

**APPROVED MINUTES  
OF THE CITY  
COUNCIL WORK SESSION  
CITY OF EAST GRAND FORKS  
TUESDAY, JULY 28, 2015 – Following the Special Meeting**

**CALL TO ORDER:**

*The Work Session of the East Grand Forks City Council for July 28, 2015 was called to order by Council President Mark Olstad at 5:02 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 Mark Olstad, Council Vice-President Chad Grassel, Council Members Clarence Vetter, Mike Pokrzywinski, Henry Tweten, and Marc DeMers.*

*Karla Anderson, Finance Director; Erika Azure, Administrative Assistant; Dan Boyce, Water & Light Manager; Nancy Ellis, City Planner; Steve Emery, City Engineer; Ron Galstad, City Attorney; Paul Gorte, EDA Director; Mike Hedlund, Police Chief; Charlotte Helgeson, Library Director; Gary Larson, Fire Chief; and David Murphy, City Administrator/Clerk-Treasurer.*

**DETERMINATION OF A QUORUM:**

*The Council President Determined a Quorum was present.*

Council President Olstad stated the agenda was going to be changed. He said that Representative Kiel was in attendance and was going to speak to the Council about the visit from the bonding committee regarding the waste water project and a possible sales tax for the City.

Representative Kiel told the Council how important it was to explain to the bonding committee about the proposed project, the importance of the project, and a brief overview of getting this request before the legislature. She explained it was going to be a short legislative session that begins on March 8<sup>th</sup> but some committees would more than likely start meeting in February. Council member Pokrzywinski asked if there should be a written summary about the project for the bonding committee to review, if this was already included on the bonding list, or what the Council would need to do in order to get this project included on the list. Representative Kiel said a written statement was important because of the amount of projects they will be reviewing in a short amount of time. Discussion followed about how staff was preparing a written summary of the project, that staff was preparing to make sure they are able to answer any questions about the project, and how the bonding committee wanted to meet on site to discuss the project.

More discussion followed about the process about enacting a sales tax to pay for the pool project. Mr. Murphy stated there could be a special election held or the question could be included with the general election in November of 2016. Council President Olstad asked Representative Kiel

for her help with getting the approval to implement a sales tax and what some of the things she has seen before with sales tax requests. Representative Kiel stated that if the request comes in before the election it is a harder sell and gave insight on how to help the process along if the Council moves forward with request before the election.

Council President Olstad commented how it was a timing issue and if passed by the voters when the sales tax could go into effect. Council member asked if the State Legislature denied the request, would the City be able to hold an election and if it passed, take it back to the State Legislature for approval. Representative Kiel said that was a possibility. Council President Olstad asked if there was anything the Council could work on to help with process along. Representative Kiel stated this would be the first time she would be making this request and making sure the committee understands why the request is being made. Mayor Stauss asked if this had been requested to help pay for a pool before. Discussion followed about how the request has to be specific and how this project would either be paid for with property taxes or with sales tax.

Mr. Gorte thanked Representative Kiel for supporting the Border Cities Tax Credits. He added that a big need for this area is work force housing. He said the second thing is there is a wonderful training program at the technical college and continued support for the college is very important. Representative Kiel explained that there were funds available for businesses that would like to train their workforce which could be trained at Northland. Council President Olstad asked why work force housing bill wasn't passed and if there was anything the Council could do to help the process along. Representative Kiel stated they had to get the metro legislators to understand there isn't always housing available for the workforce.

Council member DeMers asked about the liquor license classification change to see if the legislature would be willing to make an exception for an art studio. Discussion followed about the possible change to allow a new classification and that a bill would need to be written to allow it.

Council President Olstad asked what was upcoming in the 2016 session. Discussion followed about the tax bill, the transportation bill, and the Border Cities bill that may become a permanent request. Council member DeMers asked if the Border Cities legislation becomes permanent if an inflator would be included. Representative Kiel stated it was a possibility or it would need to be requested when an increase is needed. Mayor Stauss commented how Border Cities helps Moorhead far more than the smaller cities since it is based of population and that it should be based off the businesses in need. Representative Kiel said that change could be proposed during the next session. She added by saying if anything comes up to contact her so she can prepare for next year.

### **1. North End Park Discussion – Steve Emery/Ryan Hermes**

Mr. Emery informed the Council that there were three options prepared for the site. Mr. Hermes reviewed the three concepts for turning the dump site into a park which included a splash pad, soccer fields, baseball or softball fields as well as other courts or fields. He explained that the second option used more of a natural concept and would have native plants. Mr. Hermes

informed the Council that the third option would be completely different than any other park in the area and reviewed the plans. Mr. Emery asked if there were any questions. Council member DeMers asked Ms. Ellis if this was something that they could pick and added to the land use plan as a proposed future project. Ms. Ellis said all three plans could be added as an appendix and explained how this area is dedicated for a future park.

