

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

CALL TO ORDER:

The Work Session of the East Grand Forks City Council for June 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: Council President Mark Olstad, Council Vice-President Chad Grassel, Council Members Clarence Vetter, Craig Buckalew, Henry Tweten, and Marc DeMers.

Dave Aker, Parks & Recreation Superintendent; Karla Anderson, Finance Director; Nancy Ellis, City Planner; Ron Galstad, City Attorney; 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. Discussion on Managing of City Property – Jason Stordahl

Mr. Stordahl informed the Council about issues of vehicles, ATVs, and motorcycles being on the levee along the Red Lake River and how there is a trail on the levee. He added that there is private property where some of these vehicles, ATVs, and motorcycles have been driving and how some residents have seen five up to 20 cars drive over the levee. He explained that the trails and ruts will be seen by the Army Corps of Engineers when they complete the annual inspection which degrades the levee. He stated how there are couches, chairs, and garbage left back in some of these areas as well. He asked the Council how they would like to proceed. Discussion followed about what could be put in place to stop the driving on the levee and the toe of the levee, how residents will need to call the police if they see vehicles driving on the levee, and how people could be cited for trespassing or for driving off the road.

Council President Olstad asked to contact the Department of Natural Resources to see if there is something they could suggested. Mr. Stordahl stated he would contact both the Army Corps of Engineers and the DNR about this situation and see if either of those groups had a suggestion. Council member Vetter stated he doesn't want to have to limit the access to this area and was glad the river was being used. He added of how officers could speak with people using that area educating them about the rules about staying off of the levee and if the rules aren't followed this area may have to be closed.

2. Discussion on Strategic Planning for Pond Site – Chad Grassel

Council Vice-President Grassel stated that he and Council member Pokrzywinski talked about the future of the pond site after the ponds had been decommissioned. He stated that WSN had put something together. He went over the map that included where an existing waste lagoon would be located, 18 hole Frisbee golf course, walking paths, camp sites, a possible swimming hole, and sculpture gardens. He mentioned the City may want to work with art students at UND changing the garden from year to year. He said this would not happen overnight but this was to give the Council something to think about.

Council Vice-President Grassel told the Council Mr. Boppre estimated that it would take approximately 40 hours to complete the plans for the park project east of the golf course. He said the cost estimate for those plans was \$3500 to \$4000. He added the park may change things and help sell lots. Council member Tweten told the Council that when the proposal had been made it had been suggested to make it a Natural Learning Center so the project would be eligible for legacy funds. He asked to have this brought back to a future work session for discussion. Discussion followed about how the Council should focus on the park by the golf course first, how it needs to be determined what infrastructure is already in place, and if some of the property should be lots for homes.

This item will be brought back at a future work session.

3. Cable Franchise Agreement – David Murphy

Mr. Murphy stated the cable franchise agreement between the City and Midcontinent will expire in July, that an extension had been filed, and that the previous contract was for 10 years. He explained that Kennedy & Graven handle numerous franchise agreements throughout the State of Minnesota. He added how the City currently takes in approximately \$11,500 per month or \$139,000 annually and how the estimated cost to hire Kennedy & Graven for this would not exceed \$10,000 so the monthly payment would pay for this process. He ended by saying they would conduct a review to make sure the City received the correct amount and asked how the Council would like to move forward.

Council President Olstad stated the City should make sure it is receiving the correct rate. Mr. Galstad told the Council they had hired a separate attorney to prepare the last franchise agreement and that he has no issues with Kennedy & Graven. Council member Tweten suggested moving this on. Council member Buckalew stated that standard language is used, how a list had been provided of other cities that had hired Kennedy & Graven and asked to see if some of those agreements could be compared before moving forward. Council President Olstad asked if Mr. Murphy could reach out to some of the cities for a copy of their franchise agreements for comparison. Council member Vetter asked if this was for all of their services or only cable. Mr. Murphy stated it was only cable. He added that he would reach out to other cities.

This item will be brought back to a future Work Session for further discussion.

4. Budget Discussion – David Murphy

Mr. Murphy stated that items will be brought up at least once a month regarding the budget to help the Council set a levy. He stated the information brought forward at this meeting was salaries and wages. He stated that union negotiations will be starting soon and a plan needs to be put in place. He added

that the 2016 budgeted salaries had included a 2% cost of living increase and a 4% increase to the City's portion of insurance paid and asked if the Council was okay with that. He ended by saying the biggest difference was in the EDA umbers because the budgeted numbers for 2015 had included housing employees since the transfer hadn't been completed when the budget was being worked on. Ms. Nelson stated that the numbers were budgeted numbers, not actual numbers. She said that a report will be ran after the next payroll which would be the half way point for the year and the Council will then be able to compare what had been budgeted for in 2015 and compare to the actual.

Council member Vetter said he didn't have an issue with the increase and asked who was going to be included during the labor negotiations. Discussion followed about if the entire Council should be included in negotiations or if it should only be a couple Council members along with the City Administrator like had been done more recently. Council member Buckalew asked if the entire Council was a part of negotiations if the meeting had to be an open meeting. Mr. Galstad stated he would check on that. Mr. Murphy stated this didn't need to be decided that evening but it was something for the Council to consider.

5. Other

Mr. Murphy stated that it was asked to have a conversation regarding the consent agenda. He added that Robert's Rules of Order is more of a guideline for the Council to use and the Council can do what they are comfortable with. Council President Olstad asked to have items pulled before the meeting. Council member DeMers stated it could be asked before the motion to approve the consent agenda is made if Council members would like items pulled. The Council agreed on moving forward with that practice.

Mr. Gorte stated there will be a public hearing at the July 7th meeting for tax credits regarding the new hotel. He added that he will be bringing forward the request to transfer the funds that remain in the Town Square account. He said the funds would be transferred to the EDA and that the EDA Board was looking into the decommissioning process of the TIF Districts. Ms. Anderson informed the Council that a TIF consultant had been hired to help with this process and allow the City to use the remaining funds city wide for infrastructure following the TIF guidelines.

Mr. Aker informed the Council that the City received a grant for \$50,000 from the DNR which would be received in 2016.

ADJOURN:

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCIL MEMBER BUCKALEW, SECONDED BY COUNCIL MEMBER TWETEN, TO ADJOURN THE JUNE 23, 2015 WORK SESSION OF THE EAST GRAND FORKS, MINNESOTA CITY COUNCIL AT 6:18 P.M.

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

Voting Nay: None.

David Murphy, City Administrator/Clerk-Treasurer