The Ellsworth City Council met in regular session at 7:00 p.m. at City Hall on January 8th, 2024 with Mayor Yager, and the following council present: Laube, Funk, Gelder, King and Sogard.

 December Receipts December Disbursements

General Fund 10035.48 16519.91

Road Use Fund 6118.52 1167.00

Employee Benefit Fund 288.86 954.15

Emergency Fund 107.41

Local Option Sales Tax Fund 5517.76

Tax Increment Finance Area 1

Tax Increment Finance 1 Amend 433.39

Bingo Fund 2836.27 17343.21

Debt Service Fund 171.22 2415.00

Capital Project-Strm Water

Capital Project-Water Tower

Water Fund 22634.95 24189.35

Water Sinking Fund 12381.25

Sewer Fund 6389.16 8918.88

Electric Fund 57646.20 60236.05

Electric Sinking Fund

Storm Water Fund 3868.08 56.70

Storm Water Sinking 3058.00

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 $116047.30 $147239.50

**AGENDA APPROVAL**: Motion by King, seconded by Laube to approve the agenda. Roll call votes 5-0. Motion carried.

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

1. Motion to approve December 11th, 2023 council minutes.
2. Motion to approve December payment of claims.
3. Motion to reappoint Raphael M. Montag as City Attorney.
4. Motion to reappoint Amy L. Zeman as City Clerk,
5. Motion to reappoint Jayson Evans as the Hamilton County’s E911 and Emergency Management Board with Dolorus Yager as the alternative representative.
6. Motion to rename South Hamilton Record News as the City’s official Newspaper.
7. Motion to approve Fire Truck payment in the amount of $11,349.00 due February 1st, 2024.
8. Motion to approve The Girls Catering liquor license.

Roll call votes 5-0. Motion carried and claims hereby made a portion of these minutes.

**PUBLIC FORUM:** None

**YSS REQUEST:** A representative was not available at the meeting and the Clerk received no additional information, so the council moved to the next agenda item.

**MIDLAND POWER:** Norm Fandel and David Speed were in attendance for Midland Power to answer questions and concerns that the council had regarding several invoices for work that was performed in the Industrial Park. The work consisted of relocating a 3-phase junction box due to new construction and installing two new 3-phase metering and transformers at 2 businesses. Previously, the City Clerk had questioned who authorized the expenses, why the City had just received the invoices, why the cost was so high and why the full costs were passed to the City in the first place. The council had several concerns of their own, as well as inquiries regarding future growth and expansion on the commercial and industrial side of the City when dealing with electrical outputs and completing the substation loop. After discussing for several minutes policies and procedures and reviewing the Electric Service Rules of the Ellsworth Municipal Electric, it was determined that the Business owners would in fact be responsible for costs coordinating with the service connections and relocation of any property in association with extending services to expansions and construction of their business/property per Ellsworth’s Service Rules. The City Clerk requested from Midland, a breakdown of materials used for the metering packages and transformers costs, as well as the number of feet bored at each location, so that she may then pass those individual costs and invoices on to the business owners with more clarity.

**TIMECARD CLARIFICATIONS:** At Decembers meeting, the council met with departments regarding upcoming budgets. Library Director Schmitz had discussed 1.5 hours of time that had been turned in on her City timecard but had not been discussed with the City Clerk, Mayor, or the Council prior due to the hours being for a volunteer organization in which she was a member of. The council had asked for additional time to review and discuss before making a decision on whether the time qualified for payment under public funds payment. After much discussion, it was determined that going forward time spent outside normal business hours on non-City related business without prior consent will not be approved. There was a motion by Funk, seconded by Sogard to pay the 1.5 hours for this event due to the understanding that she was representing the library. Roll calls votes 5-0. Motion carried. The Clerk will add the hours to her January paycheck.

**BUDGET:** Due to valuations not yet being released by the county auditor prior to the meeting, limited conversation regarding budget constraints were discussed. Several areas where expenses could be cut were discussed. The council agreed further budget planning would need to wait until the City’s revenues were more solidified.

The Clerk received an update from the Hamilton County Sheriff’s Department in reference to the 28E agreement that the City has for Night Patrol. The current per capita amount is $14, which is up from the previous $10 of FY22/23. The current ask that would take affect July 1st, 2024 for the FY24/25 budget year, pending County Supervisors approval is $20 per capita.

The Clerk was also presented a letter from the Library Board approving current Library director Salena Schmitz a $1.25/hr. raise effective January 2nd, 2024. The council discussed how other employee raises and employee evaluations are done and agreed that the process needs to align with the budgeting process. Motion by King, seconded by Sogard to approve the Library Board’s decision to approve the $1.25 raise effective January 2nd, 2024 pending a copy of the employee evaluation be made available for the councils review and be placed in the employee’s permanent file at City Hall. Raises will also now need to be given at fiscal year in order to be accounted for in the budgeting process. Roll call votes 5-0. Motion carried.

**MAYORIAL APPOINTMENTS:** Mayor Yager made the following appointments

Mayor Pro-tem: Kalib King

Personal Committee: Dolorus Yager, Kalib King, William Funk

Finance and Ordinance Committee: Dolorus Yager, Ladonna Sogard, Amy Zeman

Utilities and Streets Committee: Dolorus Yager, William Funk, Nick Vanlangen

Buildings and Grounds Committee: William Funk, Jeremy Laube, Nick Vanlangen

Sanitary Landfill Rep: Kalib King, Dolorus Yager (Alternate), Steven Gelder (Alternate)

Police Board: Dolorus Yager, Ladonna Sogard

Hamilton County Crime Stoppers: Barry Anksorus

**COUNCIIL MEETING CHANGES:** There has been previous discussion about going to two monthly council meetings instead of one due to the length of the current meetings and the new budgeting procedures. The council debated different options including an earlier start time and a different night, but scheduling conflicts and prior engagements made it impossible to find a second time that would be compatible for all. At this time the council agreed to leave the meeting to once a month, with the special meeting option for budgeting purposes and revisiting it again at fiscal year.

**KEY/LOCK AND SECURITY CHANGES:** There was a discussion regarding several buildings in the City needing updated locks due to numerous keys being lost and/or copied to non-City employees. Access to the Water Treatment Plant is a concern in particular and will be taken care of. City Hall’s door lock has been having key issues for the last year and with the colder temperatures, needs to be addressed immediately. The Clerk will work with Supervisor Vanlangen to coordinate these changes. The Clerk will also do some research into having someone come and look at the handicap door button to see why it isn’t working properly.

**ADJOURNMENT:** Mayor Yager adjourned the meeting at 9:18 pm.

