

CITY OF ELY

501 Mill Street Ely, Nevada 89301
City Hall (775) 289-2430
Cityofelynv.gov

ELY CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING

March 12, 2026, 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. Mayor Robertson led in the Pledge of Allegiance and asked for Roll Call.

Members present:

- Mayor Nathan Robertson
- Councilman Terrill Trask by Zoom
- Councilwoman Melody Van Camp
- Councilwoman Michelle Yeoman
- Councilman Dennis Perea
- Councilwoman Jerri Lynn Williams-Harper

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

- City Clerk Jennifer Lee
- City Treasurer Janette Trask
- Public Works Director Mike Cracraft
- City Engineer B.J. Almberg
- City Fire Chief Pat Stork
- City Attorney Chris Arabia
- City Building Official Chris Flannery
- 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, KELY; Eugene Harper; Mark Bassett, NNRV; Bradley Solyan, Porter Group LLC; Stephanie Walker, Porter Group LLC; and Benjamin Rosenbaum, Porter Group LLC.

MUNICIPAL UTILITIES BOARD ATTENDANCE LIST

DATE: March 12, 2026 Regular Meeting

Print name below

Print name below

Dem Reynolds
BRIS HANEFEID
Brandon Hall
SHADRACH ROBERTSON
Tidd Fendley

2. PUBLIC COMMENT

Tom Stagg stated I am a member of the Utilities Board, not that that matters, but we are trying to get a dog park. What I was asked to say is that even Beatty, Nevada has a dog park and Ely doesn't have one. Everywhere you go, there's dog parks now so it's something that, I think, the City would benefit from. There are a lot of people that visit and have dogs, and they want a place to take them. There are people that live here who have dogs and would like a place to take them. It would also be beneficial to the people that want to use the park and don't want to be bothered by someone's dog and vice versa.

From: Carrie Henry
Sent: Tuesday, March 10, 2026 10:46 AM
To: Jennifer Lee <CityClerk@cityofelynv.gov>
Subject: Community Dog Park

To whom it may concern,

PLEASE READ ALOUD AT MEETING PLEASE

I'm writing to share a few thoughts on the many benefits of establishing a dog park in our community.

First, a dog park provides a safe, designated space where dogs can exercise and socialize off leash. Regular exercise is essential for a dog's physical health and helps reduce behavioral issues that often arise when pets don't have enough activity or stimulation. A dedicated park allows owners to give their dogs this freedom while maintaining safety for other park users.

Second, dog parks help strengthen community connections. They naturally bring people together, creating opportunities for neighbors to meet, interact, and build relationships. Many communities find that dog parks become social hubs where residents from different backgrounds can connect over their shared love of pets.

Another important advantage is improving public spaces. When there is a designated area to run and play, it helps keep other parks, sidewalks, and recreational areas cleaner and more organized. Property planned dog parks also include waste stations, fencing and seating, making them both functional and welcoming.

Dog parks can also support responsible pet ownership. With clear rules and facilities such as waste disposal stations, owners are encouraged to clean up after their pets and follow guidelines that keep the area safe and enjoyable for everyone.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Kathy Henry
Ely, NV 89301

From: Mike Carolan
Sent: Wednesday, March 11, 2026 8:06 AM
To: Jennifer Lee <CityClerk@cityofelynv.gov>
Subject: Statement support of dog park

Ely City Council:

Request read this statement at March 12th, 2026 council meeting. Brief Statement in support of Dog park at Broadbent Park.

My Name is Mike Carolan I have lived on Morley Avenue for about ten years. I own two dogs acquired from the local pound.

1. Dedicated dog park areas are common in most cities. As far as I know, Ely does not have a dog park area in the city limits. Dog park would provide area for people to safely off leash exercise their dogs.
2. Dog park would likely reduce dog poop/ waste problems in adjacent athletic and recreation areas.
3. For me, a Dog park would reduce the likelihood of one my dogs chasing mule deer while I exercise him on the bordering BLM land near my house. This unwanted chasing can stress the mule deer, especially during certain times of the season.
4. Dog parks are cool. People traveling through our town with their dogs may stop to use the dog park and experience downtown Ely.

Thank You for your consideration.

Mike Carolan

Ely City Council – Regular Meeting – March 12, 2026

March 11, 2026

The Honorable Mayor and Members of the Ely City Council,

I am Chris Hanefeld, and I am writing both on my own behalf and on behalf of my mother-in-law's dog, Buddy.

Prior to my meeting other residents who play with their dogs at Broadbent Park, Buddy had little interaction with members of his own species and his eagerness to connect with other dogs was often misinterpreted by their owners as aggressive.

I now regularly take Buddy to the park, allowing him to play and, more importantly, to socialize with the other dogs present. The interaction has been invaluable for Buddy, enhancing his well-being and providing him with positive social experiences.

A dedicated dog park would not only benefit residents, but travelers as well, providing a safe place for their dogs to play and exercise. This facility would give visitors peace of mind that their pets have a safe and secure area for outdoor activity during their stay.

I ask you to please give this serious consideration,

Sincerely,

Chris Hanefeld

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the Ely City Council

From: Dave Barajas

Subject: Support for the Ely Dog Park

Date: 12 March 2026

Greetings,

I am speaking on behalf of Buddy—a wonderful dog and a devoted companion to Alice Meecham.

