

**APPROVED
WORK SESSION
MINUTES
OF THE
EAST GRAND FORKS
CITY COUNCIL
Tuesday, December 8, 2009 – 5:00 PM**

CALL TO ORDER

The Work Session of the East Grand Forks City Council for December 8, 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, Council President Dick Grassel, Council Vice President Henry Tweten, Council Members Marc DeMers, Wayne Gregoire (5:02 pm), 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; Nancy Ellis, Planning & Zoning; Earl Haugen, Planning & Zoning; Mike Hedlund, Police Chief; Dave Aker, Parks & Rec Superintendent; Jim Richter, EDHA Director; and Charlotte Helgeson, Library Director.

DETERMINATION OF A QUORUM

1. Quiet Zone Report – Earl Haugen/Nancy Ellis

Ms Ellis announced that the MPO Executive Board directed staff to prepare a report on the feasibility of establishing a Railroad Quiet Zone for East Grand Forks and Grand Forks. The railroad crossings to be considered are 3rd St. NW, Central Ave, 2nd Ave. NW, and 4th Ave. NE in East Grand Forks.

Ms Ellis stated that the 4th Ave. NE railroad crossing near Crystal Sugar already has gates and lights but the entrance road to the plant enters and exits between the gates. In order for the crossing to be considered the road must be realigned or the gates must be moved. She stated that this crossing is not feasible at this time.

Ms Ellis informed City Council that there is an opportunity to first improve the safety of all intersection/railroad crossings through gates and lights. The second opportunity is to create a quiet zone for the downtown and central residential area of East Grand Forks. Funds have been programmed to upgrade one crossing in 2011 with the possibility of upgrading either Central Avenue or 3rd St. NW if the other crossing is closed has been offered. Ms Ellis stated that MnDot and BNSF offered to pay close to 100% of the costs if the City would agree to close the crossing not receiving the programmed improvement. Currently, the local cost is 10% of the lights

and gate costs and 100% cost of the necessary road improvements if only gates or lights are added with no closure.

Ms Ellis stated that the most feasible option for improved safety and establishment of the quiet zone is the closing of the Central Avenue crossing since 3rd St. NW has four times the daily traffic that Central Avenue has.

Ms Ellis stated that the second option would be to keep each crossing open. Gates and lights would be added to Central Avenue and the City would either need to fund 100% of the costs associated with placing gates and lights at 3rd St. NW estimated at \$236,000 or wait until the state programs funding for the crossing.

Council President Grassel stated that he does not want to see any railroad crossings closed. Council Member Leigh asked if there had been an accident at any one of the crossings in the past 40 years. Ms Ellis, Chief Gust, and Chief Hedlund stated that there have been no accidents to their knowledge. Discussion occurred regarding property values, safety concerns, and funding. This item will be referred to City Council for action.

2. Wastewater Operator 1 – John Wachter

Mr. Wachter announced that Mr. Kotrba is retiring as Wastewater Operator 1 on December 31, 2009 and would like to advertise in house and replace the vacant position if one is hired within. This item will be referred to City Council for action.

3. Unmarked Vehicles for Investigations – Mike Hedlund

Chief Hedlund would like approval to purchase two unmarked vehicles for Detective Lieutenant Rod Hajicek and Detective Sergeant Chris Olson. The City would trade in the two current vehicles, 2003 Ford Taurus and a 2003 Mercury Sable. He stated that he received 3 bids with the lowest bid from Dahlstrom Motors in Oslo, MN for \$22,000 plus the trade-in of the current vehicles. This item will be referred to City Council for action.

4. Other

Mr. Huizenga explained the difference between tax levy and tax rate. He discussed how the 8.3% tax levy would affect the property taxes. Mr. Huizenga stated that the change in levy doesn't mean the same in the tax rate. For Fiscal Year 2010, an 8.3% levy increase would equate to a 3.2% tax rate increase.

ADJOURN

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCIL MEMBER TWETEN, SECONDED BY COUNCIL MEMBER LEIGH, TO ADJOURN THE DECEMBER 8, 2009 WORK SESSION OF THE EAST GRAND FORKS, MINNESOTA CITY COUNCIL AT 6:07 P.M.

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

Voting Nay: None.

Scott Huizenga, City Administrator/Clerk-Treasurer