

**APPROVED MINUTES
OF THE CITY
COUNCIL WORK SESSION
CITY OF EAST GRAND FORKS
TUESDAY, DECEMBER 9, 2014 – 5:00 PM**

CALL TO ORDER:

The Work Session of the East Grand Forks City Council for December 9, 2014 was called to order by Council President Craig Buckalew 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: Mayor Lynn Stauss, Council President Craig Buckalew, 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; Greg Boppre, 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 President Determined a Quorum was present

1. Proposal for Safe Routes to School Infrastructure Application - Patty Olson

Ms. Olson introduced herself and explained that she works for Safe Kids. She explained the Safe Routes to School program and how it had been federally funded for both infrastructure and non-infrastructure grants. She continued explaining how this program is now going to be included with transportation projects so they will have more competition when applying for grants. Ms. Olson stated how the Minnesota State Legislature had set aside funds for these projects and is making a request to apply for the funds. She explained what the proposed projects were with adding sidewalks by New Heights and South Point Elementary School and how there would be an 80/20 match the City would have to pay for. Ms. Ellis commented how the City has worked with Safe Kids before and is a big supporter of the Safe Routes to School program. She added there is a concern about applying for these funds and not being able to use them because of the shortfall in the budget. She suggested that this be postponed until the project could be budgeted for. Discussion followed about if there were funds available, how the City was also applying for TAP funds, and how the City would also have to cover engineering costs on the Safe Routes to School project.

Council member Grassel asked if there could be some modifications to where the sidewalks would connect up. Mr. Boppre said that could be done. Mayor Stauss asked what the maintenance cost would be. Ms. Olson stated that once the sidewalks were in there would only be the need to repaint the one crossing that would be added. More discussion followed about the placement of sidewalks, how the Principal at New Heights was notified about this project, and the deadline for the application was

January 9, 2015. Ms. Olson thanked the Council for their time and consideration of this project.

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

2. Matter of MN Functional Classification Revisions – Earl Haugen

Mr. Haugen informed the Council that MNDOT did not agree with all of the suggestions made by the City for the Functional Classification revisions. He asked the Council if they would like to take another chance trying to make changes. He stated there would be three changes that he would suggest. The first suggested change was to have Rhinehart Drive classified as a major collector. Mr. Haugen commented that this road is above the threshold to be considered a minor collector.

He stated the next suggestion would be in regards to 5th Avenue NW on the north side of Highway 2. He explained that MNDOT would like to classify this road as a local road way. Mr. Haugen said the concern about this is if the Council ever wanted to make this a full intersection most of the funding that would be applied for will ask if this was functionally classified and if the road becomes a local road way it will not be eligible for funding. He said they are working with MNDOT to find common ground on this issue and if the Council would eventually like an intersection here they will need to keep this road as functionally classified.

Mr. Haugen then explained the District Office was agreeing with the City to keep Bygland and Central Avenue as principal arterials but MNDOT is trying to enforce statewide consistency so the District Office no longer agrees with the City to keep those streets classified as principal arterials. He said this area is not the only area that having issues with this process. He added that there had been three meetings, two between MPOs and the State, and then a third meeting without the MPOs and it was at that meeting that classifications were changed. He stated how they will be advocating keeping Bygland Road and Central Avenue as principal arterials. Mr. Haugen then explained they will bring a resolution as a counterproposal to send back for MNDOT to reconsider. He added that if MNDOT does not accept the counterproposal there is the opportunity to have this sent to arbitration and whatever was decided in arbitration would be final.

Council President Buckalew mentioned how things could change on 23rd Street and asked how often the classifications are reviewed. Mr. Haugen explained how a City could ask at any time to have this reviewed but typically it is looked at after a census so approximately every ten years. Council member Tweten asked when traffic lights will be put in since there is a safety issue with the intersection of Highway 220 and 23rd Street and asked to have a representative to come to a meeting from the Highway Department to discuss this issue. Council member Tweten mentioned an accident that had recently happened and asked Chief Larson to comment on what happened. Chief Larson summarized what happened and how they had to cut the top off of a car to get the person out of it.

