The Ellsworth City Council met in regular session at 7:00 p.m. at City Hall on December 11th, 2023 with Mayor Pro Tem King presiding until Mayor Yager arrived at 7:38 p.m., and the following council present: Sogard, Gelder, King and Norem. Absent: Funk. City Attorney Montag was also present.

November Receipts November Disbursements

General Fund 18775.77 13064.28

Road Use Fund 5623.10 2622.08

Employee Benefit Fund 1081.59 788.47

Emergency Fund 402.20

Local Option Sales Tax Fund 5769.71

Tax Increment Finance Area 1 289.77

Tax Increment Finance 1 Amend

Bingo Fund 4580.08 2657.04

Debt Service Fund 623.11 2415.00

Capital Project-Strm Water

Capital Project-Water Tower

Water Fund 25794.16 28804.66

Water Sinking Fund

Sewer Fund 6709.32 6095.28

Electric Fund 75051.28 61725.75

Electric Sinking Fund

Storm Water Fund 4784.74 57.75

Storm Water Sinking 3058.00

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$149484.83 $121288.31

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

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

1. Motion to approve November 13th and November 28th, 2023 council minutes.
2. Motion to approve November payment of claims.

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

**PUBLIC FORUM:** None

**BUDGET AND PROCEDURE CHANGES FOR DEPARTMENTS:** In response to the multiple impacts that House File 718 may have to the City’s budget, the Council and the City Clerk had previously discussed several options that may aid in offsetting some of the general fund revenue losses. In an effort to help reduce excessive spending, eliminate unauthorized expenses, prevent multiple budget amendments, and help with future CIP planning, as well as boosting communication between all City departments and Staff, the Council will implement a Purchasing Order Policy and an addendum to the current Departmental Credit Card Policy effective January 1st, 2024. The Council will unfortunately also be required to review yearly allocations given to local organizations, groups and departments for the FY24/25 Budget Year.

1. **Library**- Library Director Schmitz and Library Board member Grove were in attendance to discuss several concerns regarding the duties of the Library Board verses the duties of the council when it comes to making

financial decisions on the library budget. They also had numerous questions surrounding authorizations for library expenses because it is believed that the Library policies differ from other department policies. Director Schmitz inquired about a monthly Library report for the council as an option for better communication. The council had previously discussed all department heads being required to attend quarterly meetings to update the City on department matters and the council will move forward with that change. In other matters, Director Schmitz had questions for the council surrounding 1.5 hours of time from the November pay period that she was informed would not be paid at her director wage from the City, due to it being for a volunteer event with The Ellsworth Community Association of which she is a member. The council and director spent several minutes discussing the line of separation when it come’s to volunteering, library director duties and being a member of the ECA. Attorney Montag had questions for both Schmitz and the council that will require follow up information. The council will await that information and re-address at the next meeting.

1. **Fire-** Fire Chief Evans was present with general questions regarding emergency situations that may arise during fire and ambulance calls and how the new purchase order policy would apply during that given event. Through previous discussion and in speaking with Chief Evans, it was determined that if communication was not possible through phone or text at that time, special exception would be made and he would need to attend the next council meeting for a briefing with the council. Evans then updated the council on the purchase of new turn out gear for the department, the new digital radio program through the county, and the possibility of using volunteer call funds to purchase additional identifying gear such as jackets or polos for the department members.
2. **EMS-** Chief Evans informed the council that the department will have 2 members enrolling in EMT certification classes at the cost of $2,000.00 each that will need to be included in the Ambulance budget. The Clerk will assist Evans with a breakdown of last year’s budget, so they may plan accordingly.
3. **Bingo-** Bingo Coordinator Allen Watts addressed the council with minor concerns over some burnt out lights in the gym, a malfunctioning outdoor light and the possibility of covering the ceiling louvers due to escaping heat. He also inquired about the status of the new tables and chairs for the Community Center. The City Clerk informed Watts that the tables are still on backorder and although the chairs are available, to avoid two different freight and delivery costs, it was decided to wait until all items were in stock before having them delivered.
4. **Utilities/Streets-** Supervisor Vanlangen had no questions or concerns for the council at this time.

**OATH OF OFFICE**: Newly elected officials took their Oath of Office during the meeting. Terms will begin on January 1st, 2024. They include:

Mayor- Dolorus Yager

Council Seat- Kalib King

Council Seat- LaDana Sogard

Council Seat- Jeremy Laube

Council member Funk will take his oath with the City Clerk before January 1st, 2024.

Many thanks to current Council member Norem for his years of serving on City Council and throughout the community.

**SECURITY CAMERAS:** Requests for additional security at the Community Center and the City Shop had been brought to the City Clerk’s attention. There was concern regarding Bingo safety and City equipment being vulnerable to vandalism. The council also discussed possibly adding a camera at the Shelter house and additional cameras at the back of City Hall. Police Chief Turpen offered a suggestion of a brand of cameras that a neighboring town uses. Motion by King, seconded by Norem to authorize the City Clerk to look into options and cost and purchase a multi-location system. Roll call votes 4-0. Motion carried.

**NEW ONLINE BILL PAY PROPOSAL:** The City Clerk has received numerous requests and inquires about residents being able to have their monthly utility bill emailed to them, have their payments automatically taken out of their account, and have current and live access to their balances and payment history. The current online bill pay system does not offer

those functions. In the past, the software the City currently utilizes for their services was incompatible with many of the online bill pay options out there, without a huge expenses being passed onto both the City and the residents. This new company Nuvei is being promoted by the current software, Banyon, and offers these requested services. The Clerk was able to speak with a representative, however would like to gather a bit more information prior to a vote to ensure costs to residents and the City align with the information she received.

**INVOICING PROCEDURES:** The Clerk presented 3 invoices from Midland Power Cooperative that she received per her email request on 12/7/23. Due to several areas of concern, such as the lack of detail in the invoices, the abnormally high cost of service and other contributing factors, representatives from Midland Power will be present at January’s council meeting to answer any questions or concerns the council will have.

Supervisor Vanlangen spoke with the Council about the need for a new P.H. meter and sampler for the Water Treatment Plant. The current machine is outdated and we are unable to continue to use it for future samples. He presented the council with a previous quote and an updated quote from Core and Main. Motion by King, seconded by Gelder to approve the purchase from Core and Main for $7,527.60. Roll call votes 4-0. Motion carried.

**WATER/WASTEWATER OPERATOR CONTRACT:** The City’s contractwith Central Iowa Water Management is set to expire at the end of the year. Supervisor Vanlangen is scheduled to test in January, but the council discussed extending Central Iowa Water Managements contract another 6 months in order to not have any lapse in coverage or issues with DNR regulations. Motion by Sogard, seconded by Gelder to renew the contract for 6 additional months. Roll call votes 4-0. Motion carried.

**ONE TIME PAY INCREASE:** Motion by Norem, seconded by King to approve a one-time pay increase to the following employees listed below. Roll call votes 4-0. Motion carried.

N. Vanlangen - $250.00

A. Zeman - $250.00

L. Knickerbocker - $250.00

D. Turpen - $250.00

K. Morton - $250.00

D. Campbell - $100.00

S. Schmitz - $100.00

A. Watts - $50.00

T. Painton - $50.00

**ADJOURNMENT:** Mayor Yager adjourned the meeting at 9.59 pm.

/s/ Dolorus Yager, Mayor

/s/ Amy L. Zeman, City Clerk