## **2. Discussion on Easement for Coffee Shop – Bob Moore**

Council President Olstad asked Ms. Ellis about the project since Mr. Moore was not present at the meeting. Ms. Ellis commented on what had been asked at the previous meeting, how the requirements had been met except for the driveway exiting. She added she didn't know if they would be planting trees, how there may be planters put up to block off an old entrance, and how there could be concerns with overflow parking in the fire department lot. Ms. Ellis stated she wasn't able to answer any more questions and that Mr. Moore would need to request the easement. Mr. Emery stated this was brought up because the street was tore up so now would be the time to address some of the items that needed to be changed. Mr. Galstad gave a synopsis of the conversation with Bob Moore who wanted to discuss the easement. Discussion followed about the possible options regarding the easement, where the turn to exit could be located, parking concerns in the fire department parking lot, and drainage.

## **3. Public Works Request to Hire – Erika Azure**

Ms. Azure explained that with the recent vacancy of the Public Works Foreman position it is time to restructure the Public Works Department. She added they had worked with Springsted to develop and point the positions of Public Works Supervisor and Lead Equipment Operator. She said there was another position of Lead Waste Water/Storm Water Operator that had previously been approved by the Council last year. She said the recommendation was to authorize the City Administrator to advertise of the hiring of the supervisor, the lead equipment operator, and appoint the lead waste water/storm water. She then asked if there were any questions.

Council President Olstad asked for cost of this. Ms. Anderson explained the waste water/storm water position would be paid for using those funds and the others would be paid out of the general fund. Discussion followed about what the costs may be since they would not be replacing a truck driver and that costs also depended on negotiations. Council President Olstad said he would like to know what the impact would be if a truck driver was hired the following year. Ms. Azure said it would depend where they end up on the pay scale. Council member DeMers commented that the foreman position would not be replaced. Ms. Azure stated that was correct. Mr. Murphy reviewed the positives, how this could free up office time, and how that free time could be used to help in the Park and Rec Office since there was going to be a retirement in the Park and Rec Office. Mr. Galstad asked if they were going to be union positions and if the collective bargaining unit had been contact. Ms. Azure stated the supervisor position was not going to be a union position. Discussion followed how the supervisor should not be a union position but the lead operator position would be a union position.

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

#### **4. Stauss Park Asphalt Patching – David Murphy**

Mr. Murphy stated he wanted to bring this to the Council's attention. He explained how the parking lot had been dug into to fix a waterline and how other areas of the parking lot were in tough shape. He stated there was a quote from Opp Construction to fix these problem areas for approximately \$8200 which was not available in the Park and Rec budget. He said he had spoken with the Public Works Director and Finance Director who suggested including this project in with the 2016 street improvement project to get a better price. Council member Tweten stated that if there is an asphalt job next year the parking lot at the Senior Center should be included. Council President Olstad stated that is something that can be reviewed next year.

#### **5. Request to Accept Radio Grant – Gary Larson**

Mr. Larson informed the Council he had recently been notified Polk County was awarded the FEMA grant for radios. He estimated the amount of the grant at \$738,000 and would put radios in all of the fire departments in Polk County. He explained the East Grand Forks would receive approximately \$180,326. He commented that in the last year's capital improvement plan the replacement of the radios were going to cost \$375,000 to convert the City over to 800 MHZ radios. He said the City's share would be \$20,000 to \$25,000. He explained how the match had not been included with the budget. Council President Olstad asked if Mr. Larson was asking the Council for the \$25,000 to fund the City's portion for the grant. Mr. Larson said he was.

Council member DeMers asked when the deadline was for purchasing. Mr. Larson stated they were going to be looking at that the following day and putting out bids to try and purchase radios within a month. He explained the City's current situation and how this part of the State is the last to change over to the new system. Council member DeMers asked if the Police Department was equipped with the new radios. Mr. Hedlund stated they had some but he would be bringing a request forward for the 2016 budget for more of the 800 MHZ radios. Discussion followed about how the grant was to cover most of the radio changes for the City and what other requests from other entities that had applied for the grant.

Mr. Murphy stated he didn't have a recommendation at this time and added that if nothing else the Council could spend down the fund balance. Ms. Anderson suggested that they could also use the central equipment fund. Mayor Stauss stated a grant only requiring 15 cents on the dollar can't be passed up when it is for something that is needed. More discussion followed about what could be done with the current radios.

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

#### **6. Other**

Council member Pokrzywinski informed the Council that Punky Beauchamp had open heart surgery which had been successful.

**ADJOURN:**

**A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCIL MEMBER TWETEN, SECONDED BY COUNCIL MEMBER VETTER, TO ADJOURN THE JULY 28, 2015 WORK SESSION OF THE EAST GRAND FORKS, MINNESOTA CITY COUNCIL AT 6:27 P.M.**

---

David Murphy, City Administrator/Clerk-Treasurer