor Yager as one of the police board representatives for Ellsworth reached out to Hamilton County Sheriff Alex Pruismann to inquire on a potential arrangement for additional services. Sheriff Pruismann in attendance addressed the council and offered to answer any questions and clarified that the Sheriff Department was not present to try and replace EJS but to provide additional information to the Council and public present. Councilwoman Sogard began with asking Sheriff Pruismann how he could see the arrangement working. Sheriff Pruismann mentioned Ellsworth's current \$14 per capita 28E agreement and then stated for \$20 per capita an arrangement similar to Blairsburg, Williams, Stratford could be an option, which would include additional patrols through the town. The Sheriff's department requires deputies to spend x amount of time in each town in the county when they are on duty. Sheriff Pruismann mentioned he plans to do end of year reporting to each town on how many hours were spent and how many calls the department responded to. Sheriff Pruismann also stated Ellsworth could give the department a list of special events, dates, etc that the city would appreciate law enforcement presence. Councilwoman Olson as specifically how many hours in a 24-hour period a deputy would be present, Sheriff Pruismann could not commit to a certain number and stated it depends on how many deputies are on duty at the time/day and if there were calls in other locations in the county. Sheriff Pruismann assured the council that if there was a call from Ellsworth involving violence or break in dispatch would send someone. Councilman Funk as how the coverage would differ from what we are currently paying the Sheriff's Department. Sheriff Pruismann stated that there is no way to be able to predict specific hours present, however, that is why he plans to give each city a "receipt" for calls and time spent at the end of each year based on the department's logs and reporting system. Sheriff Pruismann stated that if there are specific times or locations extra patrol was requested by the city as a part of a new or different 28E agreement that could be written into the contract. Sheriff Pruismann stated the department does not do nuisance abatement, however, they will serve notices at a cost of around \$25 plus mileage per. As a reference point it was mentioned that Stratford paid around \$5000 for a fiscal year having the department serve notices within their city. Councilwoman Sogard addressed Officer Morton asking if the EJS Police Board was planning to replace Police Chief Turpen. Officer Morton responded it depends and will be discussed at the next meeting and would also depend on Ellsworth's status with EJS. Councilwoman Sogard read an email from past council person Steve Gelder who was not able to attend but encouraged the current Council to not make a decision at this meeting but to explore all of the options, needs of the community, and costs involved further prior to making any changes. Councilwoman Sogard addressed Public works employees Nick Vanlangen and Lee Knickerbocker to inquire what it would look like for them to service nuisance/ordinance violations. PW Supervisor Vanlangen mentioned it was nice to have EJS officers within 4 to 6 minutes away as usually there can be volatile reactions from those receiving notices and in the past Ellsworth would have Officer Morton or Turpen service notices. Officer Morton addressed the Council and Mayor Yager specifically assuring that police board members are cycled regularly and even if there is a contentious environment now it will work

itself out with the next shift in representatives from the individual communities. Concerns were raised by several council members as to the questionable nature/conflict of interest in having a past Police Chief sit on the Police Board. Officer Morton addressed the council and encouraged them to keep in mind what is best for the community as a whole prior to making any decisions. Community member Barry Anksorus was present and gave an example of the recent presence and help of EJS Officer Morton including rapid response time and thorough follow-through in the case of a stolen vehicle. The Council discussed comments and information shared by Sheriff Pruisman, Officer Morton, and Mr Anksorus. The Council discussed holding a Town Hall to allow all members of the community an opportunity to weigh in on this possible shift/change. Town Hall will be at the Ellsworth Community Center on Sunday April 27th at 2pm. Clerk Eckers will send details for publication following Iowa Code for Public Hearing requirements, post on social media, and Public Works employees will post letters on every door alerting the community to this meeting.

SCHOOL BUS SIGN ON 175: Councilwoman Sogard made inquiries to DOT, and received email correspondence that a flashing light bus stop sign was not necessary due to the area meeting minimum line of sight requirements for no sign being necessary. DOT did mention the no passing zone could be extended in front of the day care location on 175 and they would approve and erect a speed awareness sign in the area both westbound and eastbound. Council discussed all options and asked if Public Works Supervisor Vanlangen could reach out to DOT for the cost of the city purchasing a flashing light bus stop sign and having the city employees do the install.

BALLFIELD USE REQUEST: Councilman Laube requested use for adult softball league use of the ballfield on Saturdays. Councilman Phipps also involved in the league. Non-council member request at the next council meeting for a motion and vote.

ECA: Volunteers Linda Clark and Ashley Platt were present to request the use of the Ellsworth Park shelter house for a community ice cream social event on August 2nd from 3pm to 9pm, which would feature live entertainment, food trucks and games as well as a kayak raffle donation courtesy of Swell Watercraft. Motion by Sogard and seconded by Phipps to allow the use of the shelter house on August 2nd from 3pm to 9pm free of charge for the ECA event. Roll call votes 4-0, Olson abstain. Motion carried. Linda Clark requested a donation for upcoming silent auction during the Easter festivities on April 19. Mayor Yager mentioned speaking with Allen Watts at Bingo and he will put together a prize package to include in the fundraiser. Motion to approve this bingo donation made by Funk and seconded by Sogard. Roll call votes 4-0, Olson abstain, motion carried.

LIBRARY: Motion made by Sogard to not approve credit card for Library director Hunter, seconded by Olson. Roll call votes 5-0, motion carried.

FIRE/EMS: Motion made by Sogard and seconded by Laube to approve weather siren quote by Abbott Electric for \$5560.00, roll call votes 5-0. Council inquired of Clerk Eckers an update on the reimbursement checks for Fire/EMS. Clerk Eckers is waiting on call list from EMS Supervisor Butler prior to sending out the reimbursements to the volunteers.

CITY HALL UPDATES: City Clerk Eckers updated the council on the meetings concerning the city's ability to leverage TIF rebate to a potential buyer of the fish farm property in the industrial park. Continued work with Nate Summers, Ellsworth's financial advisor is necessary prior to updating a developer's agreement. Clerk Eckers' requested pursuing an amendment to the Urban Renewal district through Amy Bjork at Dorsey and Whitney to include most of the city limits in order to maximize any TIF increment for future development fiscal benefit to the city. Motion made by Sogard and seconded by Funk to pursue this amendment process. Roll call votes 5-0, motion carried. Discussion by council on pursuing an update to the city ordinance concerning days of the week for council meetings. Motion by Sogard and seconded by Laube to update the ordinance to the 2nd Monday and 4th Monday both still meeting at 6pm. Roll call votes 4-1 with Olson voting nay. Motion carried. Clerk Eckers will pursue updating the Ordinance and will include on the next agenda. Motion made by Laube and seconded by Funk to accept the 24, 25, 26 audit contract with Jeri Maher. Roll call votes 5-0, motion carried.

PUBLIC WORKS UPDATES: Public works supervisor Vanlangen updated the Council on the progress in updates to the water plant. Council discussed all receiving inquiries from residents concerning water pressure and color. Supervisor Vanlangen mentioned the issues should be resolved once the media is replaced in the sand filters, removing iron from the water, and after replacing the RO membranes instead of the current bi-pass. The new media has been ordered and will be replaced within a month.

ADJOURNMENT: Mayor Yager adjourned the meeting at 7:57 pm.

/s/ Dolorus Yager, Mayor

/s/ Heidi Eckers, City Clerk

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Dolorus Yager, Mayor

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Heidi Eckers, City Clerk