

# WEEKLY MEMO

**Date:** January 11, 2013

**To:** Mayor Lynn Stauss. Council President Craig Buckalew, Vice President Greg Leigh, Council Members Clarence Vetter, Ron Vonasek, Henry Tweten, Mark Olstad, and Chad Grassel

**From:** Scott Huizenga

**RE:** Weekly Update

## **UPCOMING MEETINGS:**

*January 15, 2013 – 5:00 PM – Work Session – Training Room*

*January 22, 2013 – 5:00 PM – Regular Meeting – Council Chambers*

*January 29, 2013 – 5:00 PM – Work Session – Training Room*

*February 5, 2013 – 5:00 PM – Regular Meeting – Council Chambers*

## **WEEKLY UPDATE:**

### **Red River State Recreational Area Campground**

The Red River State Recreational Area Campground (RRSRA) experienced record gross revenue in 2012 with nearly \$240,000. East Grand Forks will net over \$130,000 in net revenue for its operation of the facility. In total, the current agreement to operate the campground has resulted in approximately \$40,000 in additional revenue and savings to the City compare to the previous agreement. The campground popularity continues to grow. And, 2012's record year provides great emphasis on one of the City's top legislative priorities for 2013 to expand the RRSRA campground.

### **Building Inspections Annual Report**

The Building Inspections office has posted its [2012 Construction Record](#) report. East Grand Forks saw its building stabilize overall in 2012 with increases in a couple of key areas. Overall, there were exactly 300 total permits issued in 2012. This is down slightly from 315 issued in 2011. However, the focus shifted in 2012 from repair permits to new building. East Grand Forks saw 21 new single-family housing permits in 2012, compared with just four in 2011. There was one new commercial permit issues in 2012, but it was noteworthy. The Minnesota Heights development is permitted to add over \$5.1 million in property valuation to the City.

### **League Legislative Priorities**

The League of Minnesota Cities [released its top legislative priorities](#) as approved by the League's board of directors. Among the priorities are city revenue diversification, data privacy for citizen e-mail, economic development, local government aid, and street improvement districts.

## **DEPARTMENT REPORTS:**

### **Public Works Department**

We have noticed recently that many residents haven't been bring their recycling/refuse containers in off the curb within 24 hours of collection. It makes it very tough to remove snow without damaging containers. So this is just a friendly reminder to follow the City Ordinance and remove containers within designated time.

#### *Ordinance 51.03 Container Required; Placement*

It shall be the responsibility of the subscriber to place the container no earlier than 6:00p.m. of the afternoon preceding the collection day, and to remove the container within 24 hours of collection of the garbage and refuse.

## **Agenda Items**

The City Council will tackle a heavy agenda at its first work session of the year after easing into the new year up to this point.

1. The Rollin' on the River Inline Skating Marathon organization will request a special event for Friday, August 23. The request includes closing and using the boardwalk area parking lot (River Street) for music and other entertainment following the marathon, which runs during the day. The organization intends to work with the East Grand Forks downtown businesses on for promotional activities.
2. The City Engineer will present plans and specification for 2013 City Project No. 2 –Water main and force main improvements. The project started as the 2013 Water and Light water main project. Staff recommends adding a waste water force main extension connecting the swimming pool area to the Master Lift Station. The extension was originally planned for 2014. The City Engineer and public works staff recommend advancing the waste water funds in order to alleviate insistent odor control issues along 10<sup>th</sup> Ave NE. Therefore, staff recommends adding the project to the existing Water and Light project to maximize contractor bid opportunities.
3. The Public Works Director will present quotations to repair storm water lift station number 16.
4. The Public Works Director will update the City Council on its waste water treatment activities following an annual inspection from the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) last fall. The annual inspection was a routine procedure that issues that are, for most part, relatively easy to fix. MPCA identified one long-term issue to address: the waste water treatment project. MPCA is requesting three progress reports from the City in the next two months that will detail the status of the repair items as well as the Council direction for long-term treatment alternatives. The Public Works Director will lead the discussion regarding the Council's priorities for long-term treatment.

5. I will discuss the City's 2013 Legislative Priorities as proposed after consulting Mayor Stauss. Four proposed priorities include: Red River State Recreational Area (RRSRA) expansion, a Northwest Regional Wellness and Community Center, Local Government Aid (LGA), and long-term funding for proposed Waste Water Phase II treatment and repairs.
6. Council Member Tweten will discuss a quotation to install a drinking fountain and water bottle filler in the boys' locker room of the Civic Center Arena. The locker room is leased and maintained by the East Grand Forks School District.
7. Council Member Tweten will propose to reduce the interest rate on future special assessments from 4.5 percent to approximately 0.25 percent above general obligation bonding rates, which would currently equate to approximately 2.5 percent. As proposed the rate would apply to 2012 Assessment Job No. 4 – Riverview 10<sup>th</sup> Addition – and any future projects. Council Member Tweten also proposes to eliminate the three percent Administrative fee that is factored into special assessments. The Administrative Fee was not included in the agenda packet materials.
8. The Fire Chief will recommend the city accept the 2013 SAFER (Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response) grant award. The SAFER grant reimburses a full-time fire fighter wages and benefits for two full years. The City must agree not to reduce staffing during the grant period. The City also received a SAFER grant in 2011-2012.
9. Chief Hedlund will discuss a Polk County proposal to install a radar speed sign on a county road as it approaches the City. Polk County has recommended installation on County Road 19 near Highway 220. The Police Chief and the City Planner recommend County Highway 72 leading into Bygland Road. The City responsible would be responsible for half of the costs for installation, approximately \$2500.
10. The Police Chief will discuss a quotation to install new in-car video systems in the City's patrol vehicles to replace the dated systems currently in place. The purchase is budgeted in the 2013 Capital Improvements Plan (CIP).
11. I will discuss a proposal to eliminate a retiree health benefit that is not available to current employees. The City currently allows retired employees with a spouse and no dependents to enroll as two single policies rather than as a family. Two single policies are less expensive than a family plan to the retiree. However, the City does not allow active employees without dependents to enroll as single policies. Therefore, the City has, by default, subsidized retiree health plans at the expense of active employees. I recommend ending this practice effective July 1, 2013.
12. The Parks and Recreation Superintendent will discuss a private event (wedding reception) at the Civic Center this spring. The event requires City Council approval because alcohol would be served by a private party. The City requires additional insurance and security for private events with alcohol serving and/or consumption.



