

WEEKLY MEMO

Date: August 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:

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

September 4, 2012 – 5:00 pm – Council Meeting – Council Chambers

September 11, 2012 – 5:00 pm – Work Session – Training Room

September 18, 2012 – 5:00 pm – Council Meeting – Council Chambers

WEEKLY UPDATE:

Administration Update

Administration and Finance has been rolling with the punches in light of more staffing challenges. Megan Nelson has taken on additional challenges and responsibilities in the City Clerk functions and has vastly exceeded all possible expectations. Terry Knudson continues to read and react to the changes by taking on any duties that come her way. Karla Anderson and I have been working with the city's financial consultant, Springsted Inc., on a potential bond issue to finance two equipment purchases (fire truck and motor grader) and street projects that the City Council approved earlier this year. Interest rates continue at near record lows. And, I have been busy providing recommendations for next week's Council meeting and preparing the Preliminary 2013 Budget.

Health Insurance update

Terry Knudson and I met with the City's health insurance consultant, Justin Kroeger of Flexible Benefits Consulting, this week to hear an update on the City's experience rating. Thus far, 2012 has been a much healthier year for our group. We hope that translates into tempered health insurance increases. Nonetheless, we still expect a renewal that still could climb into the double digits. We also heard about many of the changes pending in 2014 as a result of the federal Affordable Care Act. The City will have to explore several new options to group health care as many of the ACA's significant changes take effect in 2014.

Police auction

As Chief Hedlund mentions below, the Police Department currently is conducting its first online auction for seized vehicles. Thus far, there has been much interest in the auction with some vehicles receiving over 100 bids. We expect activity to increase as the auction nears its end this Monday, August 27.

DEPARTMENT REPORTS:

Police Department, Chief Mike Hedlund

EGFPD Seized/Forfeited Vehicle Auction

The East Grand Forks Police Department is having an auction of vehicles that have been seized through drug investigations or DWI arrests. The vehicles are available for viewing in the East Grand Forks Police Department parking lot. Bidding for this auction is only possible online. Interested persons should go to www.govdeals.com for more information and to bid on any of the vehicles. The auction ends at various times on Monday August 27, 2012.

EGFPD Hosts "Fill the Squad" Event

The EGFPD, in cooperation with East Grand Forks Social Services, is hosting a "Fill the Squad" event. Officer April Hansen is coordinating this event in which citizens are being asked to donate school supplies that will be given to local school children from families with financial needs. Interested persons are asked to stop by the EGFPD on August 24-26 between 8:00 AM and 5:00 PM with any donations. The items needed include: new backpacks, Kleenex, hand sanitizer, disinfectant wipes, glue, glue sticks, pencils, pens, colored pencils, erasers, 24 count boxes of crayons, markers, highlighters, notebooks, folders, scissors, rulers and calculators.

Parks and Recreation Department, Dave Aker

- 1) This Saturday, August 25, there is Archery in the Park for ages 8 and above in Sherlock Park. Come and learn archery from experts from 1:00 - 3:00 pm, children age 8 - 14 need to be accompanied by an adult.
- 2) The cooling fans (condensers) have been removed from the Civic Center and the new condensers are in place.
- 3) The boards at the Civic Center are down and packed. Thank you to the Blue Line Club for helping. The boards have been sold to LuVerne, Mn for \$15,000 and they will come next week and pick them up.
- 4) The pool is closed for the year. We had 10,217 people use the pool this year. That is with the pool being closed the first part of the year (June 8 is when we started) and with the FREE swim.
- 5) Garry has been busy with new tile in the VFW Arena and is almost finished.

Public Works, Jason Stordahl

Minn-Dak Asphalt has been awarded the contract to overlay a portion of the south lane of 5th St. NE, between 3rd Ave. SE and 5th Ave. SE. They were also awarded (earlier in the summer) three overlay projects on Bygland Rd. SE. One of which is to mill and overlay the coulee area. They hope to start on this project next week.

Reminder: The EGF Green Site is for disposal of recycled materials to include: plastic, glass, aluminum, cardboard, grass clippings, leaves, and branches. Please do not dispose of household garbage, or other non recyclable materials.

AGENDA ITEMS:

This work session will have several big topics to discuss highlighted by the City building inspections program, the swimming pool, and the 2013 Preliminary Budget.

The Finance Director will discuss the 2011 Comprehensive Audit and Financial Report (CAFR). Overall, most funds including the General Fund, saw increases in overall fund balance in 2011 despite funding cuts from the state. There were only two management recommendations from the auditing firm.

The City Engineer and the Parks and Recreation Director will present a recommendation to proceed with a new boat ramp in the LaFave Park (Catfish Days) area on the Red River. The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) will pay for 100 percent of the construction cost for the project. Construction includes not only a new ramp but also parking facilities and landscaping. The City also can choose whether it wishes to use the City Engineer or DNR services. The City Engineer proposes design and construction management for a total of \$37,000. The project could begin in 2013. The City can also choose to allow DNR to procure engineering services. DNR would then pay for all engineering and construction management. But, the project would not begin until either 2014 or 2015. The DNR has not provided a firm timeline for construction using its resources. The project would be constructed as their resources allow.

The Public Works Director will present gravel and sand bids. The City advertised for the supply and received just one bid.

The Police Chief will present the annual request to the City Council to participate in the state's Toward Zero Deaths (TZD) initiative, formerly known as "Safe and Sober."

The City Administrator and the City Attorney will present a proposed amendment to an agricultural farm lease with RJ Zavoral and Sons for beet by-product disposal on city-owned land near the city's waste water treatment facility. The City has an existing lease for 30 acres north of the site that runs through next year. A proposed amendment includes an option for an additional 50 acres to the east of the facility at the same per acre rate. The City received \$3000 last year from the lease on land that has little other practical use. This option could provide up to an additional \$5000. The company has also volunteered to remove overgrown trees on the site that Public Works has been hoping to remove.

The City Administrator will present a proposed feasibility study for the swimming pool. The Council has explored several options over the course of the last year including renovation and redesign. I believe the City can use the services of an expert in aquatics design to facilitate the Council and the public to the right solution for East Grand Forks. I recommend a proposal from Ballard King and Associates to conduct a feasibility study of pool options. If approved, the feasibility study likely will take us into next year. That could delay construction for another year. Ultimately, the feasibility study process can guide the City to a solution that nearly everyone can support.

The City Administrator will discuss options for future Buildings Inspections services in light of the Building Official's recent retirement announcement. I present four possible options for building inspections office including contracting, consolidating with the City Planning office, consolidating with the Fire Department, and no change. I recommend that the City consider contracting the service on a temporary basis as the City works toward one of the other three options as a final solution.

The City Administrator will present the 2013 Preliminary Budget. The City Council received a preview of the Proposed General Fund budget at the recent City Council meeting. The General Fund proposes no levy or fee increases for 2013 resulting in a levy that has been level for three years. Local Government Aid (LGA) is also flat for the fourth straight year, which is reduced from years prior. The City Council will want to discuss whether or not it wishes to propose a modest levy increase to provide flexibility as it discusses several large projects on the horizon including the swimming pool. The Council can reduce the levy in its final budget. But, the final levy cannot be higher than the preliminary levy. The preliminary levy must be adopted no later than September 15. The final levy and budget must be adopted before the end of the year, but not before November 25. As time allows, we will also discuss the special revenue funds. Special revenue funds are not beholden to the September 15 deadline.

Council Member Tweten will update the Council on the Senior Citizens Center board. Council Members Leigh and Pokrzywinski will update the Council on the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO).