

# WEEKLY MEMO

**Date:** December 14, 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:**

*January 8, 2012 – 5:00 PM – Organizational Meeting – Council Chambers*

## **WEEKLY UPDATE:**

### **Labor Negotiations**

The City met this week with AFSCME Council 65, which represents the City's Department Heads. We now have met with all of the groups at least once. Negotiations will not resume until after the new year.

### **Greater Minnesota Economic Development Partnership**

Tim Flaherty and Mike Miller from the Coalition of Greater Minnesota Cities met with several cities representatives this week as well as the Chamber of Commerce and EDHA. The primary topic was the Greater Minnesota Economic Development Partnership. The partnership is a new organization dedicated exclusively to economic development outside of the metropolitan area. In the last session, most of the major economic development initiatives, such as the Vikings stadium, the St. Paul Saints Stadium, and Target Center upgrades were geared to metro areas. This legislative session will have more metropolitan representation than ever due to redistricting. Therefore, it is more important than ever for the outstate areas to unite under a common banner. The partnership will focus on three primary objectives in the upcoming legislative session: the internship tax credit, the new employee job training tax credit, and the expansion of the Greater Minnesota Angel Investment Credit. Two of these were passed in 2012. But, the Governor vetoed the final tax bill last year due to reasons unrelated to the economic development

The Grand Forks-East Grand Forks Chamber of Commerce and the Economic Development and Housing Authority (EDHA) have agreed to participate in the partnership. I have attached to this memo two of their informational memos from the Partnership.

### **Health Insurance**

Administration met this week from the City's Health Insurance consultant. Currently, we are seeing health insurance claims stabilize after several years of substantial increases. While rates will increase

13.5 percent next year, we hope to see a turnaround in future years as claims continue to stabilize and even decrease.

## **DEPARTMENT REPORTS:**

**Public Works, Jason Stordahl**

### **Friendly reminder**

Since we've had very little snow up until this point this year, I wanted to send out this friendly reminder of the local ordinances that pertain to snow and snow removal. I have also included the Street Maintenance Parking Schedule.

#### *Ice and Snow on Public Sidewalks*

Every owner, occupant, or agent of any lot or parcel of land in the City of East Grand Forks to follow the City's ordinance on § 96.05 ICE AND SNOW ON PUBLIC SIDEWALKS.

All snow and ice remaining upon public sidewalks is declared to constitute a public nuisance and shall be abated by the owner or tenant of the abutting private property within 12 hours after such snow or ice has ceased to be deposited.

#### *Placing snow or ice in the roadway.*

It is a misdemeanor for any person, not acting under a specific contract with the city or Without special permission from the City Superintendent of Streets, to remove snow or ice from private property and place the same in any roadway. § 96.09 OBSTRUCTIONS IN STREET

### **Street Maintenance Parking**

***Commercial Routes*** – No Parking

2:00 AM – 7:00 AM Monday-Friday

**NO PARKING**

***Residential Routes***

**7:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.**

Mondays	District 4 - Point area/ East of Bygland Road SE
Tuesdays	District 5 - Point area/ West of Bygland Road SE
Wednesdays	District 2 - North end/ South of 17 <sup>th</sup> St NW
Thursdays	District 1- North end/ North of 17 <sup>th</sup> St NW
Fridays	District 3- East end/ Central Areas/ Downtown lots

***Snow Emergency*** – A snow emergency automatically goes into effect when 2 inches or more of snow has fallen until the streets are cleaned.

*Under a snow emergency, no parking on any city street is allowed until that street has been cleared to its full width. Violators will be ticketed and towed.*

## **Streets**

Public works staff has been working hard to remove the newly fallen snow and ice. You may have noticed some new faces in our motor graders due to staffing leave issues. We have been rotating in some of our truck drivers to fill operator positions.

## **Wastewater**

Last week we placed an order for equipment and materials needed to treat the odor surrounding lift one. We have already received some of the materials. When the rest of our supplies come in we will install, and monitor. I will continue to give updates through weekly memos.

## **Planning, Nancy Ellis**

Every year, the City has the ability to reduce their liability insurance by approximately \$4000 by completing a short webinar on Land Use Basics. Some council members and planning commissioners have completed this webinar course in the past and we have been fortunate to receive the discount. It is time to complete the course again to receive the reduction. I am aware that you might have done this before and it shows you were successful. You must, however, complete this each year to receive the reduction.

You should have received an email with a registration user name and password from the League of Minnesota Cities and a link to the webinar course. Please complete the Land Use Basics webinar by **December 31st** to insure the \$4000 discount. The online course/webinar takes approximately 25-40 minutes and you must complete the survey at the end of the course. When you complete, please notify my office. We must have a quorum of Council members; the Planning Commission chairman (he has completed this webinar); a quorum of commission members and the City Planner (I have completed this webinar). Please call me if you need any help with the answers to the questions on the survey. Thanks so much for your help.

## **Fire Department, Gary Larson**

The Fire Department received a call from Senator Franken's office yesterday to announce we are the recipients of another SAFER Grant. If accepted by the council this will pay wages and benefits for a new hire firefighter for 2 years. It has a value to the City of East Grand Forks of about \$102,000 dollars. Great news!

Our new Paid On Call Firefighters have been working hard at completing their entry level classes. They are scheduled to complete their last class on January 10, which will put them through the initial 60 hours required to be in an IDLH atmosphere. They are a hard working bunch.

We had a fire at a shop/warehouse in the 10 hundred block of 8<sup>th</sup> Ave NE on Sunday, December 9th. The fire was through the roof on arrival. We made a quick hit on the seat of the fire and were able save the building. We had 27 Firefighters on scene. We did have trouble with hose line freezing due to the weather. It looks to be an oil burner that caused the fire.

We had sent a bill to Hallock for the use of Tower 1. We did this at their recommendation. The elevator that had the fire sent a check back for \$600 with a thank you for the help and assistance.

### **Parks and Recreation, Dave Aker**

The outdoor rinks should be ready next week, they have put down quite a few layers and it has a few more to go.

## **Agenda Items**

Item 5 under Old Business is the 2<sup>nd</sup> Reading to adopt an ordinance annexing new property into the City. The property is owned by RJ Zavoral and Sons, Inc., and it is located on 10<sup>th</sup> Street NE. The City previously approved a development agreement for the installation of utilities with the company. And, the final plat approval of the property is the next item under New Business.

Item 6 considers final plat for the aforementioned property to be annexed, owned by RJ Zavoral and Sons, Inc.

Item 7 considers a resolution to support a fee increase for Minnesota Deputy Registrars in local communities. These local offices provide services such as drivers licenses, title registrations, and DNR licenses. The offices are not subsidized by the state. Therefore, the organization supporting deputy registrars requests that they be authorized to increase fees commensurate with the services provided on behalf of the state. The last increase was in 2005.

Item 8 considers adopting the updated Classification and Compensation Plan. The City received the updated plan in October. The plan maintains a similar pay scale to the current plan while it updates the job classifications for changes in market conditions, new job classifications, and changes to existing job classifications. Overall, the new compensation plan does not contain a cost of living adjustment. The plan update contains step adjustments that equate to an average increase of 1.86 percent citywide.

Item 9 considers increasing by 10 percent the City's contribution to health insurance. The City has increased its contribution by four percent for the last several years. Employees' net take-home pay has decreased in the last several years due to the rapidly rising cost of health insurance. The proposed increase in employer contribution to 10 percent reduces, but does not eliminate, the impact of health insurance to employees.