

WEEKLY MEMO

Date: March 15, 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:

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:

MnDOT Funding

Staff from the City and the MPO participated in a webinar this week discussing Corridor Investment Management Strategy (CIMS) funding. The Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) is soliciting proposals for \$30 million in funding in CIMS funding that is targeted to quality of life, environmental health, or economic competitiveness improvements. Applications can include enhancements to multimodal access (e.g. bike lanes, sidewalks, bus routes), streetscaping, access and intersection improvements, and several other enhancement activities. Applications require support from the MPO and the MnDOT district office. City staff is investigating the Central Avenue (Highway 220) corridor as a potential target. Applications are due by April 30.

Code Red

Polk County is implementing its Code Red system that would provide e-mail and mobile alerts to citizens on emergency conditions throughout the County. East Grand Forks public safety and administration staff will begin training on the new system next week. Also, East Grand Forks residents currently can receive alerts on city news and announcements currently at the City web site by clicking on the “[Notify Me](#)” link on the city’s home page at www.egf.mn. Updates also can include emergency announcements, including snow emergencies, flood updates, city calendar information, and much more customized to each user’s preferences.

Labor Update

The City met with one labor group this week. Two meetings are scheduled for next week.

Legislative Update

Committee deadline on the Ides of March

Friday, March 15, is the deadline for bills to be passed out of each committee in the House and the Senate. Any bills not passed out after Friday will require special action on the floor of each house. The committee deadlines do not apply to the committees of Capital Investment (bonding), Finance, Taxes, or Rules and Administration.

Governor's revised budget

Governor Mark Dayton submitted a revised budget this week that reflects the updated budget projections. Based on an upturn in the state and national economies, the current biennium projects a slight surplus, whereas the projected deficit for the 2014-2015 biennium was cut by almost half. Dayton dropped all of his proposals to reduce the statewide sales tax rate and on plans to expand the sales tax base to include clothing and many services that are not taxed. Dayton maintained his proposal to create a 4th-tier of income tax for incomes above \$150,000 for singles and \$250,000 for couples. Finally, the revised budget drops a previous proposal to provide a \$500 tax credit for homesteads. Dayton's overall budget is an increase of approximately \$1 billion largely geared toward education and economic development.

Local Government Aid

Dayton's plan also includes an \$80 million increase to Local Government Aid (LGA). Total LGA funding would remain far below 2002 funding levels even with the proposed increase. The Governor's staff, the Coalition of Greater Minnesota Cities (CGMC), and metro cities representatives have worked on a revised funding formula that would more equitably distribute funding increases to Greater Minnesota than under the previous proposal from the Governor. East Grand Forks would receive an increase of approximately \$39,000 in 2014. This is approximately \$125,000 more than the LGA funding East Grand Forks would receive if the current law remained in effect. I have not seen projections for years beyond 2014 as of the time of this memo.

DEPARTMENT REPORTS:

Fire Department, Chief Gary Larson

This month for training the Fire Department trained on calling a mayday when in trouble. The officers trained on handling a mayday, the communications, and the rescue team operations. This was done in full gear with people trapped and the rescue team had to go in with blacked out masks and perform a rescue. People who were not involved in each scenario were training on self contained breathing apparatus.

The State Fire Marshal's office came in on 3-5-13 and put on a full day class on Image Trend software for reporting our calls. It also covers modules for inspections, staffing, and maintenance. This will replace our Firehouse software that we now pay for. This software is paid for by the State Fire Marshal's office and will be recommended to all fire departments.

We experienced trouble with two warning sirens on the monthly test. They have been operating fine until now. The Middle School and DSC siren did not go off. We will have a repairman in to diagnose.

We held an operational flood meeting on Friday the 8th to go over equipment and to see if everything is in good shape. There are a couple small things being taken care of, but everything and everybody are ready. The 50% range for East Grand Forks is 40 feet as of last Thursday's update.

The Fire Department responded to a trailer house fire on Tuesday morning at 3:14 am. The person had woken up to the smell of smoke and left the trailer. Smoke detectors were not working. We made entrance into the trailer to extinguish the fire, but had to back out because the floor was on fire under the trailer. We were able to put the fire out and were back in service by 8 A.M. The trailer is a total loss and residents had no insurance. We were able to get a dog out, but the cat was a fatality.

We had five people attend a Skywarn class in Crookston to be storm spotters.

Our new hire, Cody Wasylow, has been working out very well. He will be on days for 2 weeks to give him a chance to get familiar with equipment and some addressing.

We are at 170 calls for the year so far.

Public Works, Jason Stordahl

PUBLIC WORKS

Streets- Staff is continuing to widen streets and clean snow from banks around intersections. Our rental motor grader and second Snow Blower are up and running again, although we are still experiencing issues with the snow blower.

Stormwater- We are preparing for the spring thaw and whatever river levels that may bring. Myself, staff, and our City Engineers met with the Army Corps to discuss their annual inspection findings from last summer.

Wastewater- The City Administrator, Finance Director, City Engineers, and I conducted our second Wastewater informational meeting this past Monday. It was an open meeting to discuss options for a facility upgrade. One new option presented was to build our own mechanical plant.

Wastewater staff have been performing their regular scheduled duties, as well as attending to a leaky valve issue at our wastewater ponds.

Police Department, Chief Mike Hedlund

Prescription Drug Abuse

Prescription drugs are perhaps the number one drug problem in the Red River Valley at this time. There have been a number of burglaries throughout the region where the thieves were targeting prescription medications. Unfortunately people who are addicted to these drugs often times steal from their own family and friends to support their habits. If you have prescription medications in your home, especially pain relievers and other narcotic type drugs, it is best to keep them locked in a secure container. If you have expired medications, or prescription medications you no longer need you can bring them to your

local law enforcement agency for proper disposal. The Pine to Prairie Drug Task Force recently approved the purchase of three “drug take back” boxes that will be placed in the lobbies of the East Grand Forks and Crookston Police Departments as well as in Fosston. These boxes will allow medications to be dropped off anonymously. Help us fight this serious problem by turning in expired and unneeded medications and by keeping current prescription in a secure location!

Parks and Recreation, Dave Aker

Barons Tournament

The Barons Tournament is being played at all three rinks in East Grand Forks. This is an adult league tournament and they have scheduled Grand Forks and East Grand Forks arenas.

Park and Recreation

We are making plans for Arbor Day; right now it looks like May 3 is the probable date. It depends on the fourth grade class and if they can make that date. We are planning on having it in La Fave Park, part of the donation from US Bank of \$2,000 for trees and bushes to beautify the area. The plan is to plant six trees along the bike path and then on a Saturday have a huge planting of trees, about 90 of them.