

WEEKLY MEMO

Date: February 10, 2012

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:

February 14, 2012 – 5:00 pm – Work Session – Training Room

February 21, 2012 – 5:00 pm – Council Meeting – Council Chambers

February 28, 2012 – 5:00 pm – Work Session – Training Room

March 6, 2012 – 5:00 pm – Council Meeting – Council Chambers

WEEKLY UPDATE:

Greater Minnesota Day at the Capitol

Council President Buckalew, Council Member DeMers, and I participated in the Annual Greater Minnesota Day at the Capitol lobbying event sponsored by the Coalition of Greater Minnesota Cities (CGMC). Our city representatives met with a total of eight legislators – four Republicans and four Democrats – to review the city’s legislative platform. We provided local information to the legislators regarding the proposed Waste Water Treatment Phase II project. Of the eight legislators of both parties to whom we spoke, only one supported either the reinstatement of levy limits or supermajority constitutional amendments for budgeting. We thank the CGMC for hosting the event and Senator Stumpf, Senator Skoe, Representative Kiel, Representative Davids, Representative Eken, Representative Marquart, Representative Fabian, and Representative Lanning for taking the time to meet with us.

2012 levy increases lowest in over a decade

A report from the state Department of Revenue indicates that the total statewide levy increase from 2011 to 2012 was the lowest in at least 15 years. Statewide, total levies increased just 1.2 percent overall, with the city portions increasing by 0.9 percent. Despite this news, some legislators including House Tax Chair Greg Davids (R-Preston), with whom our delegation spoke this week, maintain that property taxes are “out of control” and continue the push for levy limits. Ironically, the 2nd-largest percentage increase in property taxes was the *state* property tax that applies only to businesses. The state property tax increased by 2.6 percent.

Planning Information on City Website

The Planning Office has taken efforts to update the Planning webpage on the City of East Grand Forks website, www.egf.mn. As part of this update, all agendas, minutes, and packets are now online. You can view this month's planning commission meeting packet and agenda on the Planning and Zoning Commission page under recent packet.

This adds to a growing list of resources available on the City’s website including Council packets and minutes, building permit data, and arena schedules, to name just a few.

DEPARTMENT REPORTS:

Fire Department, Chief Randy Gust

Department personnel along with Kevin Hanson are leaving Monday Feb. 13th for Clintonville, WI to inspect the Seagrave truck and will return late Tuesday night. I want to thank the Council again for their support in funding this truck purchase.

Library, Charlotte Helgeson

To date with East Grand Forks Library the Team has completed the following for the investigative work:

- Thermal Scans have been completed
- Additional roof penetrations are completed
- Mechanical Investigation is complete
- Braun Intertec Roof Assessment report is being finalized this week.
- Team recommendations for repairs have been selected and will be presented on 2-14-12 at 10:30 a.m.

The following will be part of the presentation:

1. KA, Braun, & McFarland
2. Our Assessment Report
3. PowerPoint Presentation
4. Discussion of the findings and the next steps that are required for the project

AGENDA ITEMS:

1. Mark Froemke, local leader of the Bakery, Confectionary, Tobacco, and Grain Millers (BCTGM) Local 167 would like to address the City Council regarding the ongoing labor dispute at the American Crystal Sugar Plant in East Grand Forks.
2. The City Engineer will present the proposed assessment roll for 15th Street NE along with an option to include 2nd Ave NE. Per Council policy, 15th Street would be assessed at 30 percent to property owners as a state aid road. 2nd Avenue NE is not a state aid road. Therefore, it would be assessed at 100 percent unless Council opts to amend the current policy. Property owners on 2nd Avenue NE have not petitioned for road improvements.
3. The City Engineer will present the bid tabulations for the proposed Industrial Park infrastructure expansion project for 13th Avenue NE. Overall, bids were lower than the engineer's estimates. The City has obtained state and federal funding for about 75 percent of the total project.
4. The City Planner will discuss possible City ward redistricting maps with an included recommendation. Generally, the northwest and southeast (Point) areas of the City grew the fastest from 2000-2010. Therefore, the City must realign ward boundaries with population totals. Wards 2, 3, 4 will likely grow in geographical size whereas Wards 1 and 5 will shrink somewhat to reflect their larger populations. The City must decide on final boundaries within 60 days from the final state redistricting approval. The state process is currently in the court system.
5. The City Planner will also present the final report of the Northwest Corridor Study. The study generally looked at the intersections of 5th Avenue NW and Highway 2 along with the intersection of 17th Street NW/River Road NW/12th Avenue NW. The final recommendations from the study committee include to keep the opening intersections of 5th Avenue NW and Highway 2 in the long range plan, but to not complete any signalization work until it is warranted by state and federal guidelines. The final report

also calls for 17th/River Road/12th to be realigned so that it more closely resembles a traditional cross intersection with 90-degree turns.

6. The Interim Public Works Director will present bids for a 13-foot slope mower for maintaining the city levees. The 2012 budget includes \$110,000 for this purchase in the City's Central Equipment Fund to be repaid with storm water funds over 10 years.
7. I will request approval to reclassify and fill a vacant position in the Administration Office as an Administrative Assistant. I will also discuss some realignment of job duties in the office to reflect the vacancy and job reclassification.
8. Council Member Pokrzywinski will update the Council on the Library Board activities.