Buddy, like many dogs in our community, spends much of his day indoors. For him, the dog park is not just a luxury; it is a vital outlet. Every morning around 7:00AM, Buddy meets his "pals" to socialize, play chase, and burn off pent-up energy in a way that only a wide-open, dedicated space allows.

I advocate for the importance of having a safe and secure environment where Buddy and dogs like him can run freely in a well-maintained fenced park.

I appreciate the council's attention to ensuring our park for dogs like Buddy remains a secure haven for our best "friends" to run, play and thrive and not be isolated locked in the house.

Thank you again for your dedication to the Ely community.

3/12/2026

Dear Ely City Council:

On the agenda of today's meeting is a proposal to use Redevelopment funds to establish a dog park at Broadbent Park. My family and I wholeheartedly support this action.

In our travels we have noticed the growing popularity of dog parks. Areas where travelers with pets can enjoy a large, open area to stretch their legs and meet local residents with similar interests. Overnight stops are scheduled near an area that provides pet accommodations. "Apps" have been developed to identify these locations.

The nicest dog parks are large enough to handle multiple parties where dogs are allowed to play together, run and roam freely and their owners can sit and visit. It is another venue where visitors can meet Ely residents.

Broadbent Park is within an easy walking distance of the Nevada Hotel, the Jailhouse Motel, the Highway 50 Inn, and others; and would offer incentive to stay in Ely for the pet advantage.

Thank you for making a commitment to an improvement that will certainly attract more visitors to Ely.

Sincerely,

Marty, Andrea, and "Happy" Westland Ely Residents



My name is Kay Roberts-McMurray, and on behalf of the Copper Queen Hotel & Casino, this letter is sent in support of the City Council agenda item, for approval to use City of Ely FY27 Redevelopment funds for fencing and signage to establish a dog park on the south side of Broadbent Park.

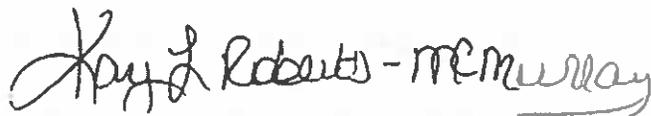
Being very avid animal lovers in general, the entire Bybee family was excited and very supportive when we heard of this particular agenda item.

Dog parks provide an opportunity for our canine companions to socialize with a variety of breeds and breed types.

A dog park provides a positive outlet for a dog to get mental and physical stimulation. And for owners, they benefit from taking a break from the daily grind and getting outdoors. They could run around with their dogs, or simply enjoy the fresh air while watching dogs play. Owners may also take advantage of other amenities they notice at the park.

Being a dog friendly hotel, we have numerous hotel guests who travel with their pets, big and small. Having a dog park to refer them to, to let their dogs run off-leash gives their pets an outlet, gives the hotel guest a chance to meet the community of dog owners, and creates friendships and connections as owners talk about dog services and the community in general.

I hope you all vote yes to approve this agenda item.



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

Councilwoman Van Camp moved to approve the agenda as presented. Councilwoman Yeoman seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

4. CITY DEPARTMENT REPORTS

➤ **WPCSO CAPTAIN**

White Pine County Captain Fincher stated we are staying really busy in the City and in the County. We have got some exciting projects we're just finishing up on. One is our E911 project, it's been a couple of years in the making, and we are going to be going live with that early next week. We have been working on our Emergency Medical Dispatch program for our dispatch center, Fire Chief Stork and Fire Chief Hall have also been working on some of the protocols with us to get those out. We appreciate the continued partnerships with the City, and hopefully those can go forward. We are nearly fully staffed, which hasn't been that way in quite a while and hopefully we can stay that way. I think I'm down two positions right now, so hopefully things are turning the other way.

➤ **CITY CLERK**

City Clerk Lee stated as previously reported, Cemetery tree removal quotes were requested February 25th to use the remaining NDF funding balance of \$18,000. The request noted any services offered, in addition to removal of the two trees, would be taken into consideration. Three quotes were received by the submission deadline yesterday at 3 p.m. from: LG Tree Services - \$8,000 for tree removal and pruning of all spruce in Veterans area and 4 willows/2 poplars for \$10,000; New Leaf Solutions - \$12,345.66 for tree removal; and M.D. Tree Surgery - \$18,000 for tree removal. Public Works Director Cracraft selected LG Tree Services to remove the two trees, as their quote was the lowest.

➤ **CITY ENGINEER**

City Engineer Almborg stated currently we are working on preparing our CDBG exhibits for the Wastewater Treatment Plant Project and the 15th Street Water Extension Project to present in Fallon on April 9th. We got our water deed from the County for the land swap that was in the well agreement and right away, on Monday, we filed the conveyance with State Water Resources to get that put into the City's name. The State Water Engineer's Office does not track ownership, it's actually ours once it got recorded at the courthouse, but we need to inform the State of whose it is, because that's how they will inform us if we need to do anything on that permit. We will get a change application in right away to move that water, which is currently north of McGill, and it's industrial water, to one of our wells in town, and convert it to municipal water and to our place of use. The Morley Water Project is out on the street. We will have that in front of you at the first meeting next month for approval. We are trying to get all of our water system into the GIS system. We're working really hard to try to get that done in a timely manner, because all of that information will then be uploaded into our Waterworth software, and that's going to give us a lot more perspective on our future needs.

5. NNRy FOUNDATION REPORT

Mayor Robertson stated I would like to disclose I am a part-time employe of the Foundation, but this is not a voting item, and I don't vote on it anyway.

NNRY President mark Bassett reviewed the following report:

NEVADA NORTHERN RAILWAY
NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK



Nevada Northern Railway Foundation

A Nevada 501 (c) 3 Non-Profit Corporation

Depot: 1100 Avenue A, Ely, Nevada 89301

Mailing Address: PO Box 150040, Ely, Nevada 89315

Voice: (775) 289-2085 • Web: www.nnry.com • E-mail: info@nnry.com

Monthly Operations Report for February 2026

1. Locomotive Status – Updated
 - a. Locomotives in service: 81, 250, 801, 802, Wrecking Crane A & Rotary B.
 - b. Locomotive 109 is out of service for governor issues.
 - c. Locomotive 93 suffered a hub liner and crown brass failure on axle 4. We have dropped the axle and taken it to Salt Lake. Fortunately, the axle can be turned. The axle has been turned and the locomotive bearing bronze has been machined and the axle is back in Ely.
 - d. During an inspection of the Doodlebug, we found a crack in the power truck frame. We are in the process of make a repair and returning the car to service.
 - e. Locomotive 105 is out of service for radiator leaks, the radiators have been sent out for repair.
 - f. Locomotive 40 is out of service for her heavy repairs. We have started on her repairs; she will be out of service until 2027.
 - g. Locomotives out of service needing moderate repairs: #201
 - h. Locomotives waiting funding for restoration: Steptoe Valley Smelting and Mining #309 and Rotary Snowplow B (for boiler overhaul.)
 - i. Locomotives out of service needing heavy repairs #80 and the military locomotives.
2. Rolling Stock Status – No change
 - a. Passenger equipment in service: #05, #07, #08, #09, Flatcar #23, Baggage/RPO #20, Outfit Car #06 and Caboose 6.
 - b. Passenger Coach 5 is in service but it needs to be lettered in gold leaf.
 - c. Passenger equipment out of service: #10, #2 and #05 needing heavy repairs.
 - d. Caboose in service: #3 #6 and #22 are operational.
 - e. Caboose out service: #5
3. Track Status – No change
 - a. Keystone Branch is open.
 - b. Adverse Branch is open.
 - c. Museum Branch is open.
4. Ridership and Ticket Sales – Updated
 - a. In February carried 226 passengers, it is a 17% increase over the previous year.
 - b. So far this year, we have carried 384 passengers an increase of 1% over the previous year.
 - c. Since operations began in 1987, we have carried 395,951 passengers.
5. Economic Impact – The average non-gaming & gaming daily expenditure per overnight visitor \$550, per Rural Nevada Visitor Profile 2019 - 2023.
Economic impact for February 2026 was 226 x \$550 = \$124,300.
Economic impact year to date was 384 x \$550 = \$211,200.

These numbers only reflect the economic impact of our train passengers and does not include visitors who did not ride the train.

6. Social Media: Our reach on social media continues to expand:

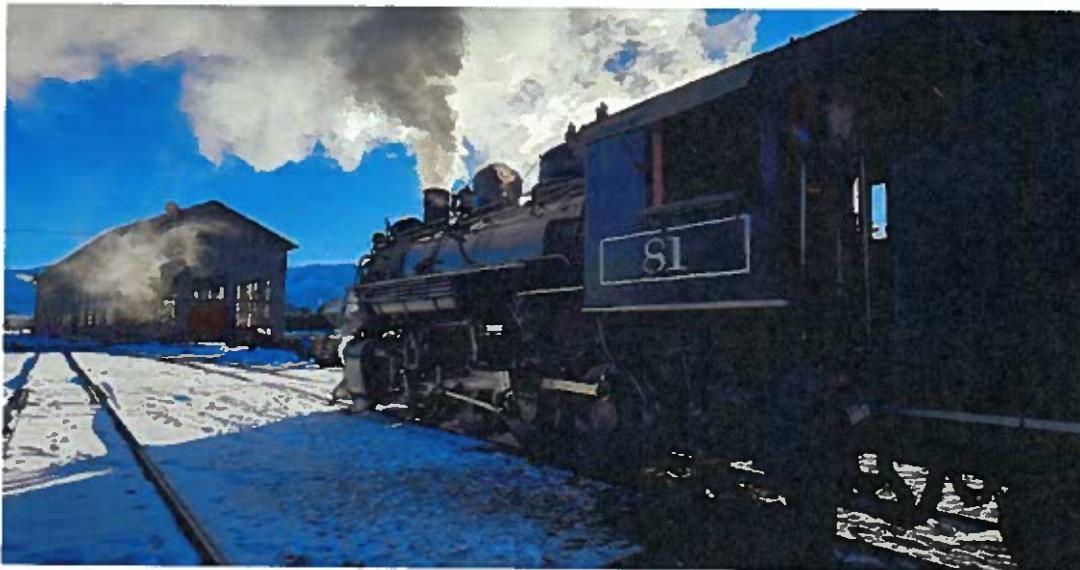
- a. Our Facebook views was 8,175,012
- b. Our Facebook viewers last month was 4,778,781
- c. Content interactions last month was 235,199.
- d. The number of times your Page or profile was visited last month was 141,230.
- e. 272,213 people follow our page.

