

**MINUTES OF WELLS CITY COUNCIL
MEETING OF JANUARY 9, 2024**

CALL TO ORDER

Date: Tuesday, January 9, 2024
Time: 7:00 P.M.
Place: Council Chambers, Wells City Hall
525 Sixth Street Wells, Nevada
Type of Meeting: Regular Meeting of City of Wells Board of Councilmen
Presiding Officer: Gary Pollock, Mayor

ROLL CALL

Present: Gary Pollock, Mayor
Jonathan Goolsby, Vice-Mayor
CR Beth Savedra, Councilwoman

Absent: Laura Moore-DelRio, Councilwoman
Chris Micheli, Councilman

Quorum:

Staff Present: Samantha Nance, City Clerk
Jason Pengelly, City Manager
Patti Zander, Deputy Clerk

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mayor Pollock led everyone in the Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

Savedra made a motion to approve the meeting minutes dated December 12, 2023.
Goolsby provided the second and the motion passed unanimously.

CITIZENS TO ADDRESS THE COUNCIL

Charles Lloyd from Elko Sanitation introduced himself and was available to answer any questions.

BETTER CITY PRESENTATION TO UPDATE BOARD OF COUNCIL

Rachel Boyett and Ryan Englund from Better City were at the meeting to give an update and present a power point of what Better City would like to accomplish for 2024. In their research and outreach, there were five things that stood out. It was reported there is an

increase in poverty rates, a decrease in civilian unemployment, continued decline in total population, increase in median age of existing population and continues to be housing and infrastructure concerns. Looking at available opportunities and areas of development Better City can assist with, there are four categories Better City could work on. One would be launching a micro-site at the Industrial Park, marketing the Industrial Park with the focus being on warehousing industries. Work would be on attracting businesses by reaching out to site locaters and getting the Industrial Park brochure out. If more trained workers for local jobs are available, that would help the population grow to be ready for when and if a big employer comes to town. The third would be the downtown revitalization with the overall goal of improving downtown Wells' appearance. The fourth goal would be housing through rehabilitation and building new housing.

Boyett asked if anyone had any questions. Pollock thinks the focus on the Industrial Park is spot on but without good paying jobs, none of this is possible. The poverty level is going up because the cost of living is increasing and the median wage is not keeping up with that. Wells can't survive the way we are going. There are a couple of places in town that provide a decent wage but those businesses are not growing. More focus needs to be on bringing industry to the Industrial Park.

Pengelly stated when he, Nance and Savedra met with NNRDA, the discussion and focus was on goals. At one time, the focus was on housing but people are needed to live in those houses. First, industry needs to come here for people to be able to have careers and trade schools are needed for the younger people. Pengelly agrees with Pollock on needing to focus on getting that big business here, whatever it is. Boyett stated Better City is 100% aligned with that idea. Englund is a big advocate on bringing in industry.

Pollock stated there is not a housing shortage, it is an affordable housing shortage. Pollock continued that unfortunately through the years, this town has had leadership that did not want to see growth. Several opportunities were passed by through the years due to those who had a personal interest. Goolsby stated we can bring industry but have nowhere for employees to live. Who will front the cost to build an apartment complex. The city is willing to work with the right business.

Savedra asked Boyett if Wells has been presented to some of these site selectors or if they could show us anything they have done to get business here. The City of Wells pays Better City a lot of money and would like to see something for our money. Boyett agrees and that is why these specific goals were presented, to specifically deliver to the city. Better City has these reports to show what is being achieved each month and where Better City is in the process, so the city has something measurable to hold Better City accountable. Savedra asked if there was anything right now. Boyett continued Better City has not started this process yet. Better City wanted to present this to the city council before doing that. That is where the time and effort has been going to, the discussions and the outreach. Now the time will be going into implementation and action. Savedra agrees with everyone about the Industrial Park and feels the need to concentrate on getting business here. Savedra would like to see some action and what is being done for the money being paid to Better City specifically.

Boyett added these are easily actionable steps Better City can take and report on. Englund has designed an even more detailed plan of specific site locators to market the Industrial Park so those boxes can be checked off and give updates to start seeing something in action. Pengelly asked how Better City gets in touch with these companies or if there was a site selector list. Englund stated there is an industry association Better City can talk to. There are individual consultants people hire to look at the whole list, get them on a mailing list and start talking to them about Wells and what is available. Wells is in a remote place on I 80 which will become increasingly important in the future. There are two railroad tracks going through Wells, which will also be important.

