

WEEKLY MEMO

Date: April 26, 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:

Contractors Forum – April 29, 2013 – 6:00 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:

Flood Update

City Crews completed the boardwalk “invisible” flood wall in one day on Thursday. Crews continue to work downtown on the south side of the DeMers Avenue along the Cabela’s parking lot. Emergency Management will monitor the river’s rise this weekend. The City may begin to close some roads this weekend depending on the river height. The Gateway Drive underpass at 4th Street generally is the first road to be closed during high water events.

Labor Update

The City reached a tentative agreement with Law Enforcement Labor Services (LELS) at the last negotiation session on Monday. The City now has tentative agreements with four of the five city bargaining groups for 2013. The City will consider the agreements after the groups formally ratify the tentative agreements.

Police Headquarters

The Police Chief, Police Lieutenant, and I met with the city’s architectural consultant to view plans and renderings for the approved Police Headquarters renovation. The staff consensus is that the rendering looks beautiful. The project will address several structural defects including wall and roof barrier issues. The building will create a distinctive, lasting impression on the city municipal center (City Hall and PD) for decades to come. Council will discuss the plans and specifications at the work session of May 8th; and will formally consider filing the plans and specifications on May 14. Bid award is projected for mid-June.

Legislative Update

The tax bills were the hot items in the legislature this week. The House of Representatives passed its omnibus tax bill on a largely party line vote. The Senate passed its tax bill out of committee. The full Senate is expected to consider the bill on the floor early next week. There are significant differences between the two tax bills that the chambers will have to reconcile in conference committee.

The House version contains several new fees and taxes, including a new top tier for income taxes. For cities, the tax bill includes \$1.5 million for border city credits and \$80 million in additional Local Government Aid (LGA) funding. The LGA funding also includes the mutually-agreed revised formula with annual inflationary adjustments.

The Senate bill to be considered Monday also includes the new LGA formula and an increase of \$80 million. But, it does not include the inflationary adjustments of the House bill. The Senate bill includes a sales tax exemption for cities and counties. According to the [League of Minnesota Cities](#):

The approved (Senate) bill includes a revised property tax savings reporting requirement tied to the city/county sales tax exemption. All cities and counties would be required to submit to the county the amount of their estimated calendar year 2012 actual or estimated sales tax payments to the state. The county would compile this information and add the information for all cities and counties to the annual parcel-specific proposed tax statement mailing. In addition, each city and each county would have to discuss the estimated benefits of the sales tax exemption on their 2014 proposed budgets and fees and other budgetary impacts. The reporting requirement does not include the provision included in the original Senate division report that would have required the commissioner of revenue to recommend reinstating levy limits if at least 75 percent of the sales tax exemption benefits did not result in a reduction in property taxes.

Finally, the Senate bill removes sales tax exemptions on clothing and personal care services such as automobile repair, hair and salon services, tattooing, piercing, and more.

The House and Senate have both advanced street improvement district legislation in close votes. The House version was included in the omnibus tax bill. The House version requires that no property pays more than twice another property. In other words, [according to the League](#), “a business could not pay more than twice a single family home.” The House version also removes tax exempt property from street improvement districts. The Senate version has been laid over in the Senate omnibus transportation bill after surviving previous committee votes. It would allow for 20-year districts, but the authorization to establish street improvement districts would sunset in five years. The Senate version allows street improvement districts only for reconstruction, not new construction. The League has recognized that neither version is “ideal,” but League officials hope to make more progress during the conference committee process.

Garry Hadden Retirement

Garry Hadden, Arena Manager, will mark his final day with the city after over 30 years in public service. The City will hold an open house from 1:00 – 5:00 pm on Tuesday, April 30 in the training room in Garry's honor.

Upcoming Meetings

The Community Development Office will hold a contractors' forum on Monday evening at 6:00 pm to receive input on the building inspections process.

The Council is invited to join Garry Hadden on Tuesday afternoon to celebrate his retirement.

There is no Council meeting on Tuesday with April 30 being the 5th Tuesday of the month.

DEPARTMENT REPORTS:

Parks and Recreation, Dave Aker

Arbor Day

Arbor Day has been moved until May 16 at 12:00 pm near the Louie Murray Bridge on the bike path. The fourth grade class from Sacred Heart and Riverside Christian School will be there to help plant the trees. We have six trees to plant on May 16 and then we are looking at planting 80 more trees courtesy of US Bank.

Blue Line Arena

This is the last weekend of ice at the Blue Line Arena, the Blue Line pays for the arena to keep ice until the 28th of April. They can rent the ice out or use it anyway they what.

Pre-flood preparing

All the things that have to be taken out during the flood is done. Benches have been taken out, signs on the bike trails, signs at the campground and water heaters from the campground. The valves have all been switched over in the campground and Catherine has hired staff.

BIG EVENT

The Big Event, a group from UND, will be held Saturday, April 27 as planned. We will not be able to get to everything we planned but we should be able to hit quite a bit of area. They have over 80 students planned to come and help clean East Grand Forks.

Public Works, Jason Stordahl

Flood: This week staff has been working with the Water and Light Department assembling the downtown floodwalls. They finished assembling the wall between Demers Ave. and Patriotism drive 4/25/2013, and will finish the wall between Demers and 3rd Ave. NW by the end of the day today (4/26/2013).

We've also been organizing and staging detour/road closed signage throughout the city, preparing for this year's flood event.

Stormwater staff has been exercising storm gates and activating stormwater lift stations as the river rises.

Streets: We have started to do some tar patching of the potholes throughout the city. Our street sweeper has been out and about this week, with intentions of operating at full force the first part of next week.