We had two viral videos last month. The first one was on firing up Locomotive 81 for the first time after repairs to the locomotive. That video was seen 3,285,324 times. The second video was a Tails of the Rails on why there is an F on diesel locomotives. That video has been seen 2,425,018 times.

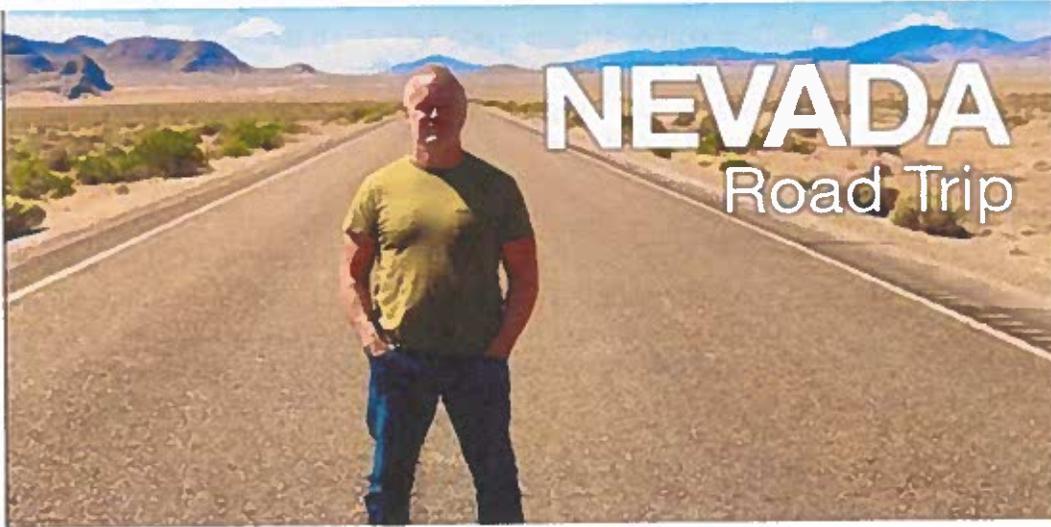
7. Our photo shoots were a great success.



Steam crane women, Nevada Northern Railway, East Ely Yard, February 13, 2026. © 2026 Steve Goss (067671)



8. The railroad has appeared on the PBS program Cultural Quest.



Last year, the Nevada Northern Railway National Historic Landmark welcomed a special visitor — Ian Clark, host of the Emmy Award-winning PBS series Culture Quest! While filming an episode in Nevada, Ian stopped by the railroad to capture the history, craftsmanship, and living culture that makes our railway so special. Ian has generously shared the episode with us — and we're excited to give our followers an exclusive sneak peek before it airs on PBS! The episode is live on our Facebook page.

Culture Quest explores life through the lens of the world's artists, artisans, and keepers of culture — and we're honored that the Nevada Northern Railway is part of that story.

6. REPORTS

➤ COUNCILWOMAN VAN CAMP

Councilwoman Van Camp stated I attended this morning's Utility Board meeting. Last week, a gentleman was assigned twelve hours of community service to me. The individual worked on Great Basin Boulevard and Lackawanna Road with a total of nine large bags of trash and a ton of debris collected, and he didn't even put a dent in that mess. Kudos to Judge Hibbs for letting me have the offenders.

➤ COUNCILWOMAN WILLIAMS-HARPER

Councilwoman Williams-Harper stated it was good to get on with the Porter Group and hear how much Jennifer is pushing forward. We talked quite a bit about refurbishing our building, its needs and what's going on. We haven't been talking about that out loud for a while, so it's good that we're going to get there.

➤ MAYOR ROBERTSON

Mayor Robertson stated I had a chance to sit down with the Governor's Chief of Staff last week. We discussed a number of things, including some of our service issues with areas in Nye County that we get called to and NHP staffing, so we've been working on some of that. I would also like to note the passing of one of our Utility Board members' wives, Linda Derbidge, this past week. She's been a real force in this community for a long time, and she's done a lot. We would like to give our thoughts and prayers to the Derbidge family at this time.

THE MAYOR WILL RECESS THE REGULAR CITY COUNCIL MEETING FOR A MEETING OF THE REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY OF THE CITY OF ELY

7. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION/POSSIBLE ACTION OF THE REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY OF THE CITY OF ELY.

1. Member Van Camp – Discussion/For Possible Action – Approval to use City of Ely FY27 Redevelopment funds not to exceed \$5,000 to purchase fencing and signage to establish a dog park on the south side of Broadbent Park.

Councilwoman Van Camp stated we had some pet owners come to me, and we had the conversation of possibly getting a dog park. We had a conversation with Mike Cracraft,

as we needed his blessing to see if something like this was possible. Our biggest question was to make the maintenance easy for the Parks Department. Many dog parks are located within parks and children's playgrounds, and everybody's got them. The planned area that we were looking at would be the least used portion of the park; we use that now in the mornings anyway. A fenced dog park keeps dogs safe and unleashed. We have found that it's impossible to use the park in the evenings during the summer because so many people utilize the park, and they bring their dogs, but they can't be unleashed. We also, year-round, have folks coming through town looking for dog parks. In the summertime we have met many people coming through, and we always get the question of, is there a dog park? We will see as many as a dozen pups or more joining us in the summer, so it's a big deal for our pups. Three hotels are located within walking distance of the proposed dog park, and our thoughts are really to create something really nice for our community, but especially for our dogs.

