

WEEKLY MEMO

Date: April 19, 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:

Work Session – April 23, 2013 – 5:00 PM – Training Room

Waste Water Public Forum – May 6, 2013 – 7:00 PM – Council Chambers

Regular Council Meeting – May 7, 2013 – 5:00 PM – Council Chambers

Work Session – May 14, 2013 – 5:00 PM Training Room

Regular Council Meeting – May 21, 2013 – 5:00 PM – Council Chambers

WEEKLY UPDATE:

Waste Water Treatment Update

City staff and consultants met with Cal Tininenko last Thursday to discuss alternative options for waste water treatment. Mayor Stauss received a letter dated April 10 from the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) that approved the City's adopted time line for waste water treatment improvements. The City Council adopted the time line via Resolution No. 13-03-32. The timeline includes selecting a treatment option by September 2014 and beginning construction in 2016. Finally, the City Council will discuss at next week's work session a proposed resolution from the City of Moorhead that opposes pending phosphorus regulation proposed by MPCA. The next waste water public forum is scheduled for Monday, May 6, at 7:00 pm.

Labor Update

The Water and Light Teamsters voted to approve a new, one-year agreement with the City. Of the five city bargaining units, two have approved or tentatively agreed to new contracts. We believe the other three are close to agreement. There is one negotiation session scheduled for next week.

Bond Refinancing

The Finance Director and I met with the City's bond consultant last week to discuss more refinancing opportunities at current favorable interest rates. We plan to propose refinancing three previous bond issues, including the 23rd Street project and two earlier special assessment bonds from 2004 and 2006. The proposed sale will be presented to the City Council on May 14. The bond sale date is proposed for mid-June.

Legislative Update

The current House tax bill includes \$80 million in increased Local Government Aid funding and annual inflationary adjustments. Previous versions in the House included \$60 million in increased funding. The Coalition of Greater Minnesota Cities and the League of Minnesota Cities had not endorsed the stripped down version. The Senate tax bill, which has not been formally released, is said to include revised public hearing process for local budgets that would replace the so-called Truth in Taxation process. The process would include two hearings – one for the preliminary levy and one for the final levy. As amendment, the first hearing would be required no later than September 30. The date was amended after many cities complained that September 1 was too early in the budget process.

The House and Senate transportation bills include authorization for local street improvement districts after a contentious committee process. The amended versions would not allow tax exempt parcels, such as churches, schools, and other non-profits, from to be included in street improvement districts.

The House passed new water fee legislation that would fund several environmental programs related to water monitoring and compliance. The fees would be passed to local water users at a rate of \$15 per day per million gallons. This translates to approximately \$6500 per year for East Grand Forks, which is less than \$2 per year for each water user in the City.

DEPARTMENT REPORTS:

Police Department, Chief Mike Hedlund

EGFPD Training

This week the East Grand Forks Police Department, in conjunction with Polk County Social Services, conducted in-service training on handling the placement of children who have been involved in domestic violence related situations. These are always very sensitive situations where law enforcement needs to be looking out for the best interests of the children involved. This training is part of a series of in-service training courses that the department conducts each year. The majority of the courses are related to use of force and defensive tactics including firearms training, Taser training, active shooter training and hands on defensive tactics. Other topics include basic first aid and CPR/AED. These courses provide our officers with the basic core training areas that are required by the state. Other training is provided through online courses that cover a variety of topics including various legal issues and hazardous materials. Officers also attend more advanced training on other law enforcement topics at locations around our region.

Public Works, Jason Stordahl

PUBLIC WORKS

Streets- Staff worked the first part of this week cleaning up snow from our last snow event. Due to the melting snow some alleys have standing water in them. We are trying to address these issues the best we can. But with frost coming out and wet conditions, we are recommending to residents that they minimize their travel in alleys until they start to dry up.

Stormwater- We have been busy opening frozen catch basins and making sure that streets are draining properly. As with most springs, we find problems with stormwater pipes shifting, breaking, collapsing, etc.

Parks and Recreation, Dave Aker

New Park Maintenance Worker

The Parks and Recreation Department would like to welcome Chad Swendseid to our Parks and Recreation Department. Chad will start April 29 and is ready for his new adventure in life. He is married and has three girls and is a graduate of Grand Forks Central, welcome Chad.

Arbor Day has been moved

Arbor Day was been moved back to May 16 at La Fave Park. We are planting six trees by the bike path which the children from Sacred Heart and Riverside Christian School will help with. The following day we are having a big Arbor Day with people from US Bank that donated 100 trees to be planted between the river and the bike path. We are asking anyone that wants to come and help please bring a shovel and some energy!

Pool pump

We have the pool pump in the pit and the motor is suppose to go on sometime next week.

Handicap Bathroom

The handicap bathroom over at the Senior Center is almost done. So far it looks good!

Library, Charlotte Helgeson

The Campbell Library has celebrated National Library Week with the Spring Art Exhibit opening on Monday, free-cards for non-resident students on Wednesday evening (25 new patrons) and author William Durbin (co-sponsored by NW MN Arts Council) working with 6th graders on Thursday. A Volunteer Recognition Gathering will take place Friday evening and Fancy Nancy Tea Parties (co-sponsored by the Red Hat Cha-Cha-Chas) will be held on Saturday. The activities have welcomed patrons who have never been in the library before this week.

The State of America's Libraries Report came out on April 16, 2013. The report can be read at <http://www.ala.org/news/state-americas-libraries-report-2013>.

Agenda Items:

1. The Parks and Recreation Superintendent will present an updated fee schedule recommendation for Arena Rentals. Previously, the City Council asked staff to review the fee schedule with specific attention to wedding events. The recommendation should include all types of arena rentals including newly-proposed fees for daily sports rentals such as baseball and soccer practice.
2. The Finance Director will present the 1st Quarter Report for 2013.

3. The City Administrator will present a proposed resolution to oppose total phosphorus (TP) regulation in the Red River basin. The City of Moorhead is requesting that basin communities support its efforts to oppose new regulation from the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA). Municipal waste water treatment facilities, such as the city's stabilization pond, contribute just 0.5 percent of all phosphorus into the river. Yet, the MPCA is proposing stringent new regulations on cities while doing nothing to regulate uncontrolled (non-point) discharges from agriculture and other unregulated activities.
4. Council Vice President Leigh will update the City Council on the Senior Citizens board activities.
5. Council Member Tweten will update the City Council on Water and Light Commission activities.