

**APPROVED MINUTES
OF THE SPECIAL MEETING
CITY OF EAST GRAND FORKS
MONDAY, DECEMBER 21, 2015 - 5:00 P.M.**

CALL TO ORDER:

The Special Meeting of the East Grand Forks City Council for December 21, 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 Clarence Vetter, Mike Pokrzywinski, Craig Buckalew, and Marc DeMers.

Karla Anderson, Finance Director; Ron Galstad, City Attorney; Paul Gorte, EDA Director; and Megan Nelson, Executive Assistant.

DETERMINATION OF QUORUM:

The Council President Determined a Quorum was present

NEW BUSINESS:

1. Discussion on ballot question or questions and notices.

Council President Olstad stated that there were three sheets that had three different options on them. He explained option A had one question that included the swimming pool and the splash parks, option B had two questions with the pool as one question and the splash parks as a separate question, and option C had one question asking for just the pool. He said he would start out saying what his preference would be. He informed the Council that in the last week he had spoken to 10 people or less about this issue and that all of these people had indicated they would support the pool but they did not want splash parks included. He said his preference would be to support either options B or C. He added that others have said this will hopefully only be for five years and maybe at that time look at splash parks.

Council Vice-President Grassel said he agreed with Council President Olstad on moving forward with either option B or C. He stated he preferred to move forward with option B because that would allow the citizens to pick what they would like to move forward with. He added the people he had talked with which wasn't very many and the one email that was received no one wanted to see the splash parks. He said would like to put it out to the citizens of East Grand Forks and if they strongly feel like he is hearing, the Council would either need to move forward with either B or C. Mayor Stauss said he had also been hearing what others had been hearing from the public about the 25% levy increase but also that they don't want more maintenance costs, and the swimming pool is enough. He added by far most people did not want splash parks so he suggested moving forward with option C.

Council President Olstad asked the other council members if they had any other comments to add. Council member Buckalew said he had a couple questions. He said that the Council had talked about the \$330,000 that a half a percent was going to raise so it would be approximately \$600,000 raised per year at 1% so the Council would be looking at about a four year payback and to put five years to make sure that enough funds were raised to cover all of the costs. Mr. Galstad stated the wording he used in the question was five years or later to ensure that enough funds would be collected to cover the costs of the entire project. Council member Buckalew asked if the splash parks would be paid for in less than two years. Council President Olstad said that the figure was all three projects put together and how there would be a time limit began once the funds started being collected.

Council member DeMers said the wording on B was wrong since it shows a 2% increase or that is how people would read it. Mr. Galstad stated the wording could be changed, the first question asks to impose the sales tax, and that the second question asks if the funds could be used for the splash parks. He added that if the Council would like clarification on that it can be changed but that was the intent. Council member Buckalew said he wasn't sure if people would be that clear on it. He said that was the only other question that he had and that definitely wanted to see the pool question be successful. He added that the Council could also give the residents a choice and allow them to choose. He said if they are moving forward with B they will need to work on the language. Council President Olstad reminded the Council the language of the questions had to be decided that night.

Council member Pokrzywinski commented that it was too bad they weren't able to vote on a really nice splash park at the pool and two additional splash parks on each end of town for a cost of about 1.2 or 1.3 million. He said the Council went ahead, fixed the pool, and had the vote later. He commented this is where things are at. He said he thought if there were two questions the splash parks will fail and the pool will pass. He said he doesn't want to have a vote where the splash parks fail so people say they said no to splash parks. He added that if the Council has to do this his reluctant support will be for one question, he had always supported one question, and the majority of the Council will not be voting for A with all three projects on one question.

Council President Olstad asked Council member Vetter if he had any comments. He stated he did not. Council President asked Council member DeMers if he had any comments. Council member DeMers said he would either support question A or C. He explained he thought it was the job of the Council to put together a package keeping the City fiscally responsible but also creating a vision for what type of projects the City could have. He continued to say that two questions on the ballot dooms one or both to fail. He said he thinks that in the future with the next set of projects, if this is a good funding source or people are happy with how this is happening, there are two types of project that could happen. He explained how one would have a large, overwhelming support of the city. He said the other option if the Council decides to use this tool again they will have to create an aggregated project where a lot of people will need to support it. He added that the Council may need to put some things together that maybe a majority of the people may not like. He said he doesn't think a majority of people would vote for the Civic Center now but it is a good thing. He stated that sometimes the Council will need to put a package together that betters the City in a fiscally responsible way and sell it. He said if that is not where the Council is at then to move forward with option C.

Council member Pokrzywinski said it looks like the Council will be moving forward with option C and what he hopes is there is a unified Council behind whatever comes out the meeting. He added the best

outcome is a unified City that will get behind this and the best way to deliver that message is to have an overwhelming majority vote for this. He also encouraged the Save Our Pool group to get out, campaign, and sell this since this project was done largely on their urging so they can step up and do their part. He said this had been a tough process but this is democracy and that is the way it goes. He added he hopes the Council comes out of this unified and he will get behind this. Mayor Stauss stated there has to be a unified Council on this or otherwise the people may get confused and end up with a mixed vote.

Council President Olstad asked for other comments. There were none. He then stated he would entertain a motion for item number two, three, or four.

2. Consider adopting Resolution No. 15-12-138 Addendum A approving the question and other necessary information for the special election on March 7, 2016.
3. Consider adopting Resolution No. 15-12-138 Addendum B approving the questions and other necessary information for the special election on March 7, 2016.
4. Consider adopting Resolution No. 15-12-138 Addendum C approving the questions and other necessary information for the special election on March 7, 2016.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCIL MEMBER GRASSEL, SECONDED BY COUNCIL MEMBER VETTER, TO ADOPT RESOLUTION NO. 15-12-138 ADDENDUM C APPROVING THE QUESTIONS AND OTHER NECESSARY INFORMATION FOR THE SPECIAL ELECTION ON MARCH 7, 2016.

Voting Aye: Vetter, Pokrzywinski, Buckalew, Olstad, and Grassel.

Voting Nay: DeMers.

Absent: Tweten.

ADJOURN:

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCIL MEMBER GRASSEL, SECONDED BY COUNCIL MEMBER VETTER, TO ADJOURN THE DECEMBER 21, 2015 SPECIAL MEETING OF THE EAST GRAND FORKS, MINNESOTA CITY COUNCIL AT 5:15 P.M.

Voting Aye: DeMers, Vetter, Pokrzywinski, Buckalew, Olstad, Grassel.

Voting Nay: None.

Absent: Tweten.

David Murphy, City Administrator/Clerk-Treasurer