Councilman Perea stated my question was really for Mike. I love dog parks and I'm in support of this, but they're not all created equal based off of the maintenance and whatnot of them. Are we able to put in a dog park and have a top-flight dog park? Do you have any concerns about that?

Councilwoman Williams-Harper stated thinking about your maintenance efforts and so forth, will we have receptacles and possibly the plastic bags?

Public Works Director Cracraft stated we have receptacles and bags already in the park. Melody and I have talked, and we haven't really agreed upon fencing, but for budgetary purposes, we decided to ask for the money, and we will figure all the rest of it out later. My only concern is we have to make it very easy to take care of because we only have two parks department people to take care of all the City parks.

Councilwoman Van Camp stated our group is very conscious and do a lot of picking up.

Councilwoman Yeoman stated given the overwhelming support, I see the area on the map, but do we think it's a sufficiently large enough area for multiple users?

Councilwoman Van Camp stated that's what we usually use in the summers, but when there's nobody there in the winter, we use the whole park.

Councilwoman Williams-Harper stated I think it's a great idea, and I think a lot more people will come out and be in the park if there's a designated place to go. We do have a lot of visitors that come through with dogs. Imagine what the 4th of July weekend will look like. How will we advertise that we have a dog park?

Councilwoman Van Camp stated I didn't want to get to far at the moment, but there are apps out there and I haven't gone to NDOT yet, but they will probably put up signage. I did talk to Jennifer about the insurance, and it wasn't an issue. I went to every department with Mike being the first one, because it was his blessing or forget it.

Mayor Robertson asked, "Did Mike give his blessing?"

Public Works Director Cracraft stated so far yes.

Councilman Perea moved to approve the use of City of Ely FY27 Redevelopment funds not to exceed \$5,000 to purchase fencing and signage to establish a dog park on the south side of Broadbent Park. Councilwoman Williams-Harper seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

THE MAYOR WILL RECESS THE REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY OF THE CITY OF ELY AND RECONVENE THE REGULAR CITY COUNCIL MEETING.

8. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION/POSSIBLE ACTION OF THE ELY CITY COUNCIL AS RECOMMENDED BY THE MUNICIPAL UTILITIES BOARD.

1. Board Members – City Clerk Lee – Discussion/For Possible Action – Acceptance of the State of Nevada Grants for Water Conservation and Capital Improvements Grant Contract No. GP2603 between the State of Nevada, acting by and through its Board of Financing Water Projects, and the City of Ely for the Morley Water Upgrades Project.

City Clerk Lee stated the Utilities Board recommended approval. What this grant from the State does for us is it reduces the match that we promised to CDBG and reduces our outlay to approximately \$162,000.

Councilwoman Van Camp moved to accept the State of Nevada Grants for Water Conservation and Capital Improvements Grant Contract No. GP2603 between the State of Nevada, acting by and through its Board of Financing Water Projects, and the City of Ely for the Morley Water Upgrades Project. Councilwoman Williams-Harper seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

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

A. CONSENT AGENDA

Mayor Robertson disclosed my husband is a member of the Ely 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.

Councilwoman Van Camp stated I would like to disclose my granddaughter is an employee of the City of Ely Fire Department.

MOTION: Move to approve the Consent Agenda item 9A-1 Minutes and 9A-2 Bills.

Moved by: Councilman Perea Second by: Councilwoman Van Camp Vote: Unanimous

1. Discussion/For Possible Action – Minutes.
 - February 26, 2026
2. Discussion/For Possible Action – Bills.
 - February 26, 2026
 - March 05, 2026

B. NEW BUSINESS

1. Councilman Trask – Councilwoman Williams-Harper – Discussion Only – Update on Porter Group’s efforts on the City of Ely’s behalf to secure federal and State funding.

Activity Report for

The City of Ely

FOR THE MONTH OF February 2026

Appropriations Requests

- The City of Ely is interested in reissuing a request around the City Hall renovation project after it was not awarded in FY26 through CDBG HUD funding last year. This year we will be applying to utilize USDA Rural ED opportunities for the renovation of City Hall.
- Discussions around deployment of the FY26 CPF awards and the compliance for those awards
- Monitoring the CRISI grant NOFO for the City and NNRF

Additional Grants

- Met with Matt Fockler with BLM State office to discuss Environmental Quality Protection Program to identify where their appropriated funds for Ely are and how the \$80,000 that has not been received are and how those funds can be used going forward.
- Established a Monthly follow-up calls with BLM to discuss other potential funding opportunities in this space.

Additional Activities

- Provided federal updates on a 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.

