

**APPROVED MINUTES
OF THE CITY
COUNCIL WORK SESSION
CITY OF EAST GRAND FORKS
TUESDAY, JULY 08, 2014 – 5:00 PM**

CALL TO ORDER:

The Work Session of the East Grand Forks City Council for July 8, 2014 was called to order by Council Vice-President Greg Leigh 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: Council Vice-President Greg Leigh, Council Members Clarence Vetter, Dale Helms, Henry Tweten, Mark Olstad, and Chad Grassel.

Dave Aker, Parks & Recreation Superintendent; Karla Anderson, Finance Director; Brad Bail, City Engineer; Dan Boyce, Water & Light Manager; Nancy Ellis, City Planner; Ron Galstad, City Attorney; Mike Hedlund, Police Chief; Charlotte Helgeson, Library Director; Gary Larson, Fire Chief; David Murphy, City Administrator/Clerk-Treasurer; Megan Nelson, Executive Assistant; and Jason Stordahl, Public Works Director.

DETERMINATION OF A QUORUM:

The Council Vice-President Determined a Quorum was present.

Council Vice-President Leigh stated that there was going to be an addition to the agenda. He stated that Mr. Klug and Dr. Brian Huschle were in attendance from the tech college and would like to address the council regarding commercial vehicle program. Mr. Murphy apologized that this was not included on the agenda. He explained he had been contacted with Mr. Klug and told him they could address the council at this work session but did not get the information to Ms. Nelson to have it included on the agenda.

Mr. Dan Klug introduced himself and Dr. Brian Huschle to the council. He stated how they are looking for a collaborative effort between the college and community so they can have access to one of the parking lots down town to use for the truck driving program. He then turned it over to Dr. Huschle for more explanation. Dr. Huschle asked the council to look at the map on the back of the handout which showed the parking area they wanted to utilize. Discussion followed about how the college would like to use this parking area 4-5 days a week during the spring, summer, and winter semesters. Dr. Huschle said they would use this course from about 9:00am to 3:00pm during the week. More discussion followed about notifying the businesses that also use that parking area, how other areas have been used but don't always work, and what the process would be so the City would have any liability. Council Vice-President Leigh said with the right paper work this could be moved on to council the next week. Mr. Galstad stated he would need to meet with the college first and this might take some time.

Chief Hedlund announced that there was a benefit for Odney Ellingson going on at the Eagles from 5pm to 9pm this evening. He stated how Mr. Ellingson was a retired police officer that had served the City for almost 30 years and was recently diagnosed with stage four pancreatic cancer.

1. Trail Repair – Dave Aker

Mr. Aker stated he had found three spots that need to be fixed on the trails. He added that he received two quotes for this project from Opp Construction and Minn-Dak. He explained how Minn-Dak is almost \$5,000 cheaper and they would complete a 2 inch overlay about 1530 feet long by 9 feet wide, patchwork on the bike path near River Heights, and fix by the bridge. Council Vice-President Leigh asked where the money for this project was coming from. Mr. Aker stated from the Greenway maintenance under capital. Council Vice-President Leigh asked if this was budgeted for routine maintenance. Mr. Aker said yes. Council member Grassel asked if this could be added to the cemetery project to be included all in one bid. Mr. Murphy said he would defer that question to engineering or Public Works. Mr. Stordahl stated that it could be included with the cemetery project. He stated that it might save a little more to on it since there is more to the project than just the bike trail. Council member Vetter suggested to have it bid as an alternative so they could see if there were savings or not. Mr. Murphy asked if this was urgent or if they could wait to see if it could be added with the other project. Mr. Aker stated this was not urgent and it could wait. Council Vice-President Leigh told Mr. Aker to work with Mr. Stordahl on this and then bring it back to the council.

2. LELS Memorandum of Understanding – David Murphy

Mr. Murphy stated there were two memorandum of understanding for language clarification due to incidents that came up over this last year. He stated the first one has to be with the shift differential that field training officers receive. He explained how there was one situation the field training officer who was not able to be on shift and another police officer, who was not a field training officer, had to train and requested the differential. He stated there was a grievance so this will clarify that only the trained field trained officers will be able to receive the differential.

He explained the other issue came about when City Hall was closed for half of a day due to severe weather and how this affects the non-emergency staff at the police department. He stated that this clarifies they are treated like other non-emergency staff in the City. He said how neither of these changes the intent of the current contract but just clarifies the language so there are not any more misunderstandings.

This item will be referred to a City Council Meeting for action.

3. Lighting at Civic Center – David Murphy

Mr. Murphy explained the Water and Light Department was approached about retrofitting the Civic Center with LED lighting. He added how Ms. Abel had reviewed the project and received a project cost of approximately \$65,000. He explained how the Water and Light Department has proposed to pay half of the cost which would be around \$32,500 and the Blue Line Club said they would pay \$10,000 for this project which would leave the City paying approximately \$22,500. He stated with the estimated energy savings of \$4,000 per year there would a payback to the City in a little over five years. Mr. Murphy said there are still funds available in the building maintenance fund since the mold remediation in the police department was a lot less than expected.

This item will be referred to a City Council Meeting for action.

4. Update on the EDHA – David Murphy

Mr. Murphy explained how there had been another meeting between the City and the Northwest Housing Authority out of Mentor. He said how there were many representatives from Mentor that met with City Staff and reviewed the City's procedures, policies, software system, and walked through the facility. He stated how they have a good understanding of what would be needed if they were to take over the voucher system. Mr. Murphy explained they will be presenting the proposal to their board on July 15th and be asking for authorization to give the proposal to the City. He said they would be looking at three full time people to staff the housing office which might be relocated to the Community Development Office and have the Community Development Office move upstairs and share space with Economic Development.

Mr. Murphy stated how if council accepts the proposal the housing employees would be notified they would be laid off effective September 30th and the group from Mentor would take over October 1st. He then stated the current housing employees would be able to apply for the positions with the Northwest Housing Authority. He added how the salaries with the Mentor group are a little bit less than current salaries but the benefits are better in comparison to the City. He stated the EDA would be kept in house and he would be asking to hire a full time economic development director along with an assistant that would prepare agendas, minute taking, and day-to-day items in the department as well as being cross-trained with Community Development to help provide support for them when needed. Council Vice-President Leigh asked if it was going to be the same Administrative Assistant position that Ms. Ellis was looking to possibly hire for Community Development. Ms. Ellis explained that each department would have their own administrative assistants because she would need someone to process permits, state surcharges, and could also be cross-trained to help with economic development. Mr. Murphy stated that the time line he is looking at if the proposal from the Mentor group is acceptable is having a director in place by October.

Council member Tweten asked if Crookston was currently utilizing these services. Mr. Murphy stated that Crookston still has their own housing authority because there council wanted to keep local control. Council member Tweten said it was his understanding there are over 300 vouchers in East Grand Forks. Mr. Murphy stated there were 317. Council Vice-President Leigh asked how much it will cost to the City if they get rid of housing and converting the offices. Mr. Murphy stated that the City loses money on housing, the EDHA had been self funded since the City stopped subsidizing the department possibly due to the LGA cuts, and ever since the salaries have been taken out of the funds where there was money available. Council Vice-President Leigh asked to have the exact costs for these changes as well as layout of the departments before moving forward. Council member Olstad informed the council that Mr. Murphy is already working on those items. Mr. Murphy added that he is working the on job descriptions, how most of the costs will be for salaries, and how he should have this information to the council by the end of July. Discussion followed about how Mr. Galstad will need to review the by-laws and statutes to see if there are necessary steps to take if the EDA is restructured, how there should be a checks and balances system in place between the council and EDA board, and how clarification of the roles of the City Council and EDHA Board will help both entities.

5. Standard Operating Procedure for City Property – City Council

Council Vice-President Leigh stated that this item had been pulled from the agenda.

6. Boards & Commissions Discussion – Clarence Vetter

Council member Vetter informed the board that about 10 years ago the council eliminated most of the

committees. He stated the council received a list with the remaining committees that are left. He said with all of the changes that are being looked at in the EDHA, he said how now could be a good time to look at the rest of the committees to see if there still is a need for them. He added how everything that goes through the planning commission goes through the City Council. He asked how since it seems there is a duplicate of services if this committee is needed. He stated that he wasn't looking for any action tonight but wanted to open this up for discussion.

Council member Olstad stated that looking at the planning commission, things are done in committee with recommendations are brought forward is how it is set up. He stated that he understands what Council member Vetter is asking or suggesting but if those items come directly to council it will require a lot more work by the council. He said how it was his opinion it would be better for the council to receive recommendations. Council Vice-President Leigh asked for other comments but there wasn't any. He said how council members will have time to think about this and if there are suggestions to send them to Mr. Murphy.

7. Discussion on Auditing Services – Clarence Vetter

Council member Vetter said he asked a year ago he had asked that bids were collected for the completion of the annual audit and with Ms. Anderson just getting started she wanted more time with Brady Martz. He added how when the City asked for proposals for refuse services the City was able to save money. He asked the council to do their due diligence and ask for proposals for auditing services. Council member Tweten commented how Brady Martz has done an excellent job for the City. He added how the council should receive quarterly reports and have the auditors discuss the reports with the council. Council member Vetter said he was not arguing that the City hadn't received good service from Brady Martz. He added that this service had not been bid for a long time. He said he is asking for bids to make sure the City is getting the best bang for the buck.

Council member Tweten said whoever the auditor is they need to bring a quarterly report to a work session so the council can be told if the operations need to change or be tightened up. He said the one thing the community wants is for operations to be tightened up. Council member Olstad said he understands what each of the council members are saying and added that there isn't anything wrong with bidding out this service. Council Vice-President Leigh stated that Council member Vetter makes a good point and the auditing service is no different than other things that the council asks for bids on. Council member Grassel asked if the contract would go year by year or if it would be a three year contract. Council member Vetter said the industry standards were to have a contract from three to five years. Ms. Anderson stated that the contract could include a clause in the case the City does not like the services they are getting.

This item will be referred to a City Council Meeting for action.

8. Greenstep Cities – Dale Helms

Council member Helms explained to the board how he had attended the League Conference and learned about Greenstep Cities. He said that if he understood the presentation correctly it wouldn't cost the City anything to belong. He added how this could be a nice working tool for grant writing and if the council is interested in this he would do more research and bring back his findings to another work session for discussion. Council Vice-President Leigh stated he had looked at the website and the City has to meet certain criteria before they can be declared a Greenstep Cities. Council member Olstad asked Mr. Boyce if the Water and Light Department if they had look at this program at all. Mr. Boyce stated they had not

looked into this and how the department has many mandatory conservation requirements already. He explained how the City is assessed from the state for these programs and that he is cautious when they say there is not cost because usually it takes up more staff time. He added how he thinks they have done well with conservation but if the council would like them to look into it they will. Council member Olstad asked to have them look at the checklist to see if it can be done. Discussion followed about if the council is interested in moving forward with this. Council member Helms stated that he had no problem looking into this further and bringing what he finds back to the next work session.

Council Vice-President Leigh stated that each council member had received a handout. He summarized that the state does allow for planning commissions to be abolished but then it lists what the state requires the planning commission complete mandatory duties. He commented that with these mandatory duties it would be difficult to eliminate the commission. He asked if there was anything else. Mr. Galstad stated that when it comes to boards and commissions some have statutory requirements to follow when they are eliminated so he would need direction from council on what board or commission they are looking at doing away with so he is able to let them know what process to follow. Council Vice-President Leigh stated that this would be coming back to another work session for discussion before any action is taken.

Council member Helms informed the board that the Mayor's brother Dale is being initiated into the Grand Imperial Shrine. He explained it takes an eleven years before a person is eligible for this position which is voted on nationwide. He stated how it is a big deal and honor for a local guy to get this position.

Mr. Murphy informed the council that the timeline will not allow for the girls locker room to be completed before the hockey season starts this year. Council member Olstad suggested having boards with the plans placed in the front of the Civic Center so people are aware of the project and can see what will be done. Council member Tweten suggested again that the council will need to move forward on checking on the parks. He stated how the meeting in January had a consensus that the parks were an asset to the City and asked Council member Grassel, Helms, Mr. Aker, and Mr. Murphy to meet and start working on possible upgrades to the parks and bring it back to the council. He added how the City is trying to promote growth and quality of life and parks do this for the community.

ADJOURN:

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCIL MEMBER TWETEN, SECONDED BY COUNCIL MEMBER GRASSEL, TO ADJOURN THE JULY 8, 2014 COUNCIL WORK SESSION OF THE EAST GRAND FORKS, MINNESOTA CITY COUNCIL AT 5:55 P.M.

Voting Aye: Leigh, Grassel, Vetter, Helms, Tweten, and Olstad.

Voting Nay: None.

David Murphy, City Administrator/Clerk-Treasurer