

**APPROVED
WORK SESSION
MINUTES
OF THE
EAST GRAND FORKS
CITY COUNCIL
Tuesday, November 24, 2009 – 5:00 PM**

CALL TO ORDER

The Work Session of the East Grand Forks City Council for November 24, 2009 was called to order by Council President Dick Grassel at 5:00 P.M.

CALL OF ROLL

On a Call of Roll the following members of the East Grand Forks City Council were present: Mayor Lynn Stauss (5:39 pm), Council President Dick Grassel, Council Vice President Henry Tweten, Council Members Marc DeMers, Craig Buckalew (5:03 pm), Wayne Gregoire, Mike Pokrzywinski, and Greg Leigh.

STAFF PRESENT

Scott Huizenga, City Administrator; Michelle French, Executive Assistant; Ron Galstad, City Attorney; John Wachter, Public Works Superintendent; Jerry Lucke, Finance Director; Randy Gust, Fire Chief; Mike Hedlund, Police Chief; Dan Boyce, Water & Light Manager; Dave Aker, Parks & Rec Superintendent; Jim Richter, EDHA Director; and Charlotte Helgeson, Library Director.

DETERMINATION OF A QUORUM

1. Fire Department Pick-Up - Randy Gust

Chief Gust requested to replace the 1986 Chevy pickup, owned by the DNR, which is used for grass fires. This pickup is not equipped with the proper equipment. Chief Gust stated that \$35,000 is budgeted. The state bid came in at \$22,674.04 from Elk River Ford, Inc. for a Ford F250 W2B, this price does not include the light bar and striping. This pickup will be used as a utility vehicle. The Fire Department will be contacting the DNR to see if the 1986 Chevy could be used in other departments and they will also eliminate the current squad car that Chief Gust is using. Chief Gust will then be driving the suburban which is also used as a backup rescue unit. The 1986 Chevy will be replaced with the 1994 Ford. Chief Gust stated that vehicles will be shifted around in the department to utilize all vehicles. This item will be referred to City Council for action.

2. Effluent Valve – John Wachter

Mr. Wachter announced that the effluent valve used on the wastewater pond is beyond repair and needs to be replaced. He stated that the valve would take 6-8 weeks to get and he would like to excavate now. This item will be referred to City Council for action.

3. Police Department Probationary Period – Mike Hedlund

Chief Hedlund was contacted by New Hope and only two cities in the State of Minnesota fall under the Civil Service Code. Chief Hedlund stated that six month probation is not enough time considering they have four months of training. He would like to see the probation period changed to one year.

Council Member Buckalew asked if the union contracts would be affected. Chief Hedlund stated that he talked to the union and they agree with the change. Council Member DeMers would like to see a letter of support from LELS. Chief Gust stated that he would like to see this for all of Public Safety. He contacted the union and is waiting to find out if there is a conflict.

Council Member DeMers would like to discuss if the City wants to eliminate the Civil Service. Mr. Galstad stated that in order to eliminate the Civil Service, this must go to a vote of the people at the next election. Mr. Lindquist recommended revising the entire Civil Service book.

4. 2010 Budget – Scott Huizenga & Jerry Lucke

Mr. Huizenga requested City Council to approve the final budget with a 4.6% levy increase. Mr. Lucke discussed the revolving infrastructure transfer for street improvements. Council Member Leigh asked what it would take to get down to a 0% increase and what would it do to the following years budget. Mr. Huizenga stated that it is possible if we cut more capital and not fix streets. Council Member DeMers inquired about the Capital Improvement Projects such as repairing the tennis court floor and the Police SUV. Council Member DeMers appreciates the fee increases but he would like justification. Council Member Pokrzywinski stated that the City needs to figure out a way to improve the pool and look at assessing for the downtown parking.

5. Other

Council President Grassel stated that the December 1st meeting will be at 7 p.m.

Council President Grassel informed City Council about the Coalition of Greater Minnesota Cities lawsuit against the Governor. He stated that the Coalition is looking for five communities to support the lawsuit for \$10,000. Mayor Stauss stated that he is opposed because he feels that the legislatures should be handling it. Mr. Huizenga stated that this would be a \$10,000 cost to the City with potential retaliation, and the unallotment could continue for many years. Mr. Huizenga stated that on the other hand, if you put in \$10,000 you could receive \$500,000.

Council Member Pokrzywinski stated that he would support the lawsuit but he does not support the number of cities involved or the \$10,000. Why not get 10 cities for \$5,000. Council President Grassel also supports the lawsuit because the City has lost too much money already. Mr. Galstad asked if this is why we belong to the Coalition in the first place.

ADJOURN

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCIL MEMBER LEIGH, SECONDED BY COUNCIL MEMBER POKRZYWINSKI, TO ADJOURN THE NOVEMBER 24, 2009 WORK SESSION OF THE EAST GRAND FORKS, MINNESOTA CITY COUNCIL AT 6:24 P.M.

Voting Aye: Buckalew, Tweten, Gregoire, Leigh, Pokrzywinski, DeMers, and Grassel.

Voting Nay: None.

Scott Huizenga, City Administrator/Clerk-Treasurer