

WEEKLY MEMO

Date: February 7, 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:

Meeting with the Governor – February 12, 2013 – 1:30 PM – Council Chambers

Work Session – February 12, 2013 – 5:00 PM Training Room

Regular Council Meeting – February 19, 2013 – 5:00 PM – Council Chambers

Meeting with the MPCA – February 21, 2013 – 9:30 AM – Training Room

Intergovernmental Retreat put on by The Chamber – February 22, 2013 – 11:30 AM-4:00 PM – Boardwalk Bar & Grill

Work Session – February 26, 2013 – 5:00 PM – Training Room

Waste Water Public Forum – March 4, 2013 – 7:00 PM – Council Chambers

WEEKLY UPDATE:

Governor Mark Dayton to visit East Grand Forks

Governor Mark Dayton will visit East Grand Forks on Tuesday afternoon. The Governor and selected staff persons will meet with Mayor and City Council members. County and school district officials also will attend. The Governor later will meet separately with Northland College staff.

Greater Minnesota Day at the Capitol

Mayor Stauss, Council President Buckalew, Council Member Tweten, and I attended Greater Minnesota Day at the Capitol on Wednesday. We spoke with several key legislators including:

- Speaker of the House Paul Thissen (DFL – Minneapolis)
- Senate Majority Leader Tom Bakk (DFL – Cook)
- Senate Tax Chair Rod Skoe (DFL – Clearbrook)
- Senate Capital Investment Chair LeRoy Stumpf (DFL – Plummer)
- Senator Kent Eken (DFL – Twin Valley)
- House Education Finance Chair Representative Marquart (DFL – Dilworth)
- Representative Kiel (R – Crookston)
- Representative Fabian (R- Roseau)

The City delegation focused on the future of Local Government Aid (LGA), the proposed expansion of the Red River State Recreational Area (RRSRA) campground, and the proposed Waste Water Phase II project in East Grand Forks. Mayor Stauss and Council Member Tweten also spoke with Governor Mark Dayton, who will be in East Grand Forks on Tuesday. Governor Dayton addressed the Coalition of Greater Minnesota Cities (CGMC) at the CGMC's luncheon on Wednesday. Dayton indicated that he is open to alternatives to his proposed LGA formula.

Green Choices Challenge

East Grand Forks finished the Green Choices Challenge 24th out of 50 communities for recycling reporting. While the online *reporting* of recycling was lower than we anticipated during the challenge, we know that the community's overall practice of recycling remains very high. Recycling is not only good for the environment, but it is also very easy to do and it saves the taxpayer funds by keeping waste out of the landfill, for which we pay to dispose of all solid waste materials.

Waste Water Treatment

The Public Works Director contacted the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) following Monday's Waste Water Public Forum to establish a direct meeting with MPCA staff. MPCA staff has agreed to discuss waste water treatment with the Council via webinar or conference call. This meeting is scheduled for February 21st in the City Hall Training Room. We will update the Council as we have additional information. Please forward any questions that you for the MPCA to the Public Works Director so that MPCA can arrange for the appropriate staff contacts to be present during the meeting.

DEPARTMENT REPORTS:

Parks and Recreation, Dave Aker

Bids for Park and Recreation

I have been busy with a couple of different bids for our Department. The first bid is for the Senior Center handicap bathroom, we had bids on the plumbing and construction of the bathroom. The second thing we are getting bids on is the Blue Line Arena. We are getting the front doors fixed and the door by the zamboni room. The electrical door was broken and the exit door's handle was broken when the arena was vandalized.

Exit lights at the Civic Center

We are going to put new exit lights in the Civic Center; they should be put in before Sections.