Monthly Federal Update

Trade

- **If Supreme Court rules against President Trump’s tariffs- he can likely still implement them under other authority**
 - The Supreme Court is considering whether or not President Trump exceeded his authority under the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (IEEPA) to implement broad tariffs
 - Lower courts have ruled against the Administration on tariffs under the IEEPA and the Supreme Court is weighing the final word
 - However, while Congress was given the authority to levy tariffs by the constitution, Congress in 1962 legislated their authority to the administration in some cases through Trade Expansion Act
 - Under the Trade Expansion Act, President Trump could continue with tariffs under:
 - Sec 232 – where a threat to national security has been identified
 - Sec 201 – where injury to a domestic industry is present/eminent (4 year limit with option to extend up to 8, no more than 50% increase over current)
 - Sec 301 – where there is discrimination against a US business or trade agreement violations (4 year limit with option to extend indefinitely)
 - Sec 338 – where there is discrimination against US commerce broadly (no more than 50% increase)

Department of Labor

- **Department of Labor has launched a public data portal**
 - The new portal will feature an easier to use tool to review and use data related to unemployment numbers, average childcare pricing, number of workplace accidents, and other datasets
 - The new portal has a query tool to help users who are unfamiliar with datasets find the information they need
 - You can access the portal here: <https://data.dol.gov/>

Nevada Delegation

- **Senator Cortez Masto**
 - Joined a Senate Democratic inquiry focused on EPA climate authority after Administrator Lee Zeldin moved to repeal the 2009 “endangerment finding,” which underpins EPA authority to regulate greenhouse gas emissions.
 - The letter frames the repeal effort as a foundational rollback that could cascade across multiple Clean Air Act programs and requests detailed information on the rationale, process, and scientific basis for reversing the prior finding.
 - Cortez Masto is positioning herself as a leading swing-state voice on environmental and consumer cost issues, arguing regulatory stability and climate mitigation are tied to public health and long-term economic resilience in the West.
 - Full release: <https://www.cortezmasto.senate.gov/news/press-releases/cortez-masto-senate-democrats-investigate-epas-attempts-to-roll-back-climate-protections/>
- **Senator Rosen**
 - Two of Senator Rosen’s Nevada public-lands bills (Washoe County and Carson City) received a Senate hearing this week, a key procedural milestone toward inclusion in a broader lands package.
 - See here the testimony provided by the Bureau of Land Management on both of her bills and the other featured Nevada bills: https://www.blm.gov/sites/default/files/docs/2026-02/Bl_M_Testimony_2-12-26_SENR_PLEM_Legislative_Hearing.pdf.pdf
- **Rep. Amodei**
 - Announced approximately \$35 million in funding to expand Nevada’s ShakeAlert earthquake early warning system.
 - The funding is framed as a deployment-focused public safety and infrastructure resilience investment, not purely research-based.
 - Amodei is highlighting this as a concrete Nevada deliverable aligned with Western risk-mitigation and taxpayer-value messaging.
 - News releases: <https://amodei.house.gov/news-releases>

Other Federal

- **Update on Homeland Security Funding**
 - Negotiations

- The democrats proposed a new condensed set of criteria for passing a Homeland Security bill to the White House
- While the exact details of the proposals have been kept from media, the broad strokes are that the democrats are down from 10 policies and the three core ICE reform policies requested from the democrats are:
 - End of the use of masks for ICE agents (the bones of this are already in the existing DHS bill sitting in Congress)
 - End of sweeps and random checks and introduction of judicial warrants
 - Making certain locations “off limits” to ICE such as schools, churches, courtrooms and polling locations
- The White House has publicly rejected the offer but didn’t provide which elements they disagreed to
- The White House also sent an offer to the democrats which was rejected by the democrats, no details of the offer have been disclosed
- Both sides say they are not close to a deal
- Shutdown impacts
 - TSA is the most public facing agency for Americans every day that is impacted by this shutdown
 - TSA will continue to operate but the longer the shutdown goes on, the higher risk as TSA agents could miss paychecks
 - Additionally, FEMA is impacted and while they will still respond to a disaster, their efforts on mitigation and reimbursements are largely halted
- Tricia McLaughlin stepped down as DHS spokesperson
 - In the wake of the controversies in Minneapolis and the lapse in funding, Tricia McLaughlin has stepped down
 - Her deputy, Lauren Bis is now the acting spokesperson for the agency
- CDC head steps down, NIH’s Bhattacharya will step in
 - CDC chief Jim O’Neil is stepping down from his role as part of a broader HHS effort to realign
 - Jim O’Neil is slated to take another role in the Administration that has yet to be announced but will not be in HHS
 - Bhattacharya has taken a more moderate approach to vaccine safety concerns and his replacement of O’Neil comes as the FDA has decided to formally review the Moderna flu vaccine which relies on mRNA technology (review in the interest of approval for use)
- FDA working with pharmaceutical companies for paths to over-the-counter (OTC) drugs
 - FDA Administrator Marty Makary has called for more drugs to be made available without a prescription
 - Drug makers have provided comments to the agency requesting that the regulatory process in order to make this transition be eased so that they can comply with the administration’s goals
 - Pharmaceutical companies commented that often the FDA will reject a medication going OTC during the process because of concerns about hypothetical patient behavior – they argue that they should be able to simply provide evidence that consumers understand label instructions
- FEMA Review Council is now expected to deliver recommendations in March
 - The FEMA review council instructed to provide the White House with recommendations for agency overhaul is scheduled to provide final recommendations in March
 - In December, the group’s meeting where they were supposed to make their final recommendations was abruptly canceled after a leaked draft showed they were slated to essentially eliminate FEMA and move authority and funding to the states
 - Since that time, Congress has proposed other FEMA alternatives and the administration has seemingly moved from the elimination posture indicating different recommendations may be coming (though none have been made public)
- Department of Interior is exploring a path to launch a Wildfire agency -Congressional democrats disagree
 - Earlier this year the White House issued an executive order which instructed the Department of Interior to consolidate wildfire management programs
 - Currently, wildfire protection, response, and mitigation is conducted through multiple agencies including the Forest Service, Park Service, Bureau of Land Management, and Bureau of Indian Affairs
 - The Department is looking to take all the fire resources and programming and centralize them through a wildfire agency believing this will be a better system to protecting resources and people
 - Congressional democrats disagree with the restructure and are concerned not enough study has been conducted to determine that the move would result in better wildfire support
 - The concerned western democrats sent a letter to the Trump administration requesting more information about the underlying justification for changing the agency, see the letter here: <https://www.energy.senate.gov/services/files/35369807-9C83-4DD7-9928-8AC7CE7186D4>