Mr. Haugen explained how functional classifications do not go hand in hand with getting traffic lights put in at the intersection. Discussion followed on if the Council would like 5th Avenue NW to remain as a functionally classified road. Mr. Haugen stated the proposal he will be bringing forward at the next meeting will include keeping 5th Avenue NW as a functionally classified road for council approval.

3. 2014-2015 Local Road Improvement Program – Greg Boppre

Mr. Boppre stated how Lift Station #5 will be rebuilt next year and with this project there is an

opportunity to apply for funds from the Local Road Improvement Program which would be used to take out the railroad tracks and lower the road on 5th Avenue NE. He explained how he has received a letter from Ryan Potato in support of removing the tracks. Council member Tweten asked if they owned the tracks. Mr. Boppre stated they did and explained there wouldn't be any additional costs to the City for this since they can use state aid funds to cover the local match.

Mr. Murphy stated there were some concerns from Department Heads regarding this project. Mr. Boyce stated there were utilities running through there that would have to be moved if they lowered the road. Mr. Boppre stated there was \$100,000 figured into the amount being requested to cover the costs of moving the utilities. Mr. Boyce stated if that was factored into the project then that addressed his concerns. Council President Buckalew asked if this would then be coordinated with the lift station project. Mr. Boppre stated that it would. Discussion followed about if the tracks were still needed, how many have requested the tracks being taken out, and that the railroad will need to be informed about this project. Ms. Ellis stated a study had been completed about rail access and how companies have moved into Grand Forks to have rail access. More discussion followed about possible issues getting the cars through the American Crystal property and if the proper authority was given to remove the tracks.

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

4. Extension to the Agreement for Fire Services – Megan Nelson

Ms. Nelson stated that the City had received a copy of the extension to the agreement for fire services from Mr. Jeffrey which had been okayed by the townships. She added that Mr. Galstad had reviewed it and found no issues. She then asked the Council if they had any questions or if any other changes needed to be made and said if there weren't then this would be brought forward at the next meeting for approval. Mr. Galstad stated the Council's concerns had been addressed.

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

5. MN Four-Wheel Drive Request – Megan Nelson

Ms. Nelson informed the Council that Mr. Dan Larson was formally asking the Council to be the sponsor for the Minnesota Four-Wheel Trail. She added that he answered some questions the Council regarding the length of the trail and how much they were requesting from the Legacy Fund. Discussion followed about how this project could possibly limit the City's ability to be granted Legacy funds for projects in the community and other possible issues that might come up with this project. Mayor Stauss stated to wish them best of luck but at this time the Council would be passing on becoming the sponsor for this project.

6. Northland College Contract Extension – David Murphy

Mr. Murphy stated how the contract between the City and Northland College was going to expire and at this time the college is looking to renew the contract through January of 2016 for use of the public parking lot for their truck driving program. Discussion followed about how there hadn't been any complaints received at the City or a major snow event at this time. Council member Olstad stated there had been an issued which was addressed. Mr. Galstad stated the insurance portion of the contract should be changed and list the State's insurance as the primary insurance. After a short discussion Mr. Murphy said he would be contacting Northland about this and bring it forward at the next meeting for the

Council to consider.

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

7. Cost of Living Increase – David Murphy

Mr. Murphy stated the Council has passed a similar resolution in the past for non-union personnel. He stated that all employees covered by labor agreements will be receiving a 2% cost of living increase which is not negotiable. Council member Tweten said to move it on and that it would not be fair if this was not approved. Mr. Murphy stated there were around 10 employees that this would affect.

Other:

Council member Tweten suggested meeting with members of the Polk County Government. He stated it was indicated by the County Assessor that there had been 29 million dollars in growth in Polk County in 2014. He added that the City and County meet annually so the City has a picture of what is happening throughout the County.

Mayor Stauss commented that he had called around to Crookston and Thief River Falls who are only having a 5% increase and 3% increase in their tax levy and how it looks like Grand Forks will be having a decrease in their levy. He added how East Grand Forks is quiet high compared to other communities.

ADJOURN:

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCIL MEMBER TWETEN, SECONDED BY COUNCIL MEMBER OLSTAD, TO ADJOURN THE DECEMBER 9, 2014 WORK SESSION OF THE EAST GRAND FORKS, MINNESOTA CITY COUNCIL AT 5:57 P.M.

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

Voting Nay: None.

David Murphy, City Administrator/Clerk-Treasurer