

WEEKLY MEMO

Date: February 24, 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:

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

March 13, 2012 – 5:00 pm – Work Session – Training Room

March 20, 2012 – 5:00 pm – Council Meeting – Council Chambers

March 27, 2012 – 5:00 pm – Work Session – Training Room

WEEKLY UPDATE:

Ward Redistricting

The City Planner has finalized the proposed ward redistricting maps for public distribution. The City will disburse proposed ward boundaries with next month's Water and Light utility bills. The City will also have a dedicated web page with the redistricting information. The publication will also include information on a public hearing scheduled at the regular Council meeting of April 3 during which the Council is expected to finalize the new ward boundaries. The Council must redistrict every 10 years in conjunction with the federal Census in order to adjust for population changes. Generally, the City's population in Wards 1 and 5 resulted in smaller geographic boundaries to those wards while Wards 2, 3, and 4 increased slightly in size.

Public Works Director

The Civil Service Commission held the first interviews of the Public Works semi-finalists on Thursday morning. The Commission named four finalists to me. Chief Gust, Karla Anderson and I interviewed the four finalists on Thursday and Friday. I expect background and reference checks to consume approximately 7-10 days, after which I will forward a final recommendation to the City Council for approval.

Legislative

The state legislature continues to discuss several property tax relief bills as discussed in this week's *Cities Bulletin* from the League of Minnesota Cities (<http://www.lmc.org/page/1/cities-bulletin-newsletter.jsp>). Most of the bills focus on property tax relief to commercial and industrial properties. Some of the bills seek to increase the Property Tax Refund (PTR) program that targets homeowner's with high property tax bills relative to personal income. Generally, cities are not inherently opposed to tax relief for these purposes. There are some concerns that should be addressed. First, the Legislature should identify funding sources to for the tax relief provisions that do not increase the burdens particularly to Greater Minnesota. There is a general consensus among Greater Minnesota communities that these bills disproportionately benefit suburban communities with higher tax bases. Overall, the Coalition of Greater Minnesota Cities

continues to advocate for increasing funding to Local Government Aid (LGA) as the most efficient and direct method to stabilize property taxes particularly in Greater Minnesota.

Most know that the statewide redistricting boundaries were released this week. As expected, District 1B that contains East Grand Forks grew somewhat in geographic size. Statewide, population growth continues to focus on the suburbs and the metropolitan area. This will likely create greater challenges for rural Minnesota communities in the state legislature in future sessions.

Swimming Pool Kickoff

The City Engineer, the Parks and Recreation Superintendent, and I met with the design consultant to begin the formal design process for the approved swimming pool renovation. The meeting focused on options related to aesthetics and ADA compliance. The project remains on track for a design completion of May and a proposed bid opening in June.

DEPARTMENT REPORTS:

Police Department, Chief Mike Hedlund

EGFPD Officers Conduct In-Service Training

The officers of the East Grand Forks Police Department conducted re-certification training on the Taser this week. The Taser, an electronic control device, is one of the best tools for law enforcement that has come about in many years. Officers undergo annual training on the device to ensure that they know how to properly and effectively use it. All EGFPD Employees also underwent training on how to perform CPR and use AED's (Automatic External Defibrillators). The combination of using CPR and AED's has resulted in numerous lives being saved, including several here in EGF. Each EGFPD officer has an AED in their squad whenever they are working.

Winter is back!

The snowy weather that we have received this week, and the colder temperatures that are forecast for at least the next week, are a reminder that winter is not over yet. The EGFPD asks that the public help city crews get our streets cleaned by not parking on the roads during snow emergencies or on the designated street maintenance days. For further information please go to the City website at www.egf.mn The slushy snow results in wet roads even after they have been cleared and cooler temps may result in slippery roads so please drive safely!

Parks and Recreation, Dave Aker

1. I sent the LaFave Park drawings so you have a chance to look at them before the March 13 meetings, if you have any questions call me.
2. The outdoor rinks are closed until we can get them safe for skating; the slush did a number on them.
3. Teams advancing to Regions include the Bantam A VFW team, Bantam Eagles team, Girls 12U and Girls 14U.
4. The furnace in the BLC Arena should be fixed by Thursday, the motor in the furnace quit working.
5. The sidewalks and the trails have been cleared off and ready for use.

Fire Department, Chief Randy Gust

The trip to Wisconsin proved to be very successful. We found the truck to be in excellent shape with no apparent mechanical problems. Assistant Chief Jeff Anderson has been the liaison with the Bridgeton Fire Department and has been able to make sure that all listed equipment is accounted for. I want to thank him for his hard work in the purchase of this truck. We hope to have the truck in our possession in the near future.

AGENDA ITEMS:

1. The City Engineer will present a *possible* option for reconstruction of 17th Street Northeast. The project has been identified as a possible target for the Cities 2014 Federal Subtarget funding allocation of approximately \$750,000. The Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) recently informed the city that there is a chance that the state may be able to advance funds early for this project, among others. If so, the Council will have two decisions. First, the Council must choose whether or not to formally amend its State Transportation Improvement Plan (STIP) to replace the 5th Avenue NW intersection project with the 17th Street NW intersection as its 2014 subtarget project. Second, the City must decide whether or not to advance the funds in 2012 should that option be available from the state. I will provide potential funding options to the City Council on Tuesday.
2. The City Engineer will present a proposal to formally begin implementation of the ICON Pavement Management software system. ICON is a database that is designed to provide pavement condition indexes to assist in the planning of street constructions and replacements. The 2012 Capital Improvements Plan budget allocates \$50,000 to begin implementation.
3. The Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) will update the City Council on its recommendations to amend the Long Range Transportation Plan as it relates to Transit operations. The primary outcome of the MPO's studies and hearing is to improve the transit routes adherence to the published schedules by eliminating some stops.
4. The Police Chief will present a quotation to upgrade its records management software. The 2012 budget approves \$10,000 for the purchase, and the quotation is less than that amount.
5. Council Member DeMers will present a petition from residents along Greenway Boulevard and 13th Street SE to add paving to those streets via the Special Assessment process. Greenway Boulevard is designated as a state aid street. The current City policy calls for property owners to be assessed at 100 percent for new construction regardless of whether or not the street is designated for state aid. The petition appears to have at least the required 35 percent of property owners to necessitate a public hearing on the project. Staff will present potential funding options for the project if the City Council chooses to proceed.
6. Council Member DeMers will update the City Council on activities of the Planning Commission.

