

**APPROVED MINUTES  
OF THE CITY  
COUNCIL WORK SESSION  
CITY OF EAST GRAND FORKS  
TUESDAY, JANUARY 12, 2016 – 5:00 PM**

**CALL TO ORDER:**

*The Work Session of the East Grand Forks City Council for January 12, 2016 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, Craig Buckalew, Henry Tweten, and Marc DeMers.*

*Dave Aker, Parks & Recreation Superintendent; Brad Bail, City Engineer; 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; 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. Frosty Bobber Event Discussion – Megan Nelson**

Ms. Nelson stated there was a group that was bringing back the Frosty Bobber event. She said she handed out a map which showed the different activities which would make this an event for all ages of the community. She added that Mr. Corey Mock was present at the meeting to answer any questions. Mr. Mock thanked the Council for their consideration and informed the Council about some of the activities that were planned. He added that the Water and Light Department has approved their request for power for this event. Council member DeMers asked when the date was for this event. Mr. Mock said it will be on Saturday, February 13<sup>th</sup>. Mayor Stauss commented how this would be an exceptional event for both Grand Forks and East Grand Forks. He added that in the future they may want to try to host Minnesota Hockey Day as well. Mr. Mock thanked the Mayor for that suggestion.

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

**2. Report of Feasibility 2016 Street Improvements – Steve Emery**

Mr. Emery stated this was the feasibility report for the proposed street improvement projects for 2016. He reminded the Council about the three year schedule for the street improvements,

reviewed the proposed areas to have street improvements in 2016, and also went over the estimated costs for these projects. Mr. Emery explained how the reconstruction project on Rhinehart could be funded by using State Aid dollars and how it is the City's policy to assess 30% of state aid projects. He then asked for questions.

Council President Olstad asked how the reconstruction of Rhinehart fit in with future plans. Mr. Emery stated how the future round-a-bout would have little effect on the section of road that was to be reconstructed. Council President Olstad asked to that worked into the plan so there wouldn't be issues later. Council member DeMers said they should at least look at what funding is available and not make things difficult for the installation of the round-a-bout. He added that he noticed end benefits being charged to people on River Road for Forest Court seal coat. He explained he didn't see this as end benefit for them and to get input on whether that should be included unless that fits with the assessment policy. He asked about the master plan for the streets, where things are at, and what the threshold was to include these streets for street improvements. Mr. Emery explained that ICON was used to develop this plan as well as visual inspections of the streets.

Council member Tweten commented how there were objections on the length of time for seal coat and asked if the Council wanted to use a longer period of time. Council President Olstad said the public will be receiving the information, can attend the public hearing, and that they can ask questions at the public hearing. Discussion followed on the costs of the street improvement projects from the previous year, how paying for these kinds of project shouldn't overlap, and that the Council would like to make sure that everyone affected by the projects will receive the notifications.

Council member Vetter asked if they expected lower bids with lower oil prices. Mr. Emery said no. Council member Vetter also asked to flip-flop the process and hold the hearing of improvement before the job is awarded so people know exactly what the cost will be. Mr. Galstad commented that had been mentioned before and the Council could move forward with that process. Council member Vetter asked to be kept informed on the process. He then commented how he was not in favor of moving forward with the reconstruct and then having a round-a-bout installed a few years later. Mr. Emery said he can verify the information with MPO and Ms. Ellis. Discussion followed about what was included with the reconstruction on Central Ave and 3<sup>rd</sup> Street and that the city engineers do not collect the administration fee that is included in the cost estimates.

### **3. Municipal State Aid Street Funds Advance – Steve Emery**

Mr. Emery stated this item depends on if the project on Rhinehart Drive moves forward. He explained the City is able to use State Aid funds for that project and currently there were not enough funds to cover the reconstruction project. He informed the Council that they could request an advance of funds to cover the project and by 2017 there would be around \$50,000 left in the fund. There were no questions from the Council.

