

WEEKLY MEMO

Date: May 10, 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:

Special Council Meeting – May 14, 2013 – 5:00 PM – Training Room

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

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

Work Session – May 28, 2013 – 5:00 PM Training Room

Regular Council Meeting – June 4, 2013 – Council Chambers

WEEKLY UPDATE:

Safe Routes to School not funded – Apr 29

Legislative Update

There was relatively little final action on key legislation items that affect cities. There was plenty of debate, however. The tax conference committee is discussing several items including the question of whether or not to include inflationary adjustments in the new LGA formula. The Senate effectively killed any hope to increase or revise transportation funding. The Senate opted instead for a “lights on” bill that will simply keep existing funding in place. The opposition to a new bill derived primarily from Governor Dayton’s opposition to any new motor fuel taxes. The Legacy committees most likely will retain the existing 20 percent funding designation for Greater Minnesota.

Labor Update

Four of the five labor groups have approved labor agreement language before them. The City Council will consider the final agreements when executed. The agreements generally call for a Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) of 1.5 percent and an overall 10 percent increase to the City’s health insurance contribution in exchange for concessions on leave benefits and the adoption of the updated citywide pay plan. This is the first proposed COLA for the City since 2009. The financial impact to the City, including pay steps, will be presented to the City Council following the final City Council action on the agreements. The 2013 Adopted Budget assumed no increase.

DEPARTMENT REPORTS:

Public Works, Jason Stordahl

Flood: The river level as of 6:45am 5/10/2013 was 33.7 feet, and steadily dropping. We opened the 4th street underpass and Hill street underpass Thursday. There are currently no streets closed due to flooding activity.

Stormwater/Wastewater: Staff has been monitoring river levels and deactivating lifts as necessary.

Streets: Street sweeping continues and we are starting to make good headway cleaning up the past winter debris.

Reminders:

Hazardous Waste and Electronic Drop Off Day is this Saturday, May 11th, from 9am-3pm. Staff has been preparing the drop off site, and other related things for the event.

Spring Clean Up will be next week May 13th-May 17th. Please have all items you wish to have picked up set out by your curbside by 7:00 am on your regularly schedule refuse collection day.

Parks and Recreation, Dave Aker

Arbor Day

Arbor Day is Thursday, May 16 beginning at 12:00 pm at LaFave Park, between the Louie Murray Bridge and the softball field. We are planting six autumn maples along the bike trail. Pat Sweeney is the guest speaker and the fourth grade class from Sacred Heart are the special guests. The plan is to plant 92 trees sometime this spring down in LaFave Park.

Police Department, Chief Mike Hedlund

EGFPD Hires New Officer

The EGFPD recently hired a new police officer, Justin Kitzberger. Justin is a graduate of Mankato State University with a degree in Criminal Justice and is originally from New Ulm but has family in this area. Justin has started his training program and will work on each of the Department's four shifts and in Investigations before he is given his permanent assignment.

Library Director, Charlotte Helgeson

Anita Poss, Program Coordinator, has submitted her resignation effective July 31, 2013. Anita held the position for 22 years at 26 hours per week. She was 2011 Arts Advocate of the Year for Northwest Minnesota and has established the East Grand Forks Campbell Library as a cultural center for our region. Many of the children in our area know her as Miss Anita from story time. Many regional artists have expressed their thanks at being able to display their art work in a public space in many cases for the first time. Throughout the school year, the library holds contests for art and writing at different grade levels along with adult writers and photography contests. Anita's enthusiasm and creativity will be deeply missed at our library.

Based on program attendance and vitality of the library's current programming, the Library Board has decided to change the Program Coordinator position to full time. To keep this within the 2013 budget, the Volunteer Coordinator position will be reduced to 26 hours. To balance staffing, the Board and Director took into consideration not only attendance at activities, but also technical services such as software support, e-lending and our website along with public relations, circulation of materials, open hours and general maintenance of the building. The change will take place September 1, 2013.

Agenda Items:

1. The City Engineer will present plans and specifications for the proposed Police Department Headquarters renovation. If approved, the bid letting will be in mid-June.
2. The Parks and Recreation Superintendent will discuss a proposal to establish a community garden in East Grand Forks.
3. The Library Director will discuss a proposed library reorganization as recommended by the Library Board. The reorganization includes increasing the program coordinator to a full-time position, reducing the volunteer coordinator position to part-time, and increasing the libraries technical resources in staffing and purchases. The proposal was included in the 2013 Adopted Budget.
4. The City Planner will present the City's proposed Title VI Plan for Transit operations. Generally, the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) requires grant recipients to adopt a non-discrimination plan under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act.
5. The Public Works Director will present proposals of current road conditions in anticipation of the summer street maintenance season.
6. The Public Works Director also will provide quotations for summer catch basin repair.
7. The Public Works Director will provide quotation from the state cooperative purchasing venture for a budgeted 72-inch deck mower.
8. Council Member Grassel will update the City Council on the Cemetery Commission proceedings.