Industrial warehousing is a good opportunity for Wells. People who like to live in the countryside and appreciate outdoor recreation will be the companies that will fit that need but recruiting a company is tough. Englund asked what was the latest with Ameri Ties. Pengelly stated last time Ameri Ties was contacted, they were still on hold which we don't know what that means. Pengelly stated we cannot tie up the industrial park waiting on someone. Pengelly continued that a lot of people are looking for dry warehousing to use as a transfer hub. Pengelly stated that there has been a lithium deposit discovered by Ely and north of Wells. If those mines get going, US 93 will be a big corridor. There would be a need for rail access and this would be a good place for it according to Englund.

Denny Stanhope stated he couldn't help but notice one of the items was the Woodhills feasibility study and wanted to know where that stands. In Vernal, Roosevelt and Duschene, Utah as well as some other areas are in the same spot where Wells is at right now about ready to go upside down. Not much is happening, no money coming in, no housing, no businesses. These places in Utah have rubbed elbows with the outdoor industry and are advertising offroad opportunities all over the place. In the last 15 years, the offroad situation has been developed and now have dealers, hotels, motels, restaurants, outdoor places because of endorsing off roading.

The feasibility study for the Woodhills was looking pretty good in the beginning. Stanhope has had numerous people ask what is happening with the outdoors here. This is a beautiful area, there are all sorts of places to go and ride off road vehicles, why doesn't Wells have any places here. Stanhope did not have an answer. Stanhope went out with the consultants to show them the area and were elated at what was available. Information about grants was passed on with very little or no matching by the city. These places in Utah are raking in millions every year because the off-road industry has been developed, people are loving it and they are crowded. Why can't that happen here? Better City was part of that in the beginning.

Pollock stated that a lot of pushback was received by the land owners on developing that area and may not be the appropriate place. Stanhope thinks there are fifty plus miles available where trails already exist that needs to be looked at a little bit closer and Better City needs to be involved in it. Pengelly added that Wood Rodgers is the group that Stanhope went out with and did come up with a final report which stated there was not

enough area in the Wood Hills to do trails with all of the private property owners. Wood Rodgers did not think the area was big enough to support all of the ATVS and UTVS that would be coming. Stanhope did not get that out of the report and disagreed.

Wood Rodgers did suggest Wells be the hub and include Jarbidge and other areas around Wells. Stanhope has been in contact with Wood Rodgers constantly through emails about grant funding and maybe should forward them to Pengelly. Pengelly has been in contact with them as well and received those emails. One of the problems is that a lot of the land that was sold to the private parties was told by the real estate agents that nothing would ever happen up there. Stanhope feels there is plenty of space and plenty of buffers that don't come anywhere near these properties. Quinn stated Better City's report is flowery and covers a lot of areas. Quinn's opinion is that the city gives them a lot of money and Better City should have a deadline and when the deadline is reached, two things that were on the list should be completed. Quinn feels Better City addresses a lot of stuff but doesn't do anything about it for the money that is paid to them. Quinn is very disappointed in what Better City does for the money paid.

DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION TO APPROVE CORRECTIVE ACTION PLAN FROM FINDINGS OF THE 2022-2023 AUDIT REPORT AND AUTHORIZE STAFF TO SUBMIT TO THE NEVADA DEPARTMENT OF TAXATION

Nance reported that these audit findings are the ones reported by Teri Gage when she presented the final audit report. Nance reviewed the audit report findings. Nance did have a typo on the first page where she had 2022 instead of 2023 that will be corrected before this letter is mailed. Goolsby made a motion to approve the corrective action plan from the findings of the 2022-2023 audit report and authorize staff to submit it to the Nevada Department of Taxation with the correction of 2023. Savedra provided the second and the motion passed unanimously.

DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION TO APPROVE PLAT MAP SUBMITTED BY HIGH DESERT ENGINEERING FOR PARCEL NUMBERS 002-554-008 AND 002-554-010, DAVID COMEAU FAMILY TRUST

Pengelly began that everyone had a copy of the parcel map showing the property that was previously the Sharp property. One of the buildings was torn down and Comeau would like to combine the lots to build a garage on the empty lot. Savedra made a motion to approve the plat map submitted by High Desert Engineering for parcel numbers 002-554-008 and 002-554-010 for the David Comeau Family Trust. Goolsby provided the second and the motion passed unanimously.

DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION TO APPROVE OR DENY SPECIAL LIQUOR LICENSE FOR WELLS MUNICIPAL SWIMMING POOL FOR EVENTS ON JANUARY 20, 2024 AND FEBRUARY 10, 2024

Nance stated this is for the splash, sip and snack event. The first event was held on December 16, 2023. There were not a lot of people but there were new people who have

never been to aquacise. There will be a forty-five-minute aquacise session then drinks and snacks. It was a fun time and Aboite would like to do it monthly if there is good attendance. Aboite will try it a couple of more times to see how it goes. Goolsby made a motion to approve the special liquor license for the Wells Municipal Swimming Pool for the event on January 20, and February 10, 2024. Savedra provided the second and the motion passed unanimously.

CLAIMS COMMITTEE REPORT: ACTION TO APPROVE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Goolsby made a motion to approve the check register dated December 1, 2023 through December 31, 2023 in the amount of \$27,632.00. Savedra provided the second and the motion passed unanimously. Goolsby made a motion to approve the Warrant Register dated December 14, 2023 through December 27, 2023 in the amount of \$146,973.97. Savedra provided the second and the motion passed unanimously. Goolsby made a motion to approve the Warrant Register dated December 28, 2023 through January 9, 2024 in the amount of \$290,140.50. Savedra provided the second and the motion passed unanimously.

COUNCILMEN'S REPORTS

Savedra thanked Nance and Pengelly for putting together the holiday party and Betaso's for the excellent food. A meeting with NNRDA was held on December 13, 2023 with a presentation by Greg Zagus with Nevada Clean Energy Fund. Zagus talked about there being a lot of grant money and funding through this Clean Energy Fund. Savedra emailed him to see if a meeting could be scheduled to discuss if there is something different to do with heating the pool as well as possible solar panels for the new senior center. Zagus just emailed Savedra back right before the meeting so hasn't had a chance to read the email. There was also a presentation on Silverlink.com. Savedra thought this might be handy for Nance because you can log in and see grant information which is free for up to \$50,000 in grants. Savedra stated since she has been on the PTO, there has been a construction cone in the middle of the playground at the elementary school with a piece of steel sticking out of it. The cone was put on it and has been there for four and a half years. Woolsey didn't realize it was there and when he was made aware of it, it was gone within a week. Savedra wanted to thank Principal Woolsey for having this removed. Savedra has an ECSD capital improvement meeting on January 18th.

Goolsby stated there have been a few wrestling tournaments and the kids are doing well. The little kids just started wrestling and there are a lot of new parents and younger parents coming and helping. There will be a tournament in Wells at the end of the month. Goolsby wanted to discuss the evaluations of Nance and Pengelly since he wasn't present at the last meeting. Management is thinking about more than themselves, it is about the city, comradery, family and community. Goolsby has been on the council for awhile and has seen a lot of dos and don'ts. The current management style is second to none. Both individuals are capable by themselves but together are unstoppable. Nance and Pengelly have secured around \$900,000 in grants. Goolsby thinks they are doing a

phenomenal job. There is a lot going on behind the scenes. It is nice that the city has the family mentality and able to bring your kids to work. It is more of a family dynamic than a workplace. Goolsby thanked them for all they do. Savedra stated when you walk into the city office, you can feel that people are happier. There is a good vibe and a good work environment and it feels good to walk into the office now. Pengelly loves what he does and it is a learning process. Pengelly stated Nance is a big asset to him and couldn't do it without her.

Pollock likes the idea of solar power at the senior center and Quinn had made that suggestion at a previous meeting. Things are moving along nicely with the clinic. The sheetrock is up at the senior center and it looks nice. The Lt. Governor will be in town on February 1st and Pollock is looking forward to meeting him. The first stop will be in Wendover, then will stop in Wells before going to Elko for Cowboy Poetry.

STAFF REPORTS

Pengelly reminded everyone that financial disclosures are due on January 15, 2024. The pool is closed temporarily due to the pump burning up. A new pump and needed parts have been ordered.

Elko Sanitation has requested a rate increase so Charles will be back for a couple of meetings. The contract with Elko Sanitation has a clause allowing rate increases every two years. Landfill fees in Elko went up so this was expected. ESC is asking for a 5% increase.

Nance stated the rabies clinic will be February 10, 2024 from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the fire hall.

CITIZENS TO ADDRESS THE COUNCIL

Quinn stated that she also loves coming to city hall and seeing Aksel. Aksel started being in the office as a baby and now when you come in, you are greeted by him.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 8:10 p.m.

GARY POLLOCK, Mayor

ATTEST:

SAMANTHA NANCE, City Clerk

Minutes of Wells City Council
Meeting of January 9, 2024