#### **4. File Plans/Specifications 15AJ4 5<sup>th</sup> Ave & 10<sup>th</sup> St - Steve Emery**

Mr. Emery stated they were looking to file plans and specifications for the lowering of 5<sup>th</sup> Ave NE. He explained the State had already approved the plans and they were looking for authorization to set the bid date for February 16, 2016. Council member Grassel commented how people will be driving fast down this road once this project is complete. Council member DeMers asked if this project will be going through a freeze/thaw cycle. Mr. Emery said that had been the goal but they ran into difficulties trying to start this project while the new lift station was being built. He stated they were looking at other options for this project since it wouldn't be going through a freeze/thaw cycle. Council member Vetter commented how he thought the road project was tied to the construction of the lift station. Mr. Emery stated they had always been two projects and that no work was being duplicated.

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

#### **5. File Plans/Specifications 16AJ2 Paving Riverview 10<sup>th</sup> Add – Steve Emery**

Mr. Emery stated they were asking for authorization to file the plans and specifications and set the bid date for the paving and sidewalk construction project in the Riverview 10<sup>th</sup> Addition. He stated that the bid date would be February 16, 2016. Council President Olstad asked if there were questions and there were none.

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

#### **6. Discussion of Building Inspections Contract – David Murphy/Nancy Ellis**

Mr. Murphy told the Council this item was being brought forward because the current contract had expired and needed to be addressed. He asked for direction from the Council and commented how the two possible options for moving forward were to either hire a full time inspector or continue with contracted services. Discussion followed about how no qualified candidates had applied the last time this job had been advertised, what the job duties were for a building inspector, and how the City operates on a complaint basis. Ms. Ellis explained how the fire marshal conducts the rental inspections based on the fire code and how there have been questions regarding health and how that needs to be addressed since the City currently does not have an appointed health official like it states in the charter.

Council President Olstad stated right now the Council is addressing the contract. He commented how there was language in the contract stating if the City did want to hire a full time person they would just need to send notification that the contract was going to be terminated. Mayor Stauss asked what it cost versus having an in-house inspector. Ms. Ellis stated that in 2014 they were paid \$83,053 and 2015 they were paid \$70,000. She added these numbers were based on inspections and office hours.

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

## **7. Knight Foundation Grant Discussion – Marc DeMers**

Council member DeMers told the Council he had received notification the City would receive a \$25,000 grant from the Knight Foundation. He asked the Council to formally accept the grant which would be used to purchase equipment so the Council meetings could be broadcast. He explained the budget that was sent was for \$62,000 but that figure included improvements to the audio systems and adds visual equipment in both the Council Chambers and Training Room. He also asked that these funds be put in a separate fund and kept out of the general fund. He added he was open to suggestions on how to raise the remaining funds that were needed. Discussion followed about using an additional 1% of the cable franchise fee and selling ad time to raise funds. Council member Tweten commented how the cable franchise fee was not going to be enough and the only recourse was to raise taxes. Council member DeMers reminded the Council the 1% he was referring to was an additional 1% and did not include the 5% the City already collects on.

Council Vice-President Grassel asked if they should only update one room instead of both to reduce the cost of the project. Council member DeMers commented that was a good idea however each meeting is different and updating both rooms would allow for board and commission meetings to be televised as well as council meetings. Mayor Stauss commented how information from the meetings are put in two papers, on the radio, and sometimes on the local news station. He asked how this will add to the budget and commented how there will be small viewership. Discussion followed about how younger people use their phones for everything, how they may watch the meetings at different times, and that they don't need that face to face interaction. Council member Vetter added that the Council use to meet at 7:00pm and that made it easier for people to attend meetings. He asked what the timeline was for using the funds. Council member DeMers stated he could have that answer by Tuesday. More discussion followed about where additional funds could potentially come from for this and once everything was set up there would only be depreciation costs.

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

## **8. Property for the Interconnect Project – David Murphy**

Mr. Murphy informed the Council the City had requested an easement on Polk County property for the interconnect project. He explained that instead of granting the easement the County wanted to turn over the property to the City since they had no use for it. He stated that staff had reviewed to see if there were any drawbacks to acquiring the property and there were none. He asked for questions. There were none.

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

## **9. Coalition Day Discussion – Mark Olstad**

Council President Olstad reminded the Council about the legislative day the Coalition of Greater Minnesota Cities was holding on March 16<sup>th</sup> and asked for a commitment for those going so accommodations could be made. Council member Tweten commended Council President Olstad

for the work he has done with the Coalition and for the City. He added the City needs to continue to support an increase to LGA which the legislators need to be told. Council President Olstad added they will also need to speak to the legislