



# CITY OF ELY

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## ELY CITY COUNCIL SPECIAL MEETING

November 4, 2021 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 5:00 P.M., led in the Pledge of Allegiance, and asked for Roll Call.

Members present:

- Mayor Nathan Robertson
- Councilman Ernie Flangas
- Councilman Kurt Carson
- Councilman Ed Spear
- Councilwoman Jerri-Lynn Williams-Harper

Members absent:

- Councilman Jim Alworth

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

- City Clerk Jennifer Lee
- City Treasurer-HR Director Janette Trask
- City Attorney Leo Cahoon
- City Administrative Assistant Patti Cobb
- City Fire Chief Pat Stork
- City Building Department Administrative Assistant Jennifer Drew

Also, in attendance: Members of the public in attendance at the Ely Volunteer Fire Hall signed in (appears below) and the following persons attended via video conference: Geri Wopschall, Marietta Henry, Brian Glasspoole, Craig Peterson, Nora Tadic, and Donna Bath.

### ELY CITY COUNCIL ATTENDANCE LIST

DATE: November 4, 2021

Print name below

Teresa Ciciliano  
George Chachas

Print name below

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### 2. PUBLIC COMMENT

George Chachas stated on October 25, 2021 during the heavy rainstorm that we received, I again had leaks coming through my roof that your former Building Inspector approved and later stated I hired a poor contractor. Once I get an invoice from the contractor, I will bring that to you Mr. Mayor for payment. Mr. Chachas stated ongoing concerns regarding lack of water and sewer connections on his property on Great Basin Boulevard; reported a leak in front of 475 Great Basin Boulevard from construction vibration that needs to be fixed; his request for a copy of all parking permits required on Great Basin Boulevard; parking for his property at 710 Avenue G.; and selective enforcement on nuisances around the City.

### 3. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION/POSSIBLE ACTION ONLY OF THE ELY CITY COUNCIL.

1. Mayor Robertson – Discussion Only – Interview of candidate for City Building Official position; the applicant is Craig Peterson.

Mayor Robertson stated the way this works is we have a list of questions in which I will read, and the Council may ask any follow up questions. If you have any questions at the end, we are happy to entertain those.

**What attracted you to this position with the City of Ely?**

We moved out to Utah about six and a half years ago and one of our adventures to escape the big city was we came out to Great Basin National Park to do some camping and hung out in the area quite a bit. I am from a small town in Michigan that you have to drive several miles to get to a Walmart, to the hospital, and a lot of other places. I went to Salt Lake City to start a new career, but I am not a city person. I was a contractor prior to becoming a building enforcement professional. They were gracious enough to hire me and I was able to get some experience under my belt. To be honest we are not satisfied with life in the city and in our free time we like to enjoy each other, and nature Ely has a lot of that to offer. It is something we have been wanting to do and were waiting for the right opportunity and this seems to be it. I have been offered positions in other places but ultimately it wasn't places we chose to be.

**What were the responsibilities of your last or current position?**

In Salt Lake City I started off doing zoning enforcement and quickly moved up to the Senior Building Inspector and managed a building inspection team of seventeen. We managed everything from single family homes, high rises, industrial, and agricultural. In June they promoted me to Permits Manager and now I deal with processes and make improvements to systems by helping people in different ways than I used to. To be honest, I am not the administrative type. I like doing administrative work, but I also like to get out and help people in exuding my enthusiasm for code. I like sharing my knowledge and helping people solve problems. In my current role I solve systemic problems and it doesn't give me the satisfaction I am looking for.

Mayor Robertson stated you are definitely out in the field some, but you are the department.

Craig Peterson stated I have no problem handling the administrative roles and responsibilities, but I appreciate the lifestyle of getting out and brushing up against the people that are building.

**This position requires working with the public. Please explain how you deal with the public when it comes to the City's adopted building codes when they might not agree?**

Craig Peterson stated in the city we get a lot of that. I think the biggest challenge when you come to a small, isolated community like this is maintaining proper relations with people you are enforcing with. I believe talking with and treating people respectfully and understanding and being empathetic towards their concerns is very important to maintain good relations. I don't mind enforcing the rules and explaining why we need to enforce them, but it has to come from a place of respect in order to maintain positive relations.

