



CITY OF ELY

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I am pleased to be presenting some of the successes of our community over this past year and also some of the challenges on the horizon. Last year when I gave this report, I had three years to cover. The benefit of giving this report on more regular basis is that report gets shorter.

February of last year when I gave this report, we were just coming out of COVID. We were looking at how our City could progress past the pandemic of the previous two years. As stated in last year's State of the City Address, our employees were a very large part of our community's success in getting through the pandemic. Not only did they run critical infrastructure, but they also helped administer grants and assistance programs to our local businesses, and a myriad of other critical functions, well and above the normal call of duty. In the past year, pandemic or no pandemic, our employees are still the critical part that keeps the City machinery running. They are out late dealing with service disruptions no matter the weather. They respond to emergencies and accidents not just in our City but all over a twenty thousand plus square mile area of the State of Nevada. They battle elements in snowplows. They are in the office come rain or shine to make sure the business of City Government gets taken care of. There isn't an accomplishment I'm going to discuss tonight that doesn't have a host of City staff working hard past quitting time to make sure that these endeavors are a success. I am also pleased to acknowledge the City Council's part in recognizing the good work of the City's employees as they saw fit to raise employee wages across the board this past year by ten percent. This was needed in light of rampant inflation but was also a well-deserved recognition for our employees' constant dedication and a consistent job well done.

The City has not only been able to increase wages this past year but has managed to keep a healthy fund balance in the process. Last year our ending fund balance was around \$1 million; the best it has been in some time. This year, even excluding government assistance funds that had come into the City, our ending fund balance is estimated to remain at around \$1 million. This may change some as we address infrastructure needs coming out of winter but will still be well above the five hundred thousand dollar minimum that the Council instructed we keep in the general fund. The City was also able to pay off two loans related to the fire station and fire equipment ahead of schedule this past year, saving tax payer money on interest payments. The careful management by City staff and the watchful oversight by the City Council

has provided for the progress of the City organization while keeping the finances in a very healthy state.

In connection with that, I am thrilled to report that the City's lobbying efforts in cooperation with our congressional delegation are paying dividends. The City of Ely has been awarded two Community Project Fund projects from the federal government. This is the first earmark funding ever received by the City of Ely. These two awards, totaling over \$5 million will address upgrades to our aging sewer system in Central Ely and water system upgrades in East Ely. This means that for every one dollar the City has invested in our lobbying efforts we have been able to secure roughly a further fifty dollars in outside funding. This is on top of the grants completed by City staff from the CDBG program for the continuing water, sewer, and street replacement on Murry St. A further \$7 million in grant funds have been secured for the redevelopment and upgrade of Broadbent Park and its amenities. This project is one we hope to start design work on probably two years from now depending on how quickly Congress and the BLM move. Outside grant money has also been employed on preparing plans to renovate our Historic City Hall. For every one dollar the City has spent on this project over the past ten years we have been able to match that with five dollars in grant funds. Realizing that local tax dollars for projects like these could not be raised from citizens, it has been critical to invest our limited resources in securing funding from sources outside of our community. We are grateful for the continued support from our State representatives, our Congressional Representative and our US Senators in securing these funds for these critical community projects.

While the financials are in sound order, I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge our record-breaking snow fall this winter and the toll it has taken on our community. The amount of overtime our crews have put in dealing with the weather this year has been as astronomical as their efforts have been herculean. The number of city residents who have sent in their sincere thanks for our road crews' diligent efforts speaks to the high quality of work they've been doing. If that is where the story ended, we could declare it a resounding success.

Unfortunately, mother nature has had other plans for our streets. The relentless amount of moisture and constant freeze/thaw cycle has left many of our roads in terrible shape. Almost four years ago I ran on the platform of "More Planning, Fewer Potholes." I am more committed to that sentiment now than ever. Just as careful planning has allowed the City to keep its finances in good order and leverage those funds to secure the outside funding needed to complete critical projects; careful planning now will allow our limited resources to go as far as possible in addressing the mess left by this past winter. Please know that City crews are patching when and where they can, but much of this work will only be able to take place after the snow stops and weather warms. In the meantime, our staff is planning, budgeting, and collecting resources to address streets as soon as mother nature allows. I trust them and their abilities and our community should too.

This next year holds many exciting events and opportunities for the City of Ely. I would again like to thank our City Council for their forward-thinking engagement and attention to detail. I feel fortunate to be serving with community members of such a high caliber. Their diverse points of view and varied backgrounds generate rich discussion and creative solutions to the problems they are routinely faced with. I am also deeply appreciative of the other community organizations that the City regularly gets to work with. We appreciate our partnerships with White Pine County, as well as the diligent work put in by White Pine Tourism & Recreation, the White Pine Chamber of Commerce, and White Pine Mainstreet. We are grateful for the service of the White Pine Ministerial Association, The Boys and Girls Club and all of our other service groups and organizations; there are too many to list. We absolutely could not do all we do in our community without these organizations and their many dedicated volunteers.

In the past one hundred and sixteen years, Nevada's sixth oldest city has come a long way. We still have a long way to go, but I am confident that we are moving in the right direction. I am ever grateful for the support of our citizens and proud of our community.

Thank you,

Nathan Robertson, Mayor