

# CITY OF ELY

501 Mill Street Ely, Nevada 89301  
City Hall (775) 289-2430  
[Cityofelynv.gov](http://Cityofelynv.gov)

## ELY CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING

April 25, 2024, 5:00 p.m. – Ely Volunteer Fire Hall – 499 Mill Street – Ely, Nevada

1. Mayor Robertson called the regular meeting of the Ely City Council to order at **5:01 P.M.** Joshua Baek offered an invocation. Mayor Robertson led in the Pledge of Allegiance and asked for Roll Call.

Members present:

- Mayor Nathan Robertson
- Councilman Kurt Carson
- Councilwoman Samantha Elliott
- Councilman Jim Alworth
- Councilwoman Jerri Lynn Williams-Harper

Members absent:

- Councilman Terrill Trask

City Officials and staff present in the building or via video conference:

- City Clerk Jennifer Lee
- City Treasurer/HR Director Janette Trask (Zoom)
- City Public Works Director Mike Cracraft
- City Attorney Leo Cahoon
- City Fire Chief Pat Stork
- City Engineer B.J. Almberg
- City Administrative Assistant Patti Cobb

Also, in attendance: Members of the public in attendance at the Ely Volunteer Fire Hall signed in (appears below) and the following people attended via video conference: Geri Wopschall, Wyatt Cox, Desiree Ramirez, and Anne D.

### ELY CITY COUNCIL ATTENDANCE LIST

DATE: April 25, 2024

Print name below

Becky Murdock  
Kyle Hargrath  
Paul VanDyke  
Mel VanCamp  
Paula Carson  
George Mackes  
Todd Fineber  
Dean Reynolds  
Dag Savader  
Nicola Colvard  
Mark Bassett  
Karen Livingston  
Pat Robinson

Print name below

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City Administrative Assistant Cobb stated please note if you log on and experience difficulty hearing the meeting, please call the toll-free numbers 877-853-5247 or 888-788-0099.

## 2. PUBLIC COMMENT

Administrative Assistant Cobb read the following into the record:

Dear Members of the City Council,

I am writing to express my concerns regarding the management and practices of the White Pine Chamber of Commerce under the leadership of Shadrach Robertson, the CEO. As a concerned member of the community and a local business owner, I believe it is imperative to address several issues that have arisen under his tenure.

First and foremost, I strongly urge the City Council to deny any request made by Mr. Robertson for additional funds to hire someone to perform the duties for which he is already compensated. It is unacceptable for taxpayers' money to be allocated to supplement his responsibilities, especially considering the lack of transparency and effectiveness in his current role.

Furthermore, I am deeply troubled by the decision to cease open meetings for Chamber members. Open communication and collaboration are fundamental principles of any successful organization, and the closure of these meetings undermines the Chamber's accountability and effectiveness.

Additionally, I must bring to your attention the fact that KDSS, a prominent member of our community, has withdrawn its membership from the Chamber due to a perceived lack of benefits. This reflects poorly on the Chamber's ability to provide value to its members and raises serious questions about its leadership.

Moreover, there appears to be a glaring conflict of interest in Mr. Robertson's dealings with the City Council, given that his husband holds the position of mayor. Such a close personal relationship presents a clear risk of bias and undermines public trust in the Chamber's interactions with the municipal government.

I also urge Mr. Robertson to promptly provide a detailed financial report outlining the Chamber's expenditures and allocations. The community deserves transparency and accountability in the management of its resources, and it is essential for Mr. Robertson to demonstrate responsible stewardship of the Chamber's finances.

It has recently been revealed that Shadrach Robertson, the CEO of the White Pine Chamber of Commerce, expended a considerable sum of funds to secure placement of an article in Forbes magazine. Securing an article placement in Forbes magazine commands a significant investment due to its esteemed reputation and vast readership. The costs associated with such placements can indeed amount to thousands of dollars, representing a substantial commitment for any organization. Given the high cost associated with such placements, it is alarming to not know where these funds were

allocated from. Utilizing an article in Forbes magazine as a platform to primarily promote oneself rather than focusing on the community or organization one represents can be seen as a missed opportunity for meaningful engagement and impact, rather than seizing the opportunity to spotlight the county's unique attributes and economic potential, Mr. Robertson opted to utilize this prestigious platform to inflate his own ego.

Furthermore, I am concerned about Mr. Robertson's tendency to boast about his accomplishments without providing tangible evidence of their impact. It is insufficient for him to merely make claims; he must substantiate them with concrete evidence of the Chamber's achievements and contributions to the community.

Lastly, I would like to highlight the fact that since our organization has ended its membership with the Chamber and sought assistance from alternative sources, such as White Pine Main Street and White Pine Tour and Recreation, we have received far more support and tangible benefits than we did during Mr. Robertson's first year in office.

In conclusion, I urge the City Council to thoroughly investigate these concerns and take appropriate action to address the issues raised. Our community deserves competent and accountable leadership from the White Pine Chamber of Commerce, and it is imperative that we hold its leadership accountable for their actions.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

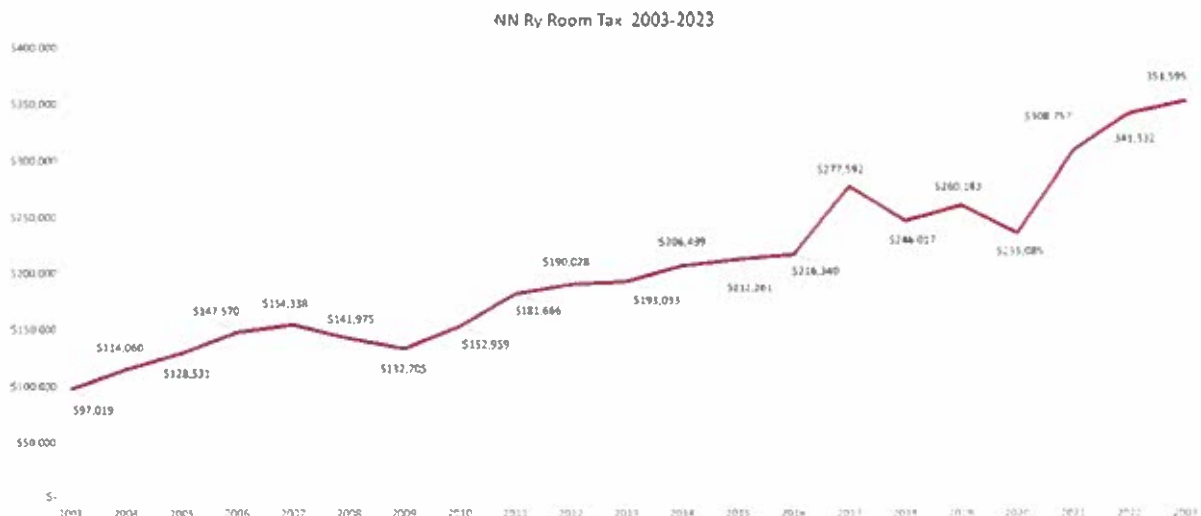
Sincerely,

KDSS

White Pine Director of Tourism Kyle Horvath stated I am an employee of the White Pine County Tourism Board, your State recognized independent government agency and legal tourism tax authority, subject to all open meeting laws, public document requirements, and annual audits just like you, and as your resident tourism professional, I have offense with so many things on tonight's agenda; I don't even know where to begin. I've never once been consulted on the Chamber's proposal to use taxpayer money to run an unwanted and unnecessary visitor center. Let me be perfectly clear, thank you, but no thank you. We pulled out of operating in that space for a reason, and that is because tourism resources were better used elsewhere. If the City wants to give the Chamber child support to keep their doors open; that's fine, but he's not my ex, and it's not my kid, I won't support it. Give your money to create a business incubation center or an entrepreneurial hub, and I will get behind that, but trying to continually sneak these agenda items that are related to tourism behind my back is disrespectful and very much putting a strain on our partnership. What is even more disrespectful is this Chamber report. He's sure done a lot being a part-time director for less than a year; can these claims be backed up. First of all, the Chamber never operated a visitor center; Tourism operated a visitor center. We stocked it, we staffed it, we remodeled it, and we funded all of it, hoping that that would help the Chamber out. The second claim is that the Chamber has created a strong economic environment in Eastern Nevada. How? You wanted a financial report from Tourism; here's qualified economic data. Visitor spending increased from \$42 million to \$62 million over the last six years. The City's award of room tax has grown every year and is on par to exceed \$343,000.00 that we projected. White Pine Tourism invests 55% of our budget right back into the community. White Pine County Tourism directly supports 250 local related businesses, organization events, and attractions. Currently, tourism is managing \$400,000.00 in grant projects. The third claim is that the Chamber is the only pro-business advocacy organization marketing Ely. Well, that's pretty offensive to all the other pro-business organizations marketing Ely. I'm pretty sure White Pine Main Street is running circles around them. Main Street is doing so good that they're paying, in full, for two of your trips to the best economic development and community building conference in the country, and they don't ask you for a dime. Finally, the Chamber's goal is to provide tourists with local and centralized whatever. The goal should be supporting new growth, filling vacant buildings, incubating and recruiting needed industry, combating blight, dealing with the housing crisis, educating the business community; not attempting to do our job. How about we put money towards solving problems? Is this the type of report that you're looking for? Is it smoke and mirrors because I can juggle too. This is the report that I give to my board. It's all the important meetings, accomplishments, grants that I manage, marketing partnerships, and new events. You would know this if you opened up your emails that Nicole sends every single month with all of our public documentation and financial reports. If you don't open up your emails you can come to our public board meeting on the fourth Tuesday of every month.

George Chachas stated on your agenda item 6B-6 you are to consider financial support in the amount of \$16,664.00 to the Chamber of Commerce Ely Visitor Center; that needs to be denied because that entity is a private club and supports only its members. They are failing at recruiting new members and doing very little to help downtown businesses. The Council can't take care of City streets; the city is inundated with weeds and sagebrush; unprecedented graffiti, which hasn't been erased to date; and you need a new fire engine. Where are your priorities? White Pine Tourism and Recreation is providing visitors with information now at the convention center and the City does not need a duplication of services. On your agenda item 6B-1 it appears in the presentation that a two-story proposal is being contemplated. I do not see any elevators and there is very little ADA compliance. I am adamantly opposed to a two-story structure in which the Council meeting room is on the second floor. The present arrangement for the use of the Volunteer Fire Hall is more than adequate. It helps the City as well as helping to sustain the Volunteer's Hall with rental income. I was mayor when the City put in ADA access ramps at the Ely City Hall, and the Fire Hall meeting hall. I want to remind you that when I was mayor the population was close to 6,000 and now it is 4,100. It is one thing to dream, but do not turn that into a nightmare. The only thing that's growing in the City is government where you have more doing less, and that needs to stop. On your agenda. Item 6B-12 the Council is to consider an ordinance to adopt an acronym for Ely Municipal Code to "EMC". Doesn't the city attorney have anything better to do? You need to look at some real issues, not this. Thank you.

Nevada Northern Railway President Mark Bassett stated I want to share my thoughts on agenda item B-6, approval to provide financial support to the Downtown Ely Visitor Center. First off, I applaud the City's efforts to support the Downtown Ely Visitor Center. Anything that can be done to encourage visitation to Ely should be supported by the City of Ely, especially when the City receives room tax money that is generated by increased tourism. The more that is invested in tourism will not only bring more tourists to Ely, but perhaps more importantly, by explaining to our visitors when they are here what they can do and see is an excellent investment that will generate more room tax money for everyone. Countless visitors have shared with me their surprise that the Nevada Northern Railway Museum is in Ely. I can't tell you the number of times I've heard from visitors that had come to Ely and did not know the Railroad Museum was here, and if they knew they would have stopped at the Railroad Museum, and most likely they would have spent the night generating more room tax revenue for everyone. The Railroad began receiving room tax in 2003. That year we received \$97,019.00 and last year we received \$351,595.00, that is an incredible increase of 262%. The room tax money the Railroad has received has served as a catalyst for us in repairing track, buildings, locomotives, and cars. I estimate that the \$4,289,486.00 the Railroad has received in room tax revenue generated over \$112 million in tourist spending in our community, that is a startling 2,511% return on the room tax investment in the Railroad. This money has created new jobs, was partially responsible for having new hotels built here, and has helped the City invest in the community too. The short version is our visitors have driven hundreds of miles to be here, we need to maximize our efforts so that once our visitors are here, they learn about the opportunities we offer that will get them to stay longer. In Ely, we have multiple visitor information centers in our community already. We have the Bristlecone Convention Center, the White Pine Public Museum, the Railroad, the BLM, the Forest Service, and the National Park. Having a downtown visitor center on the main drag next to hotels and motels is a smart business decision for the community. It will bring additional tourist spending to our community which benefits everyone. In summary the City Council needs to pass this agenda item for the betterment of the community. Thank you.



Nicole Collard stated I am an employee of the White Pine County Tourism and Recreation Board, and I would just like to add to Kyle Horvath's comments. We do have our meetings on the fourth Tuesday of every month. You can attend these meetings, or you can come into the office. Kyle is not a monster, and is happy to answer any questions, or you could ask the City Representative on the Council. Kirk can tell you how hard we are killing it. You could also watch one of George's videos. What you should be requesting is financial documentation from the Chamber before you give them any money. Why? The taxpayers should know how they spend their money, and where their revenue streams are coming from. I want to know how much the Chamber paid for this advertorial in Forbes; I won't pick apart the quality of the content. We were asked to chip in \$5,000.00 to help cover the \$15,000.00 bill for this. I'm not sure if the Chamber talked them down, but this is a pay to play opportunity. So, before you give the Chamber \$16,000.00, I would like to make sure they are using their money wisely, and actually doing what they are claiming. Honestly, my Board should be requesting from the City Council an itemized list of how you spend the \$1.9 million that Tourism has given you over the last six years to support tourism and economic growth. Thank you.

**3. Mayor – Discussion/For Possible Action – Approval of Agenda, including removal of agenda items.**

Councilman Carson moved to approve the agenda as presented. Councilwoman Williams-Harper seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

**4. CITY DEPARTMENT REPORTS**

➤ **CITY FIRE CHIEF**

City Fire Chief Stork stated we did interviews a couple weeks ago, hired one person from White Pine County, and we are back to full staff.

➤ **CITY CLERK**

City Clerk Lee stated I submitted an Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant application for the City's Fire Station Solar Panel Project on Monday. We should know in mid-May if we're awarded. Due to staff schedules for the next two weeks, the May 9th agenda will be finalized next Thursday, so please have agenda items to us by the end of the day on Wednesday.

➤ **CITY ENGINEER**

**City Council Report (4/25/24)**

- Office staff completed CDBG Presentation for next week.
- Working on City GIS and inputting data into new data collector for City crews.
- Had conference call with NDEP & NDOT about Aultman Plans. NDEP will begin reviewing plans for the project.
- RNMC requested this week to do a test well at RW-7P. City water agreement committee needs to get together to discuss the request.

**5. REPORTS**

No Reports from Mayor or Council Members.

**6. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION/POSSIBLE ACTION ONLY OF THE ELY CITY COUNCIL.**

**A. CONSENT**

Councilman Alworth disclosed I am a past member of the Ely Volunteer Fire Department and some payments benefit the Volunteers, in which I have certain privileges by my association, but I will vote in good faith for the City of Ely.

Mayor Robertson disclosed my husband is a member of the Volunteer Fire Department and is not treated any differently than any of the others so I will not be abstaining, and I also don't vote.

**MOTION:** Move to approve the Consent Agenda item 6A-1 Minutes and 6A-2 Bills.

Moved by: Councilwoman Elliott Second by: Councilman Alworth Vote: Unanimous

1. Discussion/For Possible Action – Minutes.
  - April 11, 2024
2. Discussion/For Possible Action – Bills.
  - April 09, 2024

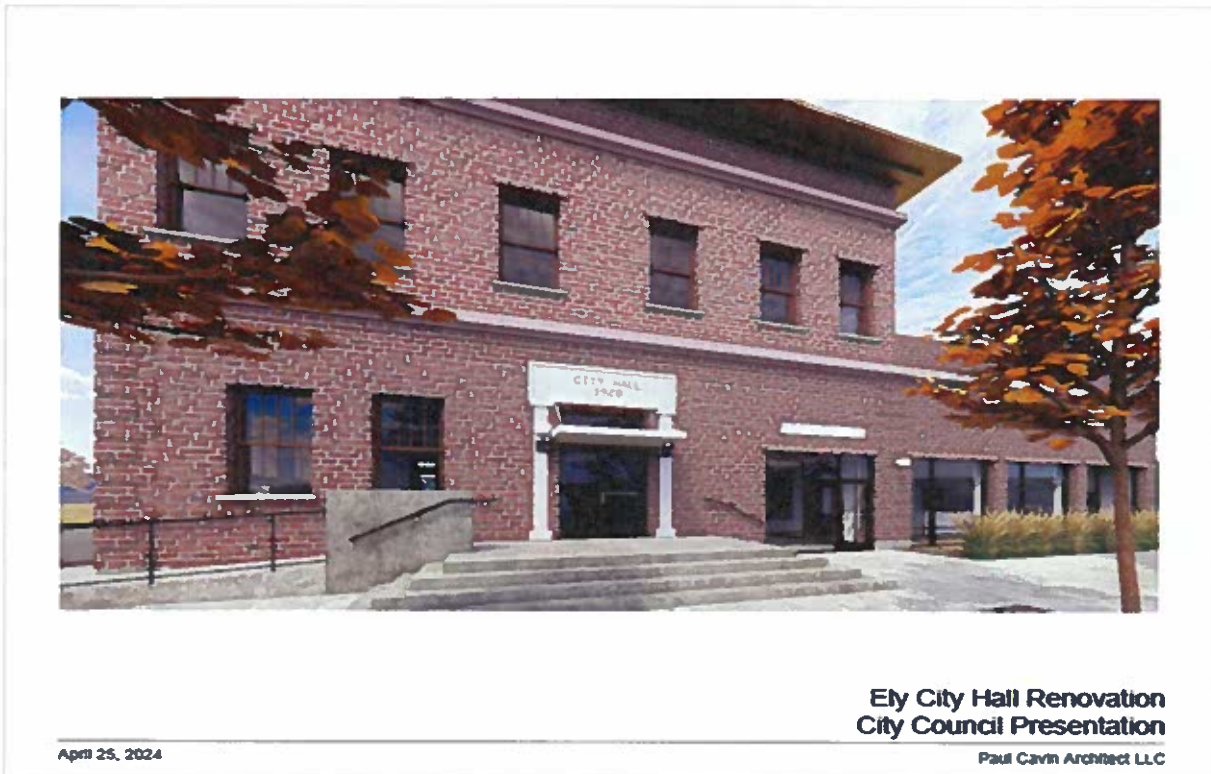


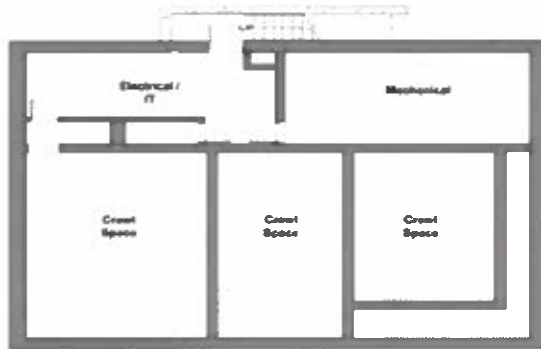
**B. NEW BUSINESS**

1. Mayor Robertson – Discussion/For Possible Action – Presentation by Paul Cavin Architect AIA of City Hall’s 50% plans and specifications to the City Council, with possible recommendations by the Council.

Principal Architect Paul Cavin I'm the owner of Paul Cavin, architect LLC. I'm a licensed architect here in the State of Nevada and to my left is Arlee Fisher and she's also a licensed architect in Nevada, and an associate at my firm. We are here to present our progress on the Ely City Hall. Like, the Mayor said we are at 50% construction documents, so we are quite a ways through the process, but we still have 50% to 100% to go so we're not complete, but we'd like to give you an update. We've been working on this for a few years now, and I just want to kind of highlight a few of the things that I think are important about this building. One of the goals of our design was to restore the historic character. So, whenever we were making moves design wise, we're always checking ourselves and asking are we restoring the historic character? We're always thinking about keeping the historic nature of this building within our design. Now, we can't do that one hundred percent, because this building has been modified in the past and we need to follow current building codes. One of our overarching design ideas is to preserve and restore the historic character. Another big driving factor was we need to configure the spaces for today's use. We need to do a seismic stabilization of this building and there's portions of this building that need more than just seismic stabilization. We're also maintaining accessibility standards, ADA standards, ANC standards, international building codes (IBC). We're also updating mechanical, electrical, heating, and air conditioning standards. A couple of other things that we feel were important is through our design process we met at City Hall quite a bit and engaged with the staff that utilizes the building. We also had breakout sessions where we asked them, how do you use this building, and how can we design the spaces for their functions and use and configure the spaces for today's use. We engaged the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) early on in this process by receiving input from them and we plan to continue the correspondence with them throughout the process. I want you to keep in mind these are concepts and very contextual. I will have Arlee walk you through the spaces.

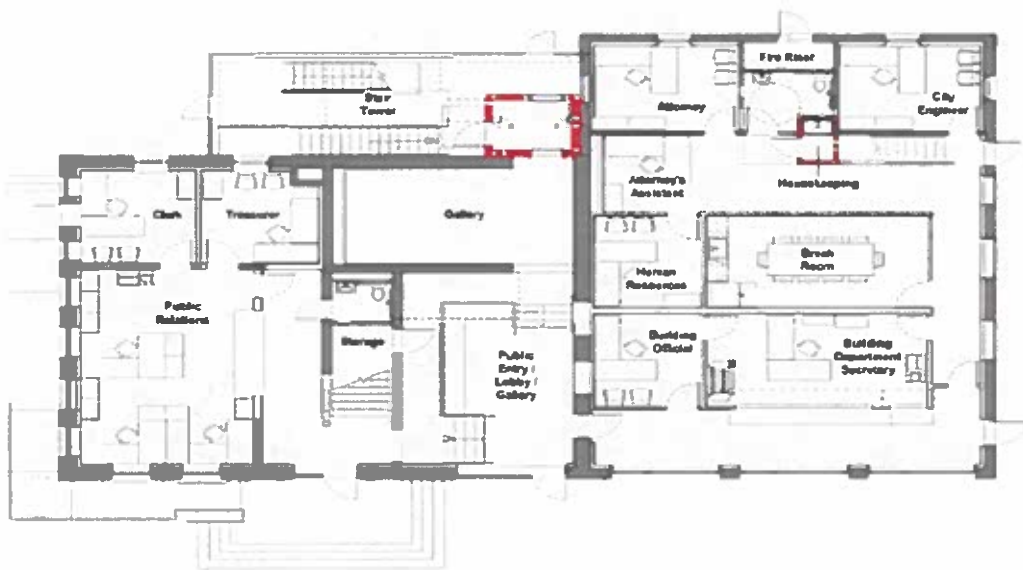
Project Architect Arlee Fisher reviewed the following presentation:





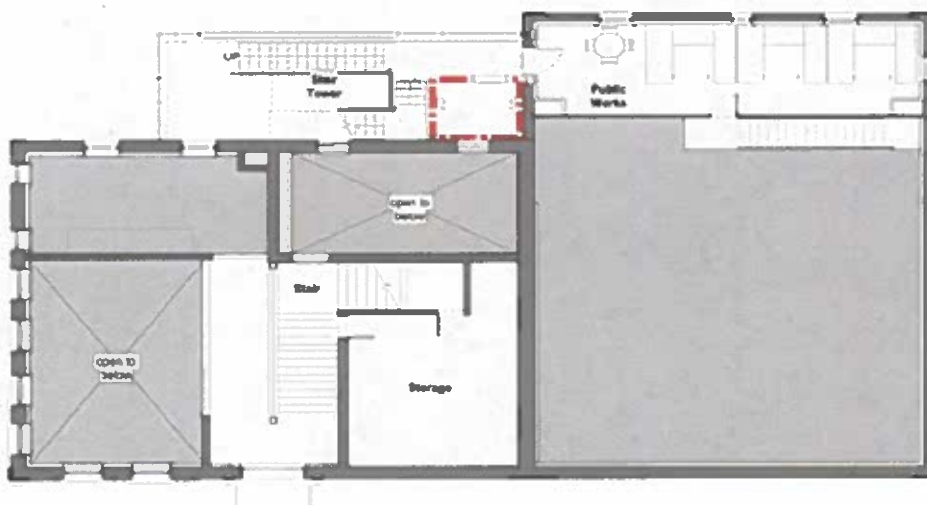
**Basement Floor Plan**  
April 25, 2024

**Ely City Hall Renovation**  
**City Council Presentation**  
Paul Cavin Architect LLC



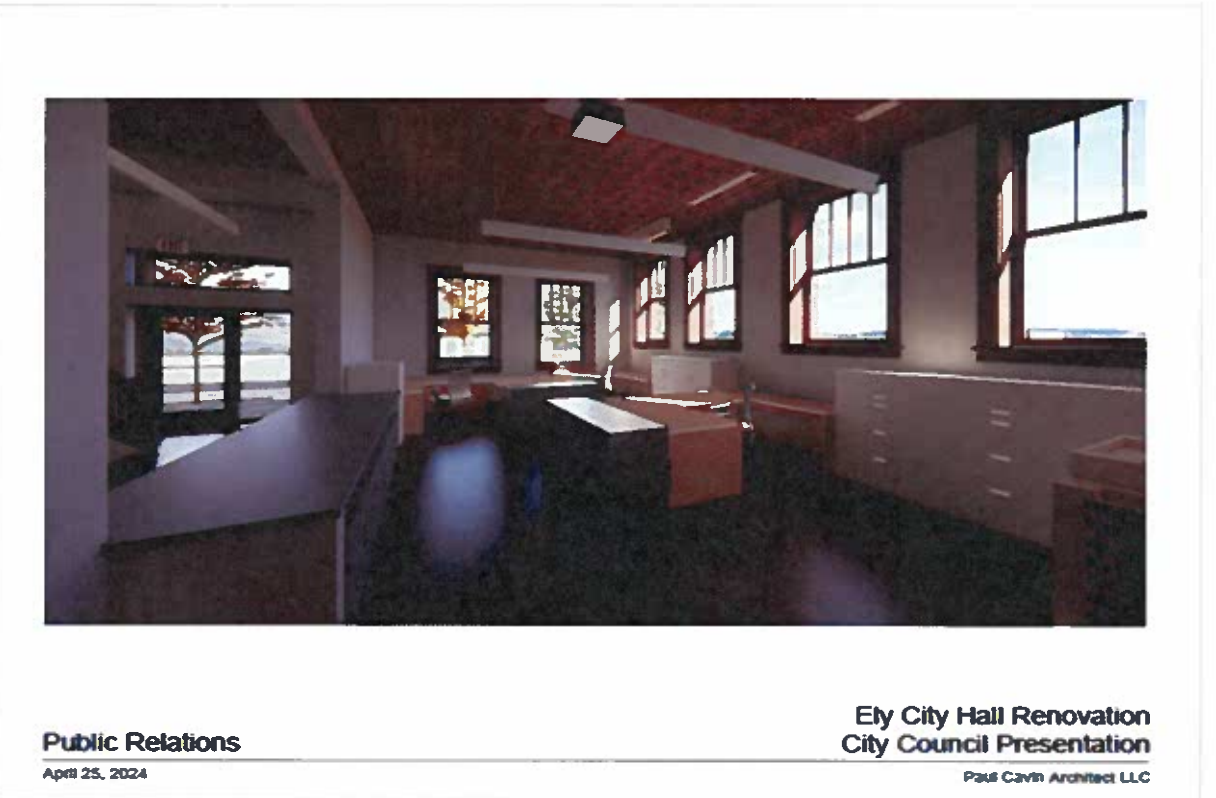
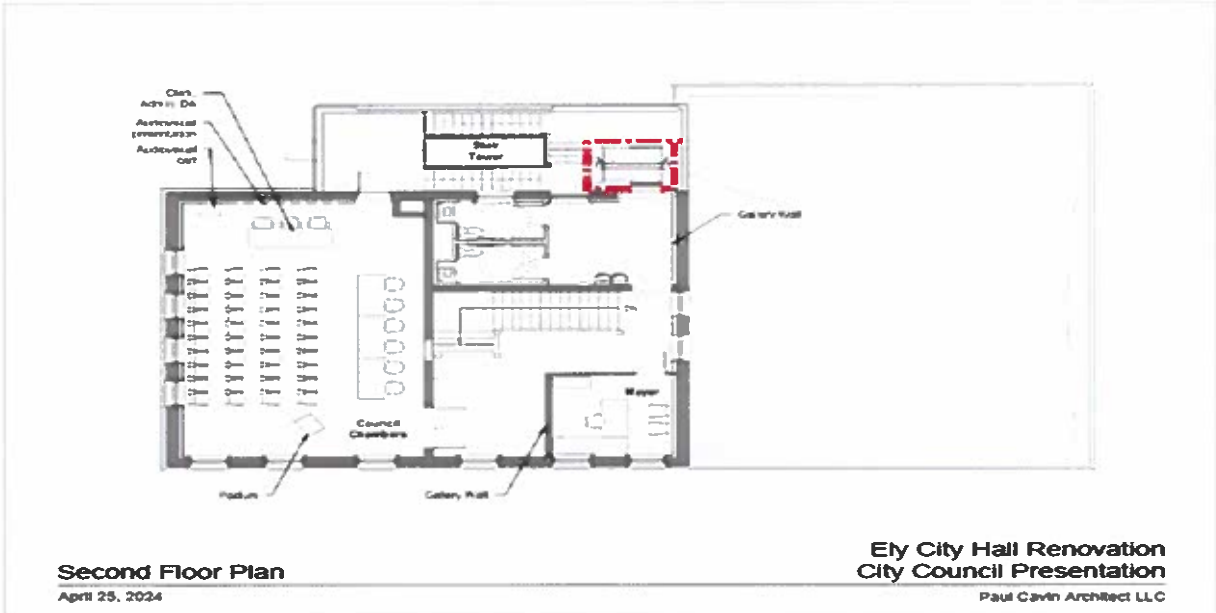
**First Floor Plan**  
April 25, 2024

