

WEEKLY MEMO

Date: March 30, 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:

April 3, 2012 – 5:00 pm – Council Meeting – Council Chambers

April 10, 2012 – 5:00 pm – Work Session – Training Room

April 17, 2012 – 5:00 pm – Council Meeting – Council Chambers

April 24, 2012 – 5:00 pm – Work Session – Training Room

WEEKLY UPDATE:

Library roof

The Library board reviewed cost estimates to repair the long-standing library roof leaking issue. The costs and alternatives vary based on the final project scope. The Library board requested that consultant prepare a final estimate that includes roof repair for the meeting room only. The larger, primary roof would not be altered in the option preferred by the board. The board will present its preferred option to the Council on the work session of April 10.

Swimming Pool Design

The Swimming Pool design work group met on Tuesday for its 30-percent design meeting. The plans are actually about 50 percent completed at this time. Updated cost estimates are not yet available. The work group will hold 60-percent and 90-percent design review meetings in the coming weeks. The City Council will review the swimming pool design in May in advance of bid advertisement. Construction slated to begin in late August with a 2013 completion date.

Administration Assistant

The Civil Service Commission vetted candidates last week for the vacant Administrative Assistant position in the Administration and Finance office. Administration and Finance staff interviewed finalist this week. Staff is currently conducting final background checks. The City Council should have a final recommendation at the regular meeting of April 17.

American Crystal Sugar update

Mayor Stauss and I met this week with staff from American Crystal Sugar. The primary purpose of the meeting was for the company to provide its regular update to the City regarding odor remediation and other environmental processes. We also discussed briefly City utility rates and the ongoing labor dispute between the company and the labor union.

Legislative Update

The legislature continues to scramble as deadlines and conference committees approach. The House Tax Bill passed on largely a party line vote. The bill contains several items previously

discussed including freeze of Local Government Aid (LGA) at 2012 levels. It also contains phased-in business tax relief over several years and requirements of local governments to make public information on line-item budgets. The House version does not contain levy limits. A conference committee will convene soon to reconcile differences between the House and Senate versions. According to the League of Minnesota Cities, influential democratic leaders claim that Governor Dayton will not sign any version of the two bills currently under consideration.

The legislature is also advancing Voter ID bills, bills to allow the sale and use of fireworks, and heightened restrictions on the sale of synthetic drugs. Finally, the Senate passed a Legacy funding bill by unanimous vote that removes a 25-percent local match requirement for projects in Greater Minnesota. The House version does not remove the match requirement despite the fact that a local match is not required for projects in the metropolitan area. Greater Minnesota advocates will lobby in the conference committee for a removal of the match requirement.

DEPARTMENT REPORTS:

Police Department, Chief Mike Hedlund

EGFPD Training

The Federal Communications Commission has issued a mandate that requires two way radios to be converted to narrow banding by January 1, 2013. Essentially this allows more radio channels to be used within the same radio spectrum. As radio traffic becomes more and more common this important step allows for a more efficient use of the radio systems for all users. The East Grand Forks Police Department has Sgt. Michelle Manias and Dispatcher Julie Deziel attending training on this function and changeover this week in Mahnomon, MN.

EGFPD Officer Scheduled to Complete Training

Officer Alex Schilke, the most recent EGFPD hire has entered the final phase of his Field Training Program and will complete his training in early April. The Field Training Program is designed so that new officers have the opportunity to learn from more experienced officers and slowly take on more and more of the responsibility on the calls they cover. Officers spend time with a different training officer on each of the department's four patrol shifts. The final phase of the process is called "shadowing" and the training officer is dressed in plain clothes and allows the trainee to complete all tasks by themselves (unless there is a situation that arises that requires the training officer to step in for legal or safety reasons). The program exposes the new officers to the many different aspects of law enforcement work and helps to ensure that they are fully prepared by the time they are working independently.

Fire Department, Chief Randy Gust

The Aerial is now lettered and radio installed. We are in the process of training all of our members in the operation of truck. We are able to use the vehicle now and it will respond as needed. Our plan is to have it at City Hall prior to either a work session or council meeting for viewing by members of council and staff.

As you know there was not much of a flood event this year but we did have two flood meeting's with staff prior to the water rise in order to be prepared in case of something unexpected and to have Mr. Stordahl at public works get used to his role in the command structure.

Water and Light Department, Dan Boyce

Following the outage at Park substation on Thursday, March 15, 2012, there have been a few inquiries from customers about damage to electrical equipment at their home or business which became apparent after the power was restored.

The Water and Light insurance with the League of Minnesota Cities Insurance Trust Fund does not cover damage of this sort, since it was not caused by anything we did or failed to do. Our crew had done an Infrared camera inspection of the Park substation within two weeks prior of the substation outage and no hot spots were evident.

In the outage at Park substation, two voltage regulators and some associated equipment failed catastrophically. This took out two of three phases on that circuit as well as a high side fuse on the Xcel transformer feeding the station. Water and Light crews switched the load being fed from Park substation onto circuits from Central substation and Sugar Hills substation to restore service as promptly as possible. Xcel was called and they sent a crew over to check their transformer and replace the fuse. The high side transformer was temporarily switched out of service to de-energize the substation.

The Water and Light crews went into the low side of the substation to check over our equipment, determine the extent of the damage, and make such repairs as were possible. Clean up and repairs continued through the afternoon and were completed by early afternoon the following day. The substation was re-energized about 1:30 PM. Load was switched back on to Park substation to feed circuits 1,3 and 6. That process was completed by shortly after 3 PM. Circuit 4 was left off with that load currently being fed from Central substation.

Our response to the calls from customers who had damage to electrical equipment at their residence or business has been to recommend that they file a claim with their homeowner's insurance.

AGENDA ITEMS:

The City Council will hold a public hearing to adopt the final proposed ward boundaries based on the 2010 Census. The only change from the previous proposal is that the Ward 2 polling location will remain at City Hall. A previous proposal called for a combined polling place of Wards 1 and 2 at the Senior Center.

The City Council will consider a revised Intergovernmental Agreement with Huntsville Township to construct 14th Avenue SE. The revised agreement as proposed from the Township caps the township contribution at no more than 10 percent of current estimates. The City would bear any cost increases from the current estimate, although the current estimate includes a 10-percent contingency. The agreement restricts annexation proceedings for at least 15 years. And, the agreement does not contain provisions for maintenance.

The City Council will also schedule a public hearing for April 17 to discuss the proposed special assessments for property owners affected by the proposed 14th Avenue SE project.