

**APPROVED MINUTES
OF THE CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF EAST GRAND FORKS
TUESDAY, DECEMBER 15, 2015 - 5:00 P.M.**

CALL TO ORDER:

The Regular Meeting of the East Grand Forks City Council for December 15, 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, Council President Mark Olstad, Council Vice-President Chad Grassel, Council Members Mike Pokrzywinski, Craig Buckalew, Henry Tweten, and Marc DeMers.

Dave Aker, Parks & Recreation Superintendent; Karla Anderson, Finance Director; Greg Boppre, City Engineer; Nancy Ellis, City Planner; Ron Galstad, City Attorney; Paul Gorte, EDA Director; Mike Hedlund, Police Chief; Jeremy King, Public Works Supervisor; David Murphy, City Administrator/Clerk-Treasurer; Megan Nelson, Executive Assistant; and Jason Stordahl, Public Works Director.

DETERMINATION OF QUORUM:

The Council President Determined a Quorum was present

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

OPEN FORUM:

“An opportunity for members of the public to address the City Council on items not on the current Agenda. Items requiring Council action maybe deferred to staff or Boards and Commissions for research and future Council Agendas if appropriate.” If you would like to address the City Council, please come up to the podium to do so.”

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

1. Consider approving the minutes from the “Council Meeting” for the East Grand Forks, Minnesota City Council of December 1, 2015.
2. Consider approving the minutes of the “Work Session” for the East Grand Forks, Minnesota City Council of December 8, 2015.
3. Consider approving the minutes of the “Special Meeting” for the East Grand Forks, Minnesota City Council of December 8, 2015.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCIL MEMBER DEMERS, SECONDED BY COUNCIL

MEMBER POKRZYWINSKI, TO APPROVE ITEMS ONE (1) THROUGH THREE (3).

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

Voting Nay: None.

Absent: Vetter.

SCHEDULED BID LETTINGS: NONE

SCHEDULED PUBLIC HEARINGS:

4. Public Hearing on the property tax rebate or abatement under the New Construction Housing Project program.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCIL MEMBER POKRZYWINSKI, SECONDED BY COUNCIL MEMBER DEMERS, TO OPEN THE PUBLIC HEARING.

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

Voting Nay: None.

Absent: Vetter.

Mr. Gorte stated that the Council was required to hold a public hearing for the tax abatement that had been approved at a prior meeting with the passing of a resolution. Council President asked if there were any questions. There were none.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCIL MEMBER POKRZYWINSKI, SECONDED BY COUNCIL MEMBER DEMERS, TO CLOSE THE PUBLIC HEARING.

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

Voting Nay: None.

Absent: Vetter.

5. Public Hearing to consider granting a property tax abatement for five years for Valley Golf.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCIL MEMBER POKRZYWINSKI, SECONDED BY COUNCIL MEMBER GRASSEL, TO OPEN THE PUBLIC HEARING.

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

Voting Nay: None.

Absent: Vetter.

Mr. Gorte stated there was a statutory requirement of a public hearing for tax abatement. Council President Olstad asked if there were any questions or comments. There were none.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCIL MEMBER POKRZYWINSKI, SECONDED BY COUNCIL MEMBER GRASSEL, TO CLOSE THE PUBLIC HEARING.

Voting Aye: Grassel, DeMers, Pokrzywinski, Buckalew, Tweten, and Olstad.
Voting Nay: None.
Absent: Vetter.

CONSENT AGENDA:

Items under the “Consent Agenda” will be adopted with one motion; however, council members may request individual items to be pulled from the consent agenda for discussion and action if they choose.

6. Consider approving the Exempt Gambling Application for the Whitetails Unlimited Red River Valley Deer Camp to hold a raffle on January 30, 2016 at the Eagles Aerie 350 located at 227 10th St NW East Grand Forks, MN 56721 and waive the 30-day waiting period.
7. Consider approving the Exempt Gambling Application for Sacred Heart to hold a raffle on February 22, 2016 at Sacred Heart located at 200 3rd St NW East Grand Forks, MN 56721 and waive the 30-day waiting period.
8. Consider approving the addendum to the lease agreement between the City of East Grand Forks and the Independent School District 595 setting the payment provisions for the lease and for the Civic Center Locker Room Renovation Project.
9. Consider adopting Resolution No. 15-12-135 supporting an increase to Local Government Aid.
10. Consider approving Ordinance 16, 4th Series Summary to be published in the official paper.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCIL MEMBER TWETEN, SECONDED BY COUNCIL MEMBER GRASSEL, TO APPROVE ITEMS SIX (6) THROUGH TEN (10).

Voting Aye: Grassel, DeMers, Pokrzywinski, Buckalew, Tweten, and Olstad.
Voting Nay: None.
Absent: Tweten.

ACKNOWLEDGE RECEIPT OF REPORTS OF OFFICERS, BOARDS, AND COMMISSIONS:

11. Regular meeting minutes of the Cemetery Commission Meeting for November 23, 2015.
12. Regular meeting minutes of the Water, Light, Power, and Building Commission for November 5, 2015 and November 19, 2015.
13. Regular meeting minutes of the Economic Development Authority Board for November 3, 2015.

COMMUNICATIONS:

14. Council will be addressed by the Teamsters Local 120 Business Agent, Brian Nowak.

Mr. Brian Nowak introduced himself to the Council as the business agent for the Teamsters Local 120.

He thanked the Mayor and Council and informed them he was coming before the Council asking them to consider a fair wage increase for the City of East Grand Forks Public Works Department employees. He said he represents the workers who plow the streets in the winter and maintain them in the summer months. He stated these workers are the backbone of the community, going to work each day or night, and in all types of weather conditions. He explained how they answer the call when conditions are at their worst and miss out on their child's birthday parties, school plays, or even Christmas Holidays. He added when it snows they go. He said they take pride in their work and many times it goes unnoticed. He stated people wake up on a cold winter morning with the streets cleaned and salted which some have to come expect. He said the workers were just asking to maintain a good quality of life. He listed cities where employees had received 3% or 2.5% wage increases for each year of their contracts. He asked the Council to take further consideration to the proposals that he had provided.

Council member Tweten stated that the City Council along with other groups follow the consumer price index or cpi, which is helped to determine a salary rate increase because of inflation. He explained that in 2015 there was no increase given to veterans or those on social security since there wasn't a rise in inflation. He stated the City Council had included a 2% increase for a cost of living increase for employees. He then reviewed the inflation rates, unemployment rates, and stated again that the senior residents will not be receiving an increase to their social security, the city has had its challenges with budgeting, and that the Council has been told by some residents that if taxes keep increasing they will have to move. He asked if the Council should raise real estate taxes even though there wasn't an increase and possibly force people from their homes. He said he understands unions, been a part of unions, and that over the years the Council has worked hard to have good work conditions. He reminded everyone about the school referendum and stated there is a limit to what can be put on the residents. He added there were some things that had been suggested that he agreed with when it comes to safety equipment and safety training. He stated that he does not want to have seniors lose their homes which in his opinion will happen. Council member Tweten said the Council voluntarily did include an increase for the workforce. He said they will need to recognize that conditions are changing and when they are making demands they need to realize the effects of what is being asked for. He asked them to take another look at it.

Mr. Nowak thanked Council member Tweten for his comments and added that they have no intentions of putting anyone out on the street. He said their intentions are sincere that as things continue to increase the cost of living cola may not be putting out increases but everything else continues to go up which is a struggle for the workers. He continued to say the Council could maybe take a look at this for the future since the budget had been set for 2016 and how there may be an opportunity for something more than had been offered. Mayor Stauss stated that if the increases in the levy for 2015 and 2016 were added together it would be close to a million dollars. He said the Council is very generous offering the 2% because the cost of living hasn't increase and the average person will not be receiving an increase in wages. He said with the 2% the Council is doing a good job and the workers are valued. He ended by saying he thinks the 2% increase is a good offer.

OLD BUSINESS: NONE

NEW BUSINESS:

15. Consider accepting and ratifying the revised lot prices for City owned lots as proposed and adopted

by the Economic Development Authority Board.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCIL MEMBER GRASSEL, SECONDED BY COUNCIL MEMBER POKRZYWINSKI, TO ACCEPT AND RATIFY THE REVISED LOT PRICES FOR CITY OWNED LOTS AS PROPOSED AND ADOPTED BY THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY BOARD.

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

Voting Nay: None.

Absent: Vetter.

16. Consider adopting Resolution No. 15-12-136 clarifying the principal uses of the monies received from the sale of city-owned residential lots.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCIL MEMBER POKRZYWINSKI, SECONDED BY COUNCIL MEMBER GRASSEL, TO ADOPT RESOLUTION NO. 15-12-136 CLARIFYING THE PRINCIPAL USES OF THE MONIES RECEIVED FROM THE SALE OF CITY-OWNED RESIDENTIAL LOTS.

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

Voting Nay: None.

Absent: Vetter.

17. Consider approving the purchase of radios for the East Grand Forks Police Department from Stone's/Motorola in the amount of \$154,094.26.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCIL MEMBER DEMERS, SECONDED BY COUNCIL MEMBER BUCKALEW, TO APPROVE THE PURCHASE OF RADIOS FOR THE EAST GRAND FORKS POLICE DEPARTMENT FROM STONE'S/MOTOROLA IN THE AMOUNT OF \$154,094.26.

Council member DeMers commented at the previous meeting Chief Hedlund had mentioned he was working with Mr. Stordahl and asked if radios for the Public Works Department was included in the quote. Chief Hedlund said this bid was just for radios for the police department. Council member Buckalew said that when he was looking over the bid he saw there was about \$70,000 to \$75,000 that was going to be spent on a dispatch console. He commented how there is a dispatch center in Crookston that dispatches the East Grand Forks Fire Department, the City of Crookston, and Polk County. He said they may not be ready to dispatch the police department, he is not interested in reducing the force of the police department, and if the City spends that much on a console now and there is a plan to combine dispatch with the County within a year or two the Council should discuss this. He stated how the extra person could be used on the street or they could be used in investigations if that would be a better use of money and asked Mr. Hedlund to answer some questions.

Chief Hedlund said this topic had been looked at long before he had become Chief, been reviewed several times since he has become chief, and at this point there hadn't been any action taken moving towards combining dispatch centers. He explained that he has argued the City should not transfer over

to Polk County Dispatch and he still feels that way. He stated there would be some advantages to switching over but he feels the advantages keeping dispatch outweighs changing. He explained how the jail would become useless since the dispatch also serves as the jailer and if the County was dispatching people would have to be transported to Crookston or an officer would have to sit and monitor the person which would take them off the street. He said from a public service standpoint he doesn't feel they would be able to provide as good public service to the citizens by turning into a Monday through Friday 8 to 4 business like City Hall. He said right now residents are able to come in any time to file reports, get answers, pay fines, etc. He added by doing their own dispatch he feels they can provide better service to the residents, one reason being the dispatch center doesn't know the area as well. Chief Hedlund informed the Council that Crookston still does their own dispatching Monday through Friday 8 to 4 so the Police Department would still need a dispatch console during those times. He explained how the department needs to transition over to the 800 trunk radios which will not be able to function nearly as well with the older console and would have to be done using a portable dispatch.

Council member Buckalew said the Council will need to agree that if \$75,000 will be spent on a console they will be committed to this arrangement for a period of time. Council member Pokrzywinski said he has had long discussions about this with the Chief, that he respects his opinion, and respectfully disagrees with parts of it. He explained that it was his opinion that it is a worthy debate, there are pros and cons to both ways of doing things, and a pro of combining dispatch would eliminate a duplication of service. He said until this community is united behind that effort he does not want to move forward until there is a large consensus to do it. He added he is not ready to have debate and move ahead with the purchase of this equipment so the police officers have the necessary equipment to keep the community safe. Council member DeMers said he concurs with both positions and thinks there needs to be a better strategy before moving forward as well as knowing what the costs are. He said the argument about having services 24 hours a day do not hold water but the jail is the key to that issue. He added today's force should not be hindered because of the Council.

Council member DeMers asked if console is next generation capable. Chief Hedlund stated they did not handle the 911 calls and those are transferred to the City by Polk County since they come in by phone system. He added the console is just for radios. Council member DeMers asked if they would be able to take anything else going forward. Chief Hedlund explained the State only allows public safety answer points in certain areas and in this area that is Polk County. Council member DeMers asked what the integration would look like with Polk County and if it helps. Chief Hedlund said it gets the City closer since the County is already operating on the 800 system. Council member DeMers asked if additional training will be required. Chief Hedlund explained each officer is required to take training for the 800 radio system and that the cost of training was not included with this purchase.

Council President Olstad said one thing he agreed with is that a discussion needs to be a discussion with the community about this topic. He added this purchase will help with the drug task force communications also. Chief Hedlund said the department did have some 800 radios which are used. Council President Olstad asked to have information from Crookston on how they run the police department for future discussions since they are also tied into the County. Council President Olstad commented how he has served on the drug task force board, seen what they do and that this is something that is essential to keep people safe. He added this will have to be addressed and discussed more in the future.

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

Voting Nay: None.

Absent: Vetter.

18. Consider approving the special assessment property tax agreement between the City of East Grand Forks and Grand Forks Township for reimbursement of real estate property taxes at \$407.30 per year for two years.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCIL MEMBER DEMERS, SECONDED BY COUNCIL MEMBER TWETEN, TO APPROVE THE SPECIAL ASSESSMENT PROPERTY TAX AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE CITY OF EAST GRAND FORKS AND GRAND FORKS TOWNSHIP FOR REIMBURSEMENT OF REAL ESTATE PROPERTY TAXES AT \$407.30 PER YEAR FOR TWO YEARS.

Mr. Galstad said he did have an opportunity to speak with Mr. Stocker and Mr. Thompson about this. He explained this had been discussed the previous week at their township meeting and if approved they are prepared to sign the agreement which would finalize the annexation of the 40 acres.

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

Voting Nay: None.

Absent: Vetter.

19. Consider adopting Resolution No. 15-12-137 approving a voluntary contribution to fund the environmental program for the Coalition of Greater Cities of Minnesota.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCIL MEMBER BUCKALEW, SECONDED BY COUNCIL MEMBER POKRZYWINSKI, TO ADOPT RESOLUTION NO. 15-12-137 APPROVING A VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTION TO FUND THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROGRAM FOR THE COALITION OF GREATER CITIES OF MINNESOTA.

Council member Buckalew asked if it has been changed to a \$1000 on the resolution. Council Vice-President Grassel said it was.

Voting Aye: Pokrzywinski.

Voting Nay: Grassel, DeMers, Buckalew, Tweten, and Olstad.

Absent: Vetter.

20. Consider adopting Resolution No. 15-12-138 authorizing a special election for February 29, 2015 to consider the implementation of a local sales tax.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCIL MEMBER DEMERS, SECONDED BY COUNCIL MEMBER TWETEN, TO ADOPT RESOLUTION NO. 15-12-138 AUTHORIZING A SPECIAL ELECTION FOR FEBRUARY 29, 2015 TO CONSIDER THE IMPLEMENTATION OF A LOCAL SALES TAX.

Council member DeMers requested to review the wording of the questions and look at having just one

question. Mr. Galstad stated the resolution was drafted to allow the Council to decide if they wanted one question or two. Council President Olstad asked if the ballot question have to be an addendum to the resolution. Mr. Galstad stated the resolution had to be passed by the Council and the ballot question has to be determined and provided according to the timeline of the County's. Council President Olstad asked if it was on the same timeline. Council member DeMers asked if a separate resolution had to be passed approving the wording of the question. Mr. Galstad said the Council could just have to pass by a motion. Discussion followed about how the state statute did not require the question be included in the resolution, that by passing the resolution the City was not tied to either question that had been listed, and the City would still have time to discuss and debate what the question or questions should be. Council President Olstad clarified that this resolution would notify the State about the special election and not set the question or questions.

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

Voting Nay: None.

Absent: Vetter.

21. Consider adopting Resolution No. 15-12-139 authorizing a property tax abatement for Valley Golf Association based on the set parameters listed.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCIL MEMBER POKRZYWINSKI, SECONDED BY COUNCIL MEMBER GRASSEL, TO ADOPT RESOLUTION NO. 15-12-139 AUTHORIZING A PROPERTY TAX ABATEMENT FOR VALLEY GOLF ASSOCIATION BASED ON THE SET PARAMETERS LISTED.

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

Voting Nay: None.

Absent: Vetter.

22. Consider approving the purchase of a 2016 Peterbilt 320 equipped with Heil 28 cubic yard compactor from Macqueen Equipment for the amount of \$259,927.71.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCIL MEMBER TWETEN, SECONDED BY COUNCIL MEMBER DEMERS, TO APPROVE THE PURCHASE OF A 2016 PETERBILT 320 EQUIPPED WITH HEIL 28 CUBIC YARD COMPACTOR FROM MACQUEEN EQUIPMENT FOR THE AMOUNT OF \$259,927.71.

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

Voting Nay: None.

Absent: Vetter.

CLAIMS:

23. Consider adopting Resolution No. 15-12-140 authorizing the City of East Grand Forks to approve purchases from Hardware Hank the goods referenced in check numbers 23032 for a total of \$295.00 whereas Council Member Buckalew is personally interested financially in the contract.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCIL MEMBER GRASSEL, SECONDED BY COUNCIL MEMBER TWETEN, TO ADOPT RESOLUTION NO. 15-12-140 AUTHORIZING THE CITY OF EAST GRAND FORKS TO APPROVE PURCHASES FROM HARDWARE HANK THE GOODS REFERENCED IN CHECK NUMBERS 23032 FOR A TOTAL OF \$295.00 WHEREAS COUNCIL MEMBER BUCKALEW IS PERSONALLY INTERESTED FINANCIALLY IN THE CONTRACT.

Voting Aye: Grassel, DeMers, Pokrzywinski, Tweten, and Olstad.
Voting Nay: None.
Absent: Vetter.
Abstain: Buckalew.

24. Consider authorizing the City Administrator/Clerk-Treasurer to issue payment of recommended bills and payroll.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCIL MEMBER BUCKALEW, SECONDED BY COUNCIL MEMBER DEMERS, TO AUTHORIZE THE CITY ADMINISTRATOR/CLERK-TREASURER TO ISSUE PAYMENT OF RECOMMENDED BILLS AND PAYROLL.

Voting Aye: Grassel, DeMers, Pokrzywinski, Buckalew, Tweten, and Olstad.
Voting Nay: None.
Absent: Vetter.

COUNCIL/STAFF REPORTS:

Mayor Stauss commented how the they will see the men and at work and hopefully there won't be too much snow.

Mr. Murphy asked to have to Council notified when the new garbage truck is in so they have a chance to see it before it is used.

ADJOURN:

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCIL MEMBER TWETEN, SECONDED BY COUNCIL MEMBER GRASSEL, TO ADJOURN THE DECEMBER 15, 2015 COUNCIL MEETING OF THE EAST GRAND FORKS, MINNESOTA CITY COUNCIL AT 5:45 P.M.

Voting Aye: Grassel, DeMers, Pokrzywinski, Buckalew, Tweten, and Olstad.
Voting Nay: None.
Absent: Vetter.

David Murphy, City Administrator/Clerk-Treasurer