City Clerk Lee stated last week, Porter Group worked with us to turn in our application to Congressman Amodei's office for the City Hall renovation. That is being reviewed by their staff right now, and the Senate applications are out, and those are due March 20th.

Porter Group Nevada Senior Advisor Bob Lucey stated we at the Porter Group have been representing Ely for quite some time, and are proud partners to be an acting member with the City of Ely in the endeavors with the federal government, and all governmental issues that may pertain to federal issues. I'm joined tonight with my team online. We have our Vice President, Stephanie Walker, our other Vice President, Ben Rosenbaum, and our Legislative Director, Bradley Solyan, all joining us from the East Coast this evening, so it's very late for them, but they wanted to make sure they were here. We are committed to continuing to serve the City of Ely. Throughout the last few years, we've helped the City of Ely secure funding to the tune of about \$18,160,000 through various sewer upgrades, water mains downtown, complete streets projects, and further water mains in fiscal year 2024. This last fiscal go-around, we were able to receive \$5 million for the emergency responder communication systems for the City of Ely. We continue to work and serve with Ely, and as the Madam Clerk has stated, we did recently submit an application to Congressman Amodei's office for Congressional Project Funding for the renovations of City Hall. We have submitted those to Congressman Amodei, and our team went over those with his team on Monday and had a wonderful response to that, so we'll see where we get with that. We will also be submitting applications to Senator Rosen's office and Senator Cortez Masto's office for their appropriations as well. We want to continue to make sure that Ely is a wonderful place in the eastern part of our state and make sure that people can continue to visit, live, and thrive out here.

2. Councilman Trask – Discussion/For Possible Action – Acceptance of *Porter Group, LLC's* Proposal and Engagement Agreement for Federal Government Affairs Consulting Services through March 20, 2027.

Mayor Robertson stated this is our annual renewal that we do every March. We appreciate Porter Group being here to talk to us about it. There have been some discussions in our previous meetings about why we're only doing the one application this year. As Bob mentioned, they've been very successful in getting a lot of congressional projects funded, we're working through quite a few of those, and I know staff have got their hands full making sure that we can get those all accomplished before we go beating the bushes for a lot more money.

Councilman Perea stated you can tell what the Porter Group has done for the City, and what they continue to do for us; we like that product. I think that my question is the value proposition. If we have the one item in the hopper and we don't get anywhere with it, and we're not going after anything can we stop the contract, or pause it, or whatnot until we actually have priorities in which can be helped? Otherwise, I think it becomes a nicety and not a necessity. I'm in support of this with giving Jennifer some leeway on deciding whether or not we're going to get the value proposition because of our priorities or not in the future and be able to cancel it if necessary.

Porter Group Vice President Stephanie Walker stated the provision standard in our contracts is a 30-day for any of them. Though I will say, too, I think the spirit of your question, part of the reason why Porter Group and the City of Ely have been so successful in their funding is because of showing up continuously. If you stop showing up and then just show up asking for dollars three years later, that's going to put you at a disadvantage to other communities. So, to the spirit of your question, I would recommend continuing to show up and meet with these members and have a program, but to the fact of your question, there is an out in our contracts for standard and in Ely's contract.

Mayor Robertson stated how this has gone in the past is we put these applications in, but Congress usually doesn't take up these issues until September.

Porter Group Nevada Senior Advisor Bob Lucey stated the funding that we just saw, for example, with the \$5 million that we received for the emergency communication radios, that was a CPF from last year that was applied for in fiscal year 2025, because there was

no CR in 2026 that got extended. Obviously, those programs got delayed to this year. So the funding is a process in which usually we apply in March with the congressional members, it gets put into the appropriations bill, starts drafted, and once we know about that, sometimes around November/December, those appropriation bills will then get supported, then they go through to the actual appropriation process, which is going on right now. We did learn in February that it was a little delayed due to the shutdowns and whatnot in late fall, but it is quite a process, because now we put it in, we'll go in, continuously meet with the members, and take members of the Council, whoever may be back there to continue to advocate and lobby for those efforts. As Vice President Walker pointed out, it's not something that we just put in, we monitor it consistently for you and continue to manage it. If I may, too, to the Councilman's question as well, outside of the CPF funding, there are also programmatic grants that we work on continuously, not only with the BLM, but with the USDA, Bureau of Reclamation, Department of Transportation, on and on. The Clerk and I have been working with BLM on a Green-up grant that they have delayed on getting money to the City. Sometimes it's not only once you get the award, but sometimes it takes a little to go find the actual department to fund the award. It is a very long route process sometimes, but we at the Porter Group are committed to making sure that you are happy, and we want to make sure that we're providing you with all of those services continually.