Tournaments for boys and girls

Sections start Thursday night at the higher seed team for Girls High School. The girls finished third in the Section. They defeated Lake of the Woods at home in the quarterfinals on Thursday, February 7. Crookston hosted Park Rapids also on Thursday, with the winner playing Warroad at East Grand Forks

on Monday, February 11, at 6:00 PM. EGF plays TRF on Monday at East Grand Forks at 8:00 PM. The Section Championship is at East Grand Forks on Thursday, February 14. The Boys Section starts on Thursday, February 21, at the higher seeds, with the winners advancing to East Grand Forks on Saturday, February 23, for the semi-finals. The Section Championship is Thursday, February 28, at the Civic Center in East Grand Forks. The championship game is being televised by WDAZ, the first time the Section 8 Championship game was been televised.

Monday, February 11, we have our District 16 seeding meeting at Red Lake Falls. The Districts will be February 15 – 17, with Regions two weeks later.

Police Department, Chief Mike Hedlund

EGFPD Conducts Firearms Training

The EGFPD is currently conducting its annual cold weather/night firearms training. Because there is no way to predict when officers might wind up facing a situation that requires them to use deadly force the department conducts annual training where the officers have to deal with the dual problems of cold weather and the low light of night time conditions. Officers are better able to deal with real life situations when they have trained in conditions similar to those they might actually face. Cold weather is a fact of life in this part of the country and the officers need to be prepared to deal with the weather through proper clothing that will hopefully keep them warm while still allowing them to perform their duties – including shooting accurately and effectively if necessary. Low light conditions are a problem that officers need to deal with on a daily basis and poor visibility adds a level of danger and stress to almost any police situation.

Agenda Items

1. Andy Magness, of with Extreme North Dakota Racing and Ground Up Adventures, will address the Council and proposed events for the beginning of the 2013 season in Grand Forks and East Grand Forks.
2. The Finance Director will readdress the issue of excess liability insurance with the League of Minnesota Cities Insurance Trust (LMCIT). The City Council previously authorized excess liability, which is essentially an umbrella insurance policy, of \$ 1 million. Previously, the City has waived statutory minimums on liability coverage but has *not* purchased excess liability.
3. The City Engineer will discuss the scheduled 2013 downtown project by the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) to repair various curb cuts along Business Highway 2 (4th Street NW and DeMers Avenue). No city match is required for the project. The project will impact the downtown for a brief period of time. The sidewalks will change slightly for compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). And, the state will repair the intersection of the 2nd Street and DeMers Avenue.
4. The City Engineer will discuss alternatives and priorities for improvements to the police building. There is \$400,000.00 that was budgeted for these projects.

5. The City Attorney will present a proposed updated background check ordinance relating to city employment.
6. The Police Chief will present a proposed order for a new Police SUV as well as declaring surplus a retired Crown Victoria patrol vehicle. The SUV purchase is included in the 2013 Budget.
7. The Police Chief also will request declaring surplus seized and forfeited firearms at the Police Department.
8. The Police Chief will request authorization to recruit and fill a patrol officer to fill a current vacancy.
9. The Parks and Recreation Director will request approval to authorize a wedding reception at the Civic Center. The City Council must approve the request to allow alcohol consumption at the City Center. The City requires General Liability Insurance by the host plus liquor liability service to be provided by private server. The City also requires at least two security guards for the event.
10. The Parks and Recreation Director also will request to fill a vacant Parks Maintenance Worker position. The position has been vacant for about two years. If approved, the Parks Maintenance Worker would respond to routine maintenance requests from City Hall and the Library in addition to general parks maintenance work. The position was approved in the 2013 Budget.
11. The EDHA Director will present a request to continue the New Residential Tax Rebate program through 2015. The program provides for a two-year tax abatement on new single-family residences in the City. One can find other current incentives available including the New Construction Incentive Program and the Construction Landscaping Grant on the [EDHA web page](#).
12. The Executive Assistant will propose the City's participation in the state Fire Escrow Account. Participation would allow the City to seek reimbursement for any condemnation or clean up charges on a fire damaged property if the City was forced to intervene. In the event that the City had to remove debris from a damaged property, the City would have a lien on the property owner's insurance policy via the state program.