

**APPROVED MINUTES  
OF THE CITY  
COUNCIL WORK SESSION  
CITY OF EAST GRAND FORKS  
MONDAY, FEBRUARY 23, 2015 – 5:00 PM**

**CALL TO ORDER:**

*The Work Session of the East Grand Forks City Council for February 23, 2015 was called to order by Council President Mark Olstad 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(5:02pm), Council President Mark Olstad, Council Vice-President Chad Grassel, Council Members Clarence Vetter, Mike Pokrzywinski, Craig Buckalew, Henry Tweten, and Marc DeMers.*

*Dave Aker, Parks & Recreation Superintendent; Karla Anderson, Finance Director; Brad Bail, City Engineer; Nancy Ellis, City Planner; Paul Gorte, EDA Director; 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. Lighting for Sorlie Bridge Presentation – Jason Stordahl**

Mr. Stordahl informed the Council a meeting had taken place in Grand Forks the previous week about the lighting on the Sorlie Bridge. He explained this information was also being presented to the Grand Forks Safety and Service Committee and then to the Grand Forks Council. He stated how North Dakota would be taking care of half of the bridge and Minnesota would be taking care of the other half of the bridge. He stated the plan included decorative lighting, lighting for the walk way, and lighting for the roadway. He said the current cost estimate was around \$150,000 which would be split between the Department of Transportation of both States. He said that he was bringing this forward with the recommendation to agree with the current lighting plan and direct engineering staff to work with the appropriate entities to develop general guidelines for operating lighting for the Sorlie Bridge Project.

Mr. Stordahl stated that there had been discussion with the historical society about how often the decorative lighting would be on and how some of those details were still being worked out. Council President Olstad asked when this will be decided on. Mr. Stordahl explained a time frame had not been set since there were issues that needed to be worked out. Council member Pokrzywinski asked if permission would need to be granted to put up colored lights on the bridge and why the historical society has the authority about how the lighting can be on the bridge. Mr.

Bail stated that since the bridge was on the historical register the bridge is supposed to keep its original character which is affected by lighting. Mayor Stauss stated the lighting that has been suggested by East Grand Forks and Grand Forks was different than what the historical society was suggested.

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

## **2. Information on Waste Water Rates – David Murphy**

Mr. Murphy stated that Council member Buckalew had asked to have this item included on the agenda for discussion. He said the information provided was the history of the changes to the sewage rates over the last few years and that the Council can consider what will need to happen moving forward. Council member Buckalew stated that the Council had agreed to slowly increase the sewage rate over time instead of a large increase all at once to help build up the waste water fund. He said that he would like to pass the same increase that was previously past. Council member Tweten asked Ms. Anderson for information about the waste water fund.

Ms. Anderson stated the fund balance of the sewage fund was around \$4 million dollars and reminded the Council a new lift station was going to be built this year at an estimated cost of \$2.5 million. She said that the rate increases have brought in approximately \$900,000 to the sewage fund which is growing by \$400,000 per year. Ms. Anderson stated the Council will have to determine which project they are moving forward to determine if the fixed rate or usage rate would need to be increased. Discussion followed about if the fixed rate or usage rate would need to be increased to pay for the project.

Council member Vetter asked if a bond was taken out for this project where it would be paid from. Ms. Anderson stated that the bond would be paid from the sewage fund. Council member Vetter stated that those funds also need to cover the maintenance of the system. He added that he was not comfortable moving forward with an increase until the Council determines what is needed to in order to make the payments on the debt service. Council President Olstad said they could review the estimates of the debt service, determine what is needed, and make an educated choice on if an increase is needed. Discussion followed about also reviewing the storm water and refuse fees since those funds are not sufficiently covering expenses in those areas. Council member Vetter recommended bringing the numbers back to the next work session for review.

## **3. Discussion on Requests for Information – Mark Olstad**

Council President Olstad explained that he would like the Council to be on the same page so if a member of the Council requests information the rest of the Council will also be receiving the information that was requested. He said he brought this forward to get feedback from the Council and see if a policy should be made. Council member Tweten asked to have the requests channeled through the City Administrator. Council President Olstad said that would be the process. Council member Pokrzywinski asked what would happen if a council member asked a department head for information. Mr. Murphy stated that questions about basic operations or needing a clarification about an agenda item the department head would be able to answer but if the questions required research about something that was not readily available the information

would be something that everyone would receive a copy of. Council member Pokrzywinski added he didn't want the policy making things cumbersome. Council President Olstad stated that was not the purpose of the policy and since there weren't objections a draft policy would be drafted and brought back for review.

**ADJOURN:**

**A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCIL MEMBER TWETEN, SECONDED BY COUNCIL MEMBER GRASSEL, TO ADJOURN THE FEBRUARY 23, 2015 WORK SESSION OF THE EAST GRAND FORKS, MINNESOTA CITY COUNCIL AT 5:25 P.M.**

*Voting Aye: Vetter, Pokrzywinski, Buckalew, Tweten, Olstad, Grassel, and DeMers.*

*Voting Nay: None.*

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David Murphy, City Administrator/Clerk-Treasurer