

# WEEKLY MEMO

**Date:** March 8, 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:**

*Waste Water Public Forum – March 11, 2013 – 7:00 PM – Council Chambers*

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

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

*Legislative Conference – March 21, 2013 – St. Paul – Crown Plaza*

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

*Regular Council Meeting – April 2, 2013 – 5:00 PM – Council Chambers*

## **WEEKLY UPDATE:**

### **Legislative Update**

#### *Red River State Recreational Area*

Senator Stumpf and Representative Kiel each have introduced legislation in the Senate and House, respectively, to provide funding for the City's proposed campground expansion. The Red River State Recreational Area (RRSRA) has 25 spaces without full utility connections. Most of the RRSRA's customer base is recreational vehicles, which require utilities. The City believes the proposed state funding of \$250,000 is a "win-win" for the City and the State. Enhanced revenue from the project provides a return on investment of less than five years. The funding would be a partial match of the city's local investment of \$400,000 in 2009 for a similar expansion. The Senate bill is SF 850; the House bill is HF 1227.

#### *Border cities*

A bipartisan effort in both chambers would also re-enact border city credits for business expansion in the cities of East Grand Forks, Moorhead, Ortonville, Dilworth, and Breckenridge. HF 515 and SF 389 would allocate \$2 million to the border city enterprise zone and development zone programs. Eligible businesses would be able to obtain tax credits based on job creation and capital investment. It has been several years since the cities have received a reallocation of enterprise zone credits. The sponsors of the bills are Representatives Lien (DFL-Moorhead), Kiel (R-Crookston), Davids (R-Preston), Marquart (DFL-Dilworth), and McNamar (DFL-Elbow Lake) and Senator Eken (DFL-Twin Valley).

## **Minnesota Cities cut spending**

Minnesota Cities held the line on property taxes for 2011 according to the Office of the State Auditor's latest report, [Minnesota City Finances: 2011 Revenues, Expenditures, and Debt](#). Cities spend four percent less in 2011 than in 2010 while maintaining tax rates to account for cuts to state aid programs including Local Government Aid (LGA). The 2011 final figures reflect a long term trend that shows Minnesota cities have reduced expenditures by 20 percent, adjusted for inflation, in the last 10 years. Most of the spending cuts have come from reduced debt service and reduced capital investment. East Grand Forks property tax rate increased from 2010-2011, was held flat from 2011-2012, and was decreased for 2013.

## **Agenda Supplements**

The Council packets contain two supplemental items. The first item is an updated present value analysis and an estimated waste water mechanical plant construction summary. The second is a proposal from Social Science Research Institute (SSRI) to conduct telephone survey related to pool options.

**Reminder:** The Waste Water Public Forum was rescheduled to this Monday, March 11 at 7:00 pm in the Council Chambers.

## **DEPARTMENT REPORTS:**

### **Library, Charlotte Helgeson**

The EGF Campbell Library closed early on Monday, March 4 due to the weather and rescheduled the Northern Exposure Juried Photography Exhibit Opening Reception for Wednesday at 6:30. The photography awards include 3 for color and 3 for black and white given from the entry fees; Arts & Crafts Choice, Mayor's Choice and Friends Choice. During the same evening, the poetry contest winners will be announced. The winners will be listed in the Exponent for those unable to attend the opening. The poetry awards are sponsored by Glamorous Reruns.

Snow is being removed from the valleys on the Library's roof. Braun Intertec and Kraus Anderson have advised the Library to remove snow as a regular maintenance item in hopes that ice dams will not form in the valleys as the sun brightens and the evenings freeze.

The damage from the January vandalism has been repaired by Sterling Carpet One, Keith's Security and Spare Husband. The bills will be turned over to insurance.

Monday, March 11 at 6:30 will be the first in a series of Agassiz Audubon Birding Series presented by Heidi Hughes.