**This position requires traveling within the greater White Pine County area. Are you comfortable with that kind of travel?**

Craig Peterson stated yes, I traveled the entire length to get here today and enjoyed every minute of it.

**Do you feel you can fill both roles as the Inspector and the Official?**

Craig Peterson stated yes, I look forward to it. I appreciate the nuances of both worlds and understand the importance of both. I have good experience with both sides of the coin.

**What are your salary expectations?**

Craig Peterson stated even at the topped-out amount here in Ely, I would be taking a pay cut. That is part of my demonstration of our commitment to be here; it is not about the money for us, it is about our lifestyle.

**When is the soonest you could start if offered this position?**

Craig Peterson stated two weeks from Monday would be when I could start as I have to give proper notice.

Councilman Spear stated I see you have thirty-seven certifications; are they all current and follow the requirements to be a building inspector?

Craig Peterson stated in Utah and generally across the nation, eight are required including combination residential and combination commercial. All the certificates I have gotten is because I enjoy professional development, learning things, and challenging myself.

Councilman Spear asked when you have someone that is not following code, what would be your solution?

Craig Peterson stated customer service has always been a big drive of mine and I believe that is why I have had such success in Salt Lake City. I eclipsed a lot of people that have been there a long time before my role with the City. I think it is the way I deal with people and help them through problems. Nothing satisfies me more than helping people cut through the red tape. It can be difficult and confusing for people and we need to make sure we contact the people that are contacting us. One thing I like and appreciate at my current work is we have a saying “no wrong door” and this means that you find the person that can help them or help them yourself to the best of your ability.

Mayor Robertson stated regarding your start date you were going to propose a modified work schedule.

Craig Peterson stated yes, I would like to have a modified work schedule to start with as we have to find housing here. I have to sell my house, but don't want to do that until we have found something here. I do intend on being here to meet the statutory requirement for White Pine County residency within six months. My intent to begin with would be to come a couple days a week to handle code enforcement, inspections, and gather plans so I could handle phone calls and plan reviews remotely in the interim. It is a pretty long drive so I would appreciate a little bit of leniency as far as how and when. I would certainly be able to handle the workload and be able to satisfy the requirements of the permit holders.

Councilwoman Williams-Harper asked would you consider working a week on and a week off until things are taken care of to a comfortable level?

Craig Peterson stated I have considered that, but the problem with that is I am already taking a significant pay cut and there really isn't any short-term choices that don't cost a fortune to stay for a week at a time. I would certainly be fine with working long days and I am very familiar with virtual inspections; however, they do have their limitations. In my years in Salt Lake City I have conducted approximately 20,000 inspections and we did so much work so quickly there that the learning curve was short so it is very easy for me to identify what I can and cannot accomplish remotely. I just don't want to put myself in a position that my wife and I will be negatively impacted. We want to come here, and my wife is fully on board.

Mayor Robertson stated given we are coming into wintertime and construction is usually a bit slower. Instead of a six-month window, if the Council said you would need to be here full time by the end of March, is that doable?

Craig Peterson stated the statute is six months, but our goal would be to sell our house and move here as soon as we find something that will suit our needs. By the end of March would be doable.

**Do you have any questions for the Council or myself?**

Craig Peterson stated I have addressed my questions with the HR Director in conversations that I have had. The only caveat would be if we could accomplish the remote/hybrid schedule in order to facilitate the needs of the Building Department. I have no reservations about handling the workload in the interim months.

Mayor Robertson asked are you envisioning two days a week?

Craig Peterson stated as much as the need for the building department would be. I would like to consolidate inspections as tightly as I could to minimize travel time. I would also be here for City Council meetings and any other required meetings I would need to attend.

Mayor Robertson asked the HR Director is there any liability having an employee who travels back and forth for work?

City Treasurer/HR Director Trask stated as long as he is traveling on his own time it is no liability to the City.

Councilman Carson asked what was the salary range?

City Treasurer/HR Director Trask stated it is \$50,000.00 to \$80,000.00 annually.

Councilman Spear stated we have had an increase in construction and the contractors sometimes hire sub-contractors that are only here for a day or two and need inspected before they leave. Would you be able to schedule your travel to be here for those inspections?

Craig Peterson stated I would work with the permit holders in the interim, so inspections are facilitated in a timely manner up to offering an on-demand remote inspection for smaller projects. I would like to get eyes on larger projects that are structural and commercial work.

2. Mayor Robertson – Discussion/For Possible Action – Appointment of individual from interviewed applicant as City Building Official and determination of salary.

Mayor Robertson stated, this position unlike others where the Mayor appoints and the Council confirms, the City Building Official, per Ely City Code, is hired directly by the Council. Mr. Peterson is very qualified, and we have been through this for about a year now trying to hire somebody. We have tried to hire someone locally and get them certified. We have hired out of the area and have had a hard time with them finding housing. I think Mr. Peterson has offered an interesting and doable solution to this and with the time of year being slower for construction projects, I think it might be a good time to try this.

Councilman Spear stated I am okay with what we have offered the last two, but with this one not being in the office full time is a tough one for me.

Mayor Robertson stated he will be working remotely; it won't be as convenient, but once again the construction is slower in the winter. If he is proactive and working with the Administrative Assistant in the office, we can work around those logistics and our big project with the courthouse is done.

Councilman Spear stated we do have the start of the hospital now. Would it be possible if something came up could we still retain Brad Christiansen?

City Treasurer-HR Director Trask stated yes, I was going to remind you that Brad is still a good option to have as backup if needed. I have not spoken with Brad, but I would be happy to as he has been great in working with us.

Councilwoman Williams-Harper stated you are used to having someone here full-time rather than working remotely. Is there any way we might offer one salary and then once that person is here full-time change that salary?

City Treasurer-HR Director Trask stated the reason I would not recommend that is he has said he is already taking a pay cut to do this. I fully expect him to be working at home and available by phone and email to do reviews and planning.

Councilman Spear stated the last person we interviewed was going to take a significant cut and spent three days here trying to find housing and was unable to find anything livable. Our challenges are number one we need a building inspector and number two we have to respect the fact that housing is difficult at this time here. Craig looks young enough that we would have him for many years and I think it is worth moving on.

Councilman Spear moved to hire Craig Peterson with an annual salary of \$75,000.00 plus benefits and that he be available full-time in the office by March 31, 2022.

Mayor Robertson asked Craig Peterson, “would those terms be acceptable to you?”

Craig Peterson stated I could not accept anything less than the maximum salary. I understand the concern about the travel, but really it is an investment to get me here. I work hard and earn every dollar that I make.

Mayor Robertson asked Councilman Spear, “Would you like to amend your motion to that effect?”

Councilman Spear stated I will amend my motion because this is vital for the community and we have been really lucky to pull all the big projects off this last year and the clinic will be a big project as well.

Councilman Spear amended his motion moving to hire Craig Peterson with an annual salary of \$80,000.00 plus benefits and that he be available full-time in the office by March 31, 2022. Councilman Carson seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Craig Peterson accepted the offer.

**4. PUBLIC COMMENT:**

George Chachas stated the biggest detriment as far as housing goes is your former Building Inspector; I hope we get a change. Mr. Chachas continued with ongoing concerns regarding parking for his property at 710 Avenue G.; ADA compliance on Great Basin Boulevard; acquiring a parking permit to park behind the sidewalk on the west end of his property to Town and Country on Great Basin Boulevard; and selective enforcement on nuisances throughout the community.

Teresa Cicliano stated I would like to speak to the Mayor after this meeting.

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

Councilman Spear moved to adjourn the Special meeting of the Ely City Council at **5:34 p.m.** Councilwoman Williams-Harper seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

  
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MAYOR

  
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ATTEST