Councilman Perea moved to accept the *Porter Group, LLC's* Proposal and Engagement Agreement for Federal Government Affairs Consulting Services through March 20, 2027 with direction to City Clerk Lee to notify the Council if FY27 applications do not move forward. Councilwoman Yeoman seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Mayor Robertson handed the gavel to Mayor Pro Tempore Williams-Harper as the CEO of the White Pine Chamber of Commerce is his husband.

3. Councilwoman Williams-Harper – Discussion/For Possible Action – Approve support letter for White Pine Chamber's *Travel Nevada* Rural Marketing Grant application.

White Pine County Chamber of Commerce CEO Shadrach Robertson stated we are simply asking for a letter of support, you are not on the hook for anything financial. It's combining a grant request through the Nevada Division of Tourism and their Rural Marketing Grant. You would be joining the Pony Express Territories chairperson and White Pine County Tourism and Recreation Executive Director, the president of the Nevada Northern Railway, and the Great Basin National Heritage Area in supporting the grant. The Chamber is the author of the grant request, on behalf of the Great Basin National Heritage Area.

Councilwoman Williams-Harper asked are there some specific things that you are looking for us to do in that letter of support?

White Pine County Chamber of Commerce CEO Shadrach Robertson stated the letter has already been written and is part of your backup documentation provided by City Clerk Lee. It simply notes that you support the endeavor of going out for Travel Nevada funds. The grant would be matching Great Basin National Heritage Area funding, for the benefit of acquiring a filmmaker to present a documentary over the twenty years of the Great Basin National Heritage Area as this year is their 20th year. They've been an incredible contributing member of our community by supporting a lot of nonprofit organizations throughout White Pine County. They're a partner of the Chamber of Commerce and that is why we are authoring the grant for them. We are also contributing a significant amount of money from the Chamber Foundation to support the documentary film. It's demonstrated a statistical fact that documentaries, films, and television increase tourism to a particular area showcased in those cinematic demonstrations. This could yield a positive result and we're going with a filmmaker who has demonstrated proven success with getting his documentaries on PBS. Nobody at the Chamber of Commerce or the Great Basin Heritage area is being paid with these funds, they are specifically for filmmaking a documentary on the Great Basin National Heritage Area.

Councilwoman Yeoman moved to approve the support letter for White Pine Chamber's Travel Nevada Rural Marketing Grant application. Councilwoman Van Camp seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Mayor Pro Tempore Williams-Harper handed the gavel to Mayor Robertson.

4. Council Members – City Human Resource Director Ramirez – Discussion/For Possible Action – Approval of section 6.3.3, Donation of sick leave, to be added to the City of Ely Personnel Policy Manual with most recent revisions approved on November 13, 2025.

City Human Resources Director Ramirez stated I just wanted to add this to the policies, because it's not currently in policy, and we have dealt with donations in the past by referring to past practice. For black and white purposes, it would just make sense to put it in our policies, so we have some guidance to go by in the future. It doesn't come up very often, but when it does, we would have some guidance.

Councilman Perea stated I've seen this through the State, as I sit on the Catastrophic Leave Board for the State and when there's an application, there's a committee that reviews it to see if it meets the qualifications. Are you going to have a committee, or are you making the decision?

City Human Resources Director Ramirez stated it would just be HR.

Councilman Perea stated It would be you making the decision whether it met the criteria. In the state, everything's overly complicated. Is there an appeal process if they're turned down? Could they come back to the council? There's a lot of questions, because it can get squirrely if somebody's denied and somebody else got it.

City Human Resources Director Ramirez stated I understand that. It would not be just for the flu, but for a major life event that they're going to be out of work, and want to keep a paycheck, and there is somebody that wants to be generous.

Mayor Robertson stated it's not specifically stated, but I would assume that if you make a judgment call by the policy and the employee is unhappy about it, they could still come before the Council and make their case.

City Human Resources Director Ramirez stated yes, they can always make their case to the Council.

Mayor Robertson stated I thought the policy was well written and I am sure we got some input from POOL/PACT on that too. It's always my opinion that if it's written down, it's easier to go, well, the policy is this, and it takes a lot of the judgment call out of it for the most part.

City Human Resources Director Ramirez stated there is guidance in the policy to protect the donor as well.

Councilman Perea stated one of the things that I saw at the State is sometimes tough pregnancies didn't count. I am just wanting to make sure that something as temporary as a tough pregnancy or something could be covered in it. It's just a judgment call, right?

City Human Resources Director Ramirez stated yes, there's also the Pregnancy Fair Act, so there are things to go by.

Councilman Perea moved to approve section 6.3.3, Donation of sick leave, to be added to the City of Ely Personnel Policy Manual with most recent revisions approved on November 13, 2025. Councilwoman Williams-Harper seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

10. PUBLIC COMMENT:

No public comment

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

Councilwoman Williams-Harper moved to adjourn the regular meeting of the Ely City Council at 5:46 p.m. Councilwoman Yeoman seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.


MAYOR PRO TEMPORE


ATTEST