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

## **OUTDOOR RINKS ARE CLOSING**

The outdoor rinks are open until March 10, after that the rinks will not be maintained anymore and the warming houses will not be open.

### **CIVIC CENTER ROOF**

When we received all the snow an old problem came back to haunt us. The roof over the lobby of the Civic Center began to leak and the ice worked its way down the side wall. There was leaking at the side doors and the girls bathroom upstairs.

### **HOCKEY TOURNAMENT RESULTS**

Congratulations to the High School team for winning Section 8 and for winning the opening game at the State Tournament. We have two other teams that advance to Minnesota State Tournament on March 15 – 17, they are the Bantam A and Pee Wee A. The Bantam A won the Region Tournament with a 2-1 victory over Thief River Falls. The opening round they beat North Shore 4-1 and then beat Eveleth/Gilbert/ME in the semi-finals 6-1. The Pee Wee A took second at their Regional Tournament dropping the championship game to Virginia 7-4. They had close games all the way through the Tournament starting with at 4-3 (OT) victory with Greenway, followed by a 3-2 win over Duluth Denfeld and a 3-2 (2OT) victory over Warroad to advance to the State Tournament.

The Bantam A team plays at Buffalo on Friday at 6:00 pm against Detroit Lakes. The Pee Wee A will be at Fairbault Ice Arena on Friday at 4:00 pm and they play Minneapolis.

Other scores in Region Tournaments:

Bantam B lost to Grand Rapids 5-1; beat Crookston 3-0; and lost to Bemidji Blue 4-2.

Pee Wee B lost to host Silver Bay 6-4 and to Grand Rapids 5-4.

Girls 14U lost to Alexandria 1-0 and Warroad 2-1.

Girls 12U lost to Brainerd 5-2; beat Grand Rapids 4-3 (OT); and lost to Duluth Breakers 11-1.

### **Police Department, Chief Mike Hedlund**

#### **Snowmobile Safety**

We are starting to have spells of warmer weather which results in melting snow and the subsequent runoff, much of which eventually makes its way to the Red and Red Lake Rivers. River ice can never be considered truly safe because the changing currents can result in very thin ice only a matter of a few feet from ice that would be considered safe. The runoff from the melting snow increases the river flow, changing the currents even more and can also create weak spots where the water flows into the river. People who like to snowmobile on the river should be very cautious and consider staying off the rivers at this time of year.

### **Agenda Items:**

- The Parks and Recreation Superintendent will provide a quotation through the state cooperative purchasing venture to purchase new playground equipment for O'Leary Park and Stauss Park.

The 2013 Budget allocates \$30,000 for playground equipment in the Capital Improvements Plan (CIP).

- The Parks and Recreation Superintendent also will provide a quotation to install an ADA-compliant restroom in the Senior Center. The proposed funding source is the Building Maintenance Fund.
- The Parks and Recreation Director will request to begin recruitment for a planned Arena Manager vacancy. The current Arena Manager at the VFW Arena will retire at the end of April.
- The Public Works Director will propose a revised snow emergency ordinance and a snow removal policy. The ordinance would allow the City Administrator and the Public Works Director to declare a snow emergency as needed. The Snow Removal policy details several methods and best practices for snow removal within the Public Works Department. It would also identify four inches of snow accumulation as a general guide – but not a requirement – for implementation of a snow emergency.
- The Public Works Director will present an update on the waste water treatment project for the final progress report to the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA). The Public Works Director will present a recommendation following the waste water public forum scheduled for Monday evening. The final report is due March 22.
- The City Administrator and the Parks and Recreation Superintendent will provide an update to the pool feasibility study. The work session report primarily will cover responses to the questions the City Council posed at the last meeting. The questions include possible cost alternatives for a pool liner in the current pool, the feasibility of an indoor pool, the notification requirements for a possible general obligation bond issue, and a proposed public survey regarding community opinion toward a new pool facility.
- The City Planner will propose to renew the agreement with Indepth Inspections for building inspections services.