

WEEKLY MEMO

Date: November 4, 2011

To: Mayor Lynn Stauss, Council President Craig Buckalew, Vice President Wayne Gregoire, Council Members Marc Demers, Ron Vonasek, Henry Tweten, Greg Leigh, and Mike Pokrzywinski.

From: Scott Huizenga

RE: Weekly Update

UPCOMING MEETINGS:

November 8, 2011 – 4:00 pm – Work Session – Training Room

November 15, 2011 – 5:00 pm – Council Meeting – Council Chambers

November 22, 2011 – 5:00 pm – Work Session – Training Room

November 29, 2011 – 5:00 pm – Work Session – Training Room (If Needed)

WEEKLY UPDATE:

Citizen Feedback Survey

The City still is soliciting feedback from residents to its Citizen Feedback Survey. The online survey can be accessed at <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/EASTGRANDFORKS2011>. The survey is coordinated with the League of Minnesota Cities via the state's Council on Local Results and Innovation.

Traffic Control Change on Rhinehart

The City implemented traffic control changes on the southwest portion of the City. The stop sign at 12th & Rhinehart has been removed. And, the intersection of 13th and Rhinehart is now a four-way stop. This configuration better matches the traffic control with natural traffic patterns and traffic warrants. Please drive with caution in this area as residents adapt to the changes.

League Market Value Homestead Credit info

The League of Minnesota Cities unveiled several new tools for cities and residents to analyze changes to the Market Value Homestead Credit (MVHC) program. The MVHC was eliminated and replaced with the Market Value Exclusion (MVE). The changes will result in property tax increases to most types of property *even if the City, County, and School District do not change their levies*. The new tools from the League include a spreadsheet in which one can input specific property values and levy rates to calculate property tax changes. The spreadsheet includes each city in Minnesota, so that the results can be tailored specifically to East Grand Forks (and other Minnesota cities). The new League resources also include brochures that explain the MVHC to MVE conversion. Finally, the League worked with Association of the Minnesota Counties, the Minnesota School Boards Association, and other entities to develop an explanatory insert for upcoming Truth in Taxation (TNT) statements. One can view all of these resources on the League of Minnesota Cities web page: http://www.lmc.org/page/1/hmve_tools.jsp.

Minnesota Public Radio also developed a clever online video that explains in layperson terms (using Legos®) the MVHE-MVE conversion. <http://minnesota.publicradio.org/display/web/2011/10/25/video-property-taxes-increase/>

DEPARTMENT REPORTS:

Library, Charlotte Helgeson

The Library's Friends Fall Book Sale will take place this coming Saturday, November 5, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. We have a tremendous amount of donated books for this sale. They range from paperbacks to gift books. The Friends Store will also be open and staffed by volunteers.

Our current art exhibit is coming down artist-by-artist this week. Our new art will be hung on Thursday, November 10 with an Opening Reception on November 14th.

Fire Department, Chief Randy Gust

The department personnel are gearing up for winter by changing over the equipment to winter operations, such as snow plows and snow blowers.

I have spoken to Wherleys Moving and Storage about the large pile of wood products near at the rear of their building on 2nd Street NE. They stated that they are cleaning up the surrounding area and will have the wood removed as soon as possible.

We are starting our class room training of the Cities third graders this month with personnel going to all of the city's schools including Sacred Heart and Riverside Christian Schools.

Three Fire Department personnel including myself attended the Fall Regional Firefighters meeting in Mentor, MN on Tuesday the 1st of November. There were representatives from 22 departments from our region in attendance.

AGENDA ITEMS:

The Work Session will begin at 4:00 pm and end no later than 6:00 pm to comply with state statutes regarding public meetings on election days.

1. The City Planner will report on the results of a speed study of Bygland Road that the MPO conducted in October. The City Council requested the study to determine whether or not the Council should consider raising the speed limit on Bygland Road from 30 miles per hour to 35 miles per hour.
2. The City Planner also will present a proposed new ordinance to regulate new development and the special assessment process. The new ordinance would require all new developments to install complete infrastructure, including road paving, within three years from final plat approval. Developers either could choose to self finance the improvements or to request that the City construct the improvements through the special assessment process. Developers would be required through development agreements to waive their rights to protest special assessments. The proposed ordinance removes the City Council from the being in the middle of disputes between developers and property buyers regarding the timing of paving in new neighborhoods. Further, potential property buyers would know before buying a new property the approximate cost of the improvements.
3. The City Engineer will request that City Council request an advance on the City's State Aid Construction allotment to reconstruct 15th Street Northwest. The Minnesota

Department of Transportation (MnDOT) allows Cities to advance up to three years of state aid construction funds for eligible streets. The City's state aid system includes 15th Street due to a recent ordinance passed by the City Council.

4. The Public Works Director will request the City Council to recruit for Truck Driver positions. The department is expecting significant turnover over the next 6-8 months starting in December. The recruitment process would create an applicant roster from which the City could fill positions as they are vacated subject to Council approval.
5. Mayor Stauss will gather input from the City Council regarding a potential change to logos on City vehicles. The potential design ideas could create uniformity on city equipment along with a rebranding of the City fleet.
6. I will present options for the final proposed budget. The presentation will include a description of minor changes to the budget since the City Council passed the preliminary budget in September. I will also provide a detailed description of the Capital Improvements Plan (CIP). Finally, I will present further budget options for Council consideration. The final budget meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, December 6.