**Ely City Hall Renovation**  
**City Council Presentation**  
Paul Cavin Architect LLC



**Intermediate Floor Plan**  
April 25, 2024

**Ely City Hall Renovation**  
**City Council Presentation**  
Paul Cavin Architect LLC







**Public Entry / Lobby**  
April 25, 2024

**Ely City Hall Renovation  
City Council Presentation**  
Paul Cavin Architect LLC



**Gallery**  
April 25, 2024

**Ely City Hall Renovation  
City Council Presentation**  
Paul Cavin Architect LLC



**Building Department**  
April 25, 2024

**Ely City Hall Renovation  
City Council Presentation**  
Paul Cavin Architect LLC



**Historic Stair - View From Top of Stair**  
April 25, 2024

**Ely City Hall Renovation  
City Council Presentation**

Paul Cavin Architect LLC



**Council Chambers - View From Entry**  
April 25, 2024

**Ely City Hall Renovation  
City Council Presentation**

Paul Cavin Architect LLC



**Stair Tower - View From First Floor Landing**  
April 25, 2024

**Ely City Hall Renovation  
City Council Presentation**

Paul Cavin Architect LLC





**Stair Tower - View From Exterior**  
April 25, 2024

**Ely City Hall Renovation  
City Council Presentation**  
Paul Cavin Architect LLC

Mayor Robertson stated I wanted to make sure that the design contemplated expansion in the future.

Councilwoman Elliott moved to accept City Hall's 50% plans and specifications as presented by Paul Cavin Architect AIA. Councilman Carson seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

2. Mayor Robertson – Discussion/For Possible Action – Review and discussion of researched funding sources to date for the renovation of City Hall.

Mayor Robertson stated I wanted the Council to be aware of where we were looking for funding. As I stated when we started this, the whole objective is restoring a historic structure. We have opportunities for bringing outside funding in and hopefully, we can get most, or all of this paid for through other grants. You'll notice in the plans there were things like gallery space. Those are purposeful in making it so that we can go for other funding sources, making sure that we have as many funding sources available to us as possible. I did make a preliminary inquiry to the Department of Energy (DOE) for a grant that Bill Wolf had brought our attention to, but that didn't pan out. We will be making another application to the Commission for Cultural Centers and Historic Preservation (CCCHP) who is funding this portion of it for an additional \$500,000.00. We made a request to our Congressional representation for \$4 million and we'll see where that goes. I have been talking with the City of Caliente, too. They're working on their building that they use as city hall. They currently are in a \$6 million exterior renovation, and I talked to their city manager about where they were getting their funding sources from and one of their funding sources was talking to the Nevada Legislature. I'm hoping to be able to do that; I was going to have a preliminary conversation with our Assemblyman, Bert. Gurr. We need to have a conversation with USDA as they've come in a couple of times and mentioned they do have available funding sources for these kinds of things as well. If there's any suggestions from the Council about where they think we should look, I'm open to suggestions. What I'd like to propose to the Council at our next meeting is that we commit a certain amount of money out of some funds. I have a couple of ideas, but just commit them so that when I'm asking for grants, I can say, well, the City has committed this amount. If we never get the money, we never spend that, and we can spend it on something else. Even if we get the whole building paid for, we will need to be setting some money aside for things like furnishings. We haven't had our own council furnishings for some decades, and that'll need to be purchased even if the entire building's paid for. We will also need to pay for our audio/visual equipment to be set up in that room that we've purchased and installed over here. So, there'll be a number of small things like that that'll need to be taken care of.

Councilwoman Elliott asked what is the total cost?

Mayor Robertson stated the projected cost is just over \$4.7 million. Paul and Arlee have been honing that as they move through the process, but as of right now with their 50% plans that's where we're at.

Councilman Carson asked what are we going to do when we're renovating? We're going to obviously have to move out, and that'll be another huge expense to go rent a place or find a place for sure.

Mayor Robertson stated we have discussed in the past either phasing it so we're kind of moving around. Paul and his associates recommended not doing that, because there were some additional costs in doing that with the contractor rather than just moving out. I can bring some suggestions on that back as well at the next meeting if the Council would like.

Item died due to lack of motion.

3. Mayor Robertson – Discussion/For Possible Action – Approval to participate in the Robinson Summit Substation Expansion Project Environmental Assessment (EA) as a cooperating agency.

Councilman Alworth moved to approve participating in the Robinson Summit Substation Expansion Project Environmental Assessment (EA) as a cooperating agency. Councilwoman Williams-Harper seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

4. Councilwoman Elliott – Discussion/For Possible Action – Approval of First Reading of Ordinance 755, Bill No. 2024-01, an ordinance amending Title 3 Chapter 2, Section 11-4 (E) of the Ely Municipal Code to remove the transferability and site-specific restriction on bar and server cards requiring card holders to obtain a new card each time they change employment and/or location.

Councilwoman Elliott stated this will make it so bartenders will get a bar card every three years and can bartend in any establishment, creating a more consistent process.

Councilman Carson moved to approve the First Reading of Ordinance 755, Bill No. 2024-01, an ordinance amending Title 3 Chapter 2, Section 11-4 (E) of the Ely Municipal Code to remove the transferability and site-specific restriction on bar and server cards requiring card holders to obtain a new card each time they change employment and/or location. Councilman Alworth seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

5. Councilwoman Elliott – Councilman Alworth – Discussion Only – Update on Porter Group efforts on the City of Ely's behalf to secure federal and State funding.

Councilwoman Elliott stated we did have Brian out here last week. We did submit our projects for the Fire Department, our safety project, the remodel, and water meters so once we hear more information we will report back.

Councilman Alworth read the report on the following page into the record:



# Activity Report for The City of Ely

## FOR THE MONTH OF March 2024

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### Appropriations Requests

- Included in the FY24 Commerce, Justice & Science Senate text:
  - Security Camera Installation project at parks and municipal facilities (\$610,000)
- Included in the FY24 THUD House Version:
  - Campton Street Improvement Project (\$893,000)
- Hosted a DC fly-in with Mayor and other representatives from Ely's government the first week of March
  - Met the following Members of the Nevada delegation to discuss FY25 appropriations requests
    - Senator Cortez Masto
    - Senator Rosen
    - Congressman Amodei
- Submitted all FY25 appropriations requests

### Additional Grants

- Provided information on EV Grants for Tribal Organizations

### Additional Activities

- Provided federal updates on variety of topics important to the City of Ely, including pending action in the House and Senate, potential legislative updates, and updates on grant award announcements.

6. Councilman Alworth – Discussion/For Possible Action - Approval to provide financial support to the Downtown Ely Visitor Center from Community Support Funds beginning April 2024 through November 2024 in the amount of \$16,664; the continuation of further financial support can be considered by City Council Members in office December 2024.

Mayor Robertson stated I will make a disclosure that the Director of the Chamber of Commerce is my husband and as such I will be abstaining from any discussion on this even though none of this money is going to pay the Director of the Chamber of Commerce. Per legal advice from our attorney, I will continue to chair the meeting, but I will be waiving any tie breaking vote.

Councilman Alworth stated we need tourism in the City of Ely. The more tourism we have, benefits everyone. I'm not going to go into the pros and cons because I think both agencies do good. The funding is not coming from the taxpayers, it's coming from the federal government as part of the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) money. The City Council used some of that ARPA money in the tune of \$332,000 for our local businesses to keep the businesses going, and the businesses need tourism to keep going. The purpose of the Chamber is to promote businesses and help the downtown area. There is not a wall between the Chamber and the Visitor Center, and they need to work together with the convention center. They're very important, as are the Museum and the Railroad.

White Pine Chamber of Commerce CEO Shadrach Robertson reviewed the following documents:



### White Pine Chamber of Commerce

636 Aultman St. Ely, NV. 89301

Phone: 775-289-8877

Email: [WPC@WhitePineChamber.com](mailto:WPC@WhitePineChamber.com)

Serving White Pine County for Over One Hundred Years

### Downtown Ely Visitor Center

#### PROPOSAL:

The White Pine Chamber of Commerce is requesting dedicated and sustainable funding from the City of Ely, through the Transient Lodging Taxes (Room Tax) collected from the City of Ely. This plan is solely for the purposes of operating a Downtown Ely Visitor Center within the White Pine Chamber of Commerce office.

Funding through the City of Ely shall only be utilized to employ two (2) part time employees, or one (1) full time employee, to occupy the designated office in the White Pine Chamber of Commerce Visitor Center, Monday through Friday, 9:00 am -5:00 pm.

A separate bank account set up only for the purposes of payroll for part-time Downtown Ely Visitor Center employees will be open to audit by the City at anytime.

No Transient Lodging Tax may be used to compensate the Chamber of Commerce Chief Executive Officer or any Board of Trustees of the White Pine Chamber of Commerce.



## White Pine Chamber of Commerce

636 Aultman St. Ely, NV. 89301

Phone: 775-289-8877

Email: [WPCC@WhitePineChamber.com](mailto:WPCC@WhitePineChamber.com)

Serving White Pine County for Over One Hundred Years

### Downtown Ely Visitor Center Plan

#### OVERVIEW:

- Local visitor's centers are co-located within local chambers of commerce in most communities in the State of Nevada.
- These visitor's centers are funded by transient lodging tax and not the local chambers of Commerce.
- The high traffic, main street visibility, and the long-established tendency for visitors to stop at the WP Chamber of Commerce for local information was the reason an official visitor center was established at the Chamber office about 5 years ago.
- Since the withdrawal of support of that visitor center in December of last year, the WP Chamber of Commerce has continued to operating a visitor center as staffing and funding has allowed. This has included partnering with AARP to provide funding for wages for a part time employee to staff said visitor center.
- WP Chamber of Commerce is seeking funding from the City of Ely to be able to hire additional people specifically to staff the visitor center. The goal being to eventually secure enough funding to enable the visitor center return to being open and available to the traveling public 7 days a week.
- The funding being requested will not be used for the operation of the WP Chamber of Commerce or to pay the salary of any Chamber executive. Funding will only be used to pay for staff to operate a visitor center.
- Whether or not a supported visitor center is located at the WP Chamber of Commerce, visitors to our community will continue to stop at the Chamber for local information. Funding support staff to interface with out of area visitors allows the Chamber to continue its primary mission of supporting the member businesses contributing to the city and county's enhanced quality of life.

Councilman Carson stated I guess the one thing that I do have a hard time with is giving these funds to an employee that we really don't have any control over. Do we have any say in a job description of what they're going to do, or do we just give them the money and hope for the best? I don't know if that's a good idea or not. I'm definitely all in on the tourism at the Visitor Center, but at the same token I have to ask myself, is this a duplication of services? Could we use the money somewhere in a better way? I don't know the answer to that, but it's just a thought.

White Pine Chamber of Commerce CEO Shadrach Robertson stated 'm just trying to carry the torch and continue the service as the service is a need. They identified, because of the amount of traffic in that specific building, chambers of commerce are historically and culturally in the United States known as central information hubs. I became more aware of the idea of getting city support by traveling and interacting with a lot of other CEOs. Chambers of commerce's throughout the state are supported from their cities and municipalities to provide the tourism component with transient lodging taxes, with city contributions that takes the burden off of the operations of the chamber of commerce, so they can facilitate their original intent.

White Pine County Director of Tourism Kyle Horvath stated there's a necessary need for a chamber, and there's a very specific job that a chamber does. I've worked with them, and I know how tourism and chambers collaborate and complement each other, and so it was a very easy decision to remodel it, staff it, and put all the materials in there. By no means am I saying that the Chamber of Commerce shouldn't have visitor material in there. The reason that we pulled out was in the Destination Development Plan process we realized that there were about 500,000 people that were just passing through on Highway 93, that we're not making it downtown. The decision was made to pull our resources out of that area and put them into other areas in the community to try to drive more action into the downtown. I'm glad everybody appreciates tourism and sees the benefit of it, but I think there's some issues that are being ignored when focusing on a visitor center that needs to be solved and I rattled those off in my public comment.

Councilwoman Williams-Harper stated this would be put in a separate account and again, I'll say it ten million times, not a person on the Chamber or their Director gets any of this money. Our CEO doesn't receive any money because we're more concerned about people in our Visitor Center being able to provide services to people who come in.

Councilwoman Williams-Harper moved to approve providing financial support to the Downtown Ely Visitor Center from Community Support Funds beginning April 2024 through November 2024 in the amount of \$16,664; the continuation of further financial support can be considered by City Council Members in office December 2024. Councilman Alworth seconded the motion. The motion carried with three ayes and one nay from Councilman Carson.

7. Councilwoman Williams-Harper – Discussion Only – White Pine Chamber of Commerce monthly report.



## White Pine Chamber of Commerce

636 Aultman St. Ely, NV. 89301

Phone: 775-289-8877

Email: [WPCC@WhitePineChamber.com](mailto:WPCC@WhitePineChamber.com)

*Serving White Pine County for Over One Hundred Years*

April, 25, 2024

City of Ely - City Council Report

Good Evening, Mr. Mayor and Ely City Council,

Thank you for allowing the time for The White Pine Chamber of Commerce's monthly report for April 2024. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, Nevada had the second highest unemployment rate in the nation for the month of February 2024. However, Nevada leads the nation with the largest over-the-year percentage increase in employment growth. As a state, unemployment claims are decreasing each month and trending downward. Nationally, market trends and economic indicators project 2024 will continue to be a strong economic performance year.

The latest Nevada Labor Market report, as of March 31st, White Pine County has only 39 continuing unemployment insurance claims, down from an initial 182 filed in this same month of 2020. White Pine continues to lead the state with the lowest unemployment rates, at 3.5%. Since last year the area has increased in 103 jobs or 2.3% growth.

On a local level, the White Pine Chamber is happy to announce we have partnered with Bradley's Bestway Grocery, in McGill. We are helping cover the costs of Bradley's raffling off a one minute Supermarket Swee, as this Chamber member raises awareness and funds for the Multiple Sclerosis Foundation. Tickets are available at Bradley's from May 1st through the 31st, drawing the winning tickets and the sweep follow in the first week of June.

Additionally, I'd like to formally invite all of you to this year's planned Small Business Resource Forum, set for October 16th of this year. The WPCC, with the Lt. Governor's Office of Small Business Advocacy, will incorporate elected leaders on the local, state, and congressional levels, in order to have direct and engaging conversations about issues and opportunities associated with maintaining sustainable small businesses that contribute to strong economic growth. Last year's resource expo, that the city sponsored, had 27 organizations in attendance, offering tremendous benefit to business owners, non-profit leaders, and entrepreneurs.

The chamber continues to support our members. Over the months of March and April, I and our Member services Manager have met with 50 of our members in face-to-face collaboration meetings. The Chamber also saw an increase in out-of-the-area- visitor traffic as the month has progressed we directly served 111 travelers so far in April.

Lastly, in your back up documentation you will see a one sheet, an article that will be appearing in Forbes, Fortune and Entrepreneur Magazines. This will provide the city of Ely and White Pine County some positive press over the next two years, as this article is shared over 300 of Forbes' affiliate news websites and outlets.

8. Councilwoman Williams-Harper – Discussion/For Possible Action- Approval to request White Pine Tourism and Recreation Director present quarterly financial reports – audited and unaudited – to the City Council in the month following the end of the quarter, starting with the quarter ending March 31, 2024.

Councilwoman Williams-Harper stated the purpose of this is just as we have information coming from the Chamber, I would like to see the same thing from Tourism and Recreation. They're doing an amazing job and so I would simply like them to come and talk about their financial reports and any of the reports that they have. You know it's a requirement that we give them 5/8 of the transient lodging tax, and as a city we're required to do a report to the Department of Taxation. I would just like us all to be as open and transparent as possible. This is not a phishing exposition, as some think it is. It's just the facts to know where all of our money is going?

White Pine County Director of Tourism Kyle Horvath stated we are a public entity and have all of our documents sent out every month. We have our meetings every month and we get audited, which is a public document, and I am happy to send that in too.

Councilwoman Elliott asked where can we find that information?

White Pine County Director of Tourism Kyle Horvath stated in my office. If you send an email request, we can send it digitally or I can give you a hard copy. It is also on Elynevada.net under agendas. The councilwoman is actually confused about giving us 5/8 of a percent. We collect the room tax per the Department of Taxation. We give you your portion of that which totals \$343,000.00. Usually in a relationship where you're giving money to an organization, they're requesting documentation from you, It's not the other way around. So, this does feel very much like a Gotcha, considering everything else that's going on. The comment of not making this personal. This does feel very personal because of the request for audited and unaudited quarterly reports. I'll do you one better. We do them monthly, and you get them in your inbox. If you have questions, I'm a tourism professional that's supposed to be partners with you guys, you can come in and you can ask me questions or if you want me to celebrate our successes of tourism; Kurt hears them all the time, you should ask him. To request for me to come up and provide documentation that I already provide to you that you probably don't even open in your email is offensive.

City Attorney Cahoon stated just for clarification, I believe the comment about the 5/8; that's 5/8 of 1% that is statutory required to remain with the Tourism and Recreation.

Mayor Robertson stated that amount is required to be used for tourism, right?

City Attorney Cahoon stated correct, the other amounts could be used by the City.

Councilwoman Williams-Harper stated I'll still make this last comment in that this doesn't have to be personal, and it shouldn't be personal. It's in black and white. It's something that we've asked for and either you'll do it or you won't.

Mayor Robertson asked Kyle is the contention that when the agenda gets sent out that there's backup documentation with that agenda or is there a separate limitation?

White Pine County Director of Tourism Kyle Horvath stated everything that goes out to my board goes out to the public and is available. Whether you request it in email form that's sent out as soon as it goes out to my board, or you come into the office and request it. There is backup documentation, just like the City, that comes in at various times that is presented at the meeting and you can pick that up. Any financial documentation that is sent to the Department of Taxation, or is given to my board, is available at any time upon request. It would be the last six years of every hotel for every month and what they've brought in and what the room tax awards are for every organization that is earmarked for it; that is the City of Ely, the railroad, and Travel Nevada. They get their percentage, and then the County has earmarked for the Golf Course their percentage. The lion shares which are \$750,000.00 of my budget goes to two organizations, the City of Ely and the Nevada Northern Railway.



Mayor Robertson stated I get the agenda and that is all that comes.

Nicole Collard with White Pine Tourism and Recreation stated we have an agenda request form and a packet request form. Our board meetings are on the fourth Tuesday of every month at 4:00 P.M. and the agendas go out gently on a Tuesday or Wednesday the week before. The Friday before the meeting we also have packets available. If anybody would like me to send you the request form for actual packets, I would be happy to do that.

Councilman Alworth stated I don't think we should haggle over any other businesses financials in our meeting. We have our own financial department to worry about. If you want to hassle up with them, go to their meeting, sit with their board and pound on the table there.

White Pine County Director of Tourism Kyle Horvath stated You have my word that all of you will be getting the financial documents from the last meeting and from here on out.

Item died due to lack of motion.

9. Councilwoman Williams-Harper – Discussion/For Possible Action- Approval to request White Pine Tourism and Recreation Director present monthly reports to the City Council, starting in May 2024.

Councilwoman Elliott stated I just think that it's awesome for everybody to know all the cool things that your department is doing. I don't want to make it a requirement, but I think that it is important, because there are a million events happening from now until September.

White Pine County Director of Tourism Kyle Horvath stated I appreciate that offer.

Item died due to lack of motion.

**Mayor Robertson recessed the regular meeting of the Ely City Council at 6:37 p.m.**

**Mayor Robertson reconvened the regular meeting of the Ely City Council at 6:44 p.m.**

10. Council Members – City Treasurer Trask – Discussion/For Possible Action – Approval of Collective Bargaining Agreement between City of Ely and Operating Engineers, Local 3 July 1, 2024 through June 30, 2027.

City Treasurer Trask reviewed the following:

10. Council Members – City Treasurer Trask – Discussion/For Possible Action – Approval of Collective Bargaining Agreement between City of Ely and Operating Engineers, Local 3 July 1, 2024, through June 30, 2027.

The City entered negotiations with Operating Engineers Local Union No. 3 on March 12, and March 13, 2024, for the General unit.

Through the process of negotiations, a tentative agreement was reached for the following changes to the current contract that expires June 30, 2024:

1. The contract would be in place from July 1, 2024, to June 30, 2027. This will make it a three-year contract for the fiscal years 2025, 2026 and 2027.
2. **Article 18 (D), Clothing, Uniforms.** It was negotiated to raise the steel toed shoes allowance from \$250.00 to \$275.00. Employees are required to wear steel-toed shoes when working in the stated departments.
3. **Article 28 Hours of Work, Overtime & Shift Differential (E).** This was to clarify the intent of this section to include the 10-hour shift employees.
4. **Article 30 Holidays (I) Recognized Holidays.** Juneteenth was added to the contract as it met the requirements of being a recognized Federal and State holiday. An additional Personal Day was added to the contract to give the employee two personal days each year and clarify that these days must be used during the calendar year.

A brief history of holidays and personal days, at one time the employees had a total of thirteen paid holidays and two personal days a calendar year. Christmas Eve, New Year's Eve, and one personal day were removed as paid holidays sometime after 2013. Last year, Christmas Eve was added back. By adding Juneteenth and an additional personal day, this restores the number paid days off the employees had back in 2013.

5. **Exhibit (A) Wage/Pay Scale.** A pay increase was negotiated to include the 7.5% and .50 cent per hour raise approved by the City Council along with an additional 3% raise to the pay scale. With the three-year contract the union can each year open negotiations for a Cost-of-Living Adjustment/Wage Rate Change as stated at the bottom of Exhibit (A) Wage/Pay Scale. This clause was added to the current contract due to the contract periods becoming multiple years instead of one-year contracts.

Within the last 3 years, the negotiated pay increases along with the council approved raises will increase the employees' wages by over 18.5%. This percentage does not include the \$200 per paycheck that was paid to the essential workers from the Community Support Expenditure in 2022, the \$1,000 one-time payment and .50 cent hourly increase recently approved by the Council. The 18.5% is more than the total percentage of the last 3 years from the West region CPI of 16.9%.

With the City being in a better financial position from just a few years ago, it is my advice that we look at trying to give an annual cost of living raise with the goal of being able to sustain these increases during times of economic downturns.

Councilman Alworth stated there's only two union members out of the twenty-five hourly people. When you met those two times, was it in person with your Union Representatives and how long did it take?

City Treasurer Trask stated we meet in person. We meet with the Union Representative along with the Union Steward and that's how it's done with both associations for fire and the general agreements.

Councilman Alworth stated your second to last paragraph where it mentions the City was the generous one in those amounts of money, which is outstanding and we know the history of that, but the City did that, the Union did not do that. I'll just say using the Consumer Price Index (CPI) as the judge on this and what you're going to do, in my opinion, is wrong, because the Union has a say, the City has a say, and we have no say on inflation caused by the government. I will challenge that last sentence that you used 16.9% of the CPI in the last three years. That's a false statement, and I can prove it next month. If you go back to four years ago, the CPI was only 1%. I believe it should be like

it used to be that you sit there and negotiate back and forth and not use the Consumer Price Index for a judgement on what we're going to pay our employees. The current president right now has got the inflation so high. We never used the 7.2% and we never used the 6.2%. We used 3%, 3%, and we didn't even use the 3.6%, we used 3%. Using the Consumer Price Index to allow how much money we're going to pay our employees is wrong and again it's what the City can afford. Two people pay \$54.00 a month for Union dues and the other people don't want to pay it. Why should they? They get a pay raise and \$680.00 of their \$1,100.00 goes for Union dues. As far as I'm concerned, the Union representing the hourly people is not worth two bits. I think we really need a hard look at the CPI, using that as the judging rate. I think we need to move forward with the 3% and we need to get the Union back here and chat about the CPI because I can show you numbers of the last three years, it did not work. Can this be approved with the exception of getting the Union back in here to talk about the CPI thing, because I think it's going to hurt our employees if we follow the rules of the CPI verbiage the contract has. Our employees would have made more money, and I can prove it by numbers.

Mayor Robertson stated I did talk to Phil, and I expressed a similar sentiment of an uncomfortableness with that language in the contract. Phil did mention, and I'm going to speak on behalf of Phil, there's only one other bargaining unit that uses this kind of language, and they do it with the City of Elko. He says the difference for them is that they use a floor and a ceiling amount. They go by the CPI, but it can't go any lower than this, or any higher than that to protect both the Union and the City in that instance. I think he sounded open to being able to change that and I think we can approve this. I know it doesn't come up for two years, but correct me if I'm wrong Janette, if there was something we wanted to tweak like that, we could meet sooner.

City Treasurer Trask stated the way I read it was it is just a guide to go by. Each year they are allowed to open negotiations on just wages. It's the way I understood that verbiage to be, not set in stone so there is opportunity for discussion.

Councilman Alworth stated we have a signed contract, and I'm talking about the last three years. The first raise should have been 7.1%, we gave 3%; the next year should have been 6.2%, we gave 3%; this last one should have been 3.6% because that's what's published by the CPI, and we gave 3%. We owe some employees some money.

Councilman Carson stated we also gave additional raises, right?

Councilman Alworth stated we can't count that, Mr. Carson. That's generosity from the City. We're talking Union, we have a contract we're supposed to use December of those years and we did not do that.

Mayor Robertson stated for tonight, what you're suggesting, Councilman Alworth, is that we approve this with a proviso that we talk to Phil about changing that language.

Councilman Carson stated we don't have to approve it tonight if the Union could come to the next meeting; it doesn't have to be approved until July 1<sup>st</sup>, right?

Mayor Robertson stated we've already agreed on the 3%, and if everybody's okay with the 3%, I'd like to get that approved to move on, and then we can change that language going forward.

Councilman Alworth stated Well, Ole Jim Bob's not going to be sitting at this table and I want somebody to carry the ball on this.

Mayor Robertson stated I think we could talk to Phil well before then.

Councilman Alworth stated okay, thank you because the CPI is not a good thing to use, in my opinion, for giving our people raises, especially at this time of economic volatility.

Councilman Alworth moved to approve the Collective Bargaining Agreement between City of Ely and Operating Engineers, Local 3 July 1, 2024 through June 30, 2027 as presented with a request to talk with the Operating Engineers, Local 3 Representative

Phil, about changing the language for the next negotiating period regarding basing hourly employee pay scale increases on the West region Consumer Price Index (CPI). Councilwoman Elliott seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

11. Council Members – City Public Works Director Cracraft – City Engineer Almberg – Discussion/For Possible Action – Review of solutions discussed with White Pine County regarding excessive water consumption by Duck Pond with possible acceptance of solution(s), with implementation of solution(s) by April 30, 2024, or termination of water usage fifty percent (50%) cost share.

City Engineer Almberg stated Mike and I were able to meet with the County to discuss what our options were to reduce this flow of water, and it was a very productive meeting. The solution came down to turning this water on and off. Carl or the guys from the Water Department go in the morning, turn the water on and then the County crews then run their pumps through the day to do what they needed to do with the duck pond. They're gone by 2 p.m. and before the end of the day the water would be shut off again. It doesn't even need to happen every single day. At this point in time, I think they did it three times this last week. Mike and those guys are monitoring the pond when they're going in there and they think they could probably cut it back to twice a week to reduce our water use even more and with doing that we have reduced the water usage by about 79%.

### Duck Pond Water Usage 4/19 - 4/25

Top of Pond Water Usage			
Date	Time	Water Meter Reading (gal)	Volume (gal)
4/19/2024	7:10	3,871,665	
	11:15	3,882,061	10,396
4/22/2024	7:15	3,882,061	
	1:30	3,895,067	13,006
4/24/2024	6:10	3,895,067	
	1:30	3,904,557	9,490
<b>Total Water Loss</b>			<b>32,892</b>

Average per day when water is on	10,964
Prior Average per day when water left on	20,000-24,000
Weekly use with intermitten water on	32,892
Prior weekly when water left on	140,000-168,000
Approximate % decrease in water usage	79%

Councilwoman Elliott moved to approve the solution as presented by City Engineer Almberg and City Public Works Director Cracraft regarding decreasing the excessive water consumption by the Duck Pond and to continue the fifty percent (50%) cost share with White Pine County. Councilwoman Williams-Harper seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

12. Council Members – City Attorney Cahoon – Discussion/For Possible Action – Approval of First Reading of Ordinance 756, Bill No. 2024-02 An Ordinance amending Section 1-1-1 of the Ely Municipal Code to refer to the code as the Ely Municipal Code with the initials “EMC” and making other necessary changes throughout Title 1, Chapter 1.

City Attorney Cahoon stated just a quick, easy fix to include this acronym, so that future references or citations to the code will be much easier. It's similar to NRS. The statutes will cite NRS within the statutes, and so it'll allow future ordinance drafting, to be able to reference back to previous sections a little bit easier and just makes it cleaner. There are probably other parts of the Code that will reference it as City Code or Code, which is why I included the alternative of City Code or Code, so that we don't have to go back and change everything.

Councilwoman Elliott moved to approve the First Reading of Ordinance 756, Bill No. 2024-02 An Ordinance amending Section 1-1-1 of the Ely Municipal Code to refer to the code as the Ely Municipal Code with the initials “EMC” and making other necessary



changes throughout Title 1, Chapter 1. Councilman Carson seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

**7. PUBLIC COMMENT:**

George Chachas stated all City Council Members have to make a better effort to attend Council meetings physically in person. I have to close my business to attend and present issues. It bothers me when I have concerns and have to wait till the end of the meeting only to be cut short because the Council person that attended by Zoom signed off early because he had to take care of his business destroying the quorum and leaving citizens without a voice. Councilman Trask needs to decide; he cannot get paid as a councilman yet take off to take care of his business. He's either in or he's out. Mr. Chachas stated ongoing concerns regarding any updates on the egress and ingress at the Golden Gate Project; who paid for the excavation paving at 901 Avenue H and 1100 Avenue L; code violations not being addressed by the Regional Planning Commission, City Council or County Commission; those that have been permitted in the City to park RVs and if they are paying utilities; the drainage from the Bath property; reimbursement for the sewer problem he took care of at his property located at 681 Parker Avenue; and his concern of many alleged Code violations on the previous NDOT project.

**8. ADJOURNMENT: THE MEETING MAY BE ADJOURNED BY APPROPRIATE MOTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL.**

Councilman Carson moved to adjourn the regular meeting of the Ely City Council at 7:06 p.m. Councilman Alworth seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
MAYOR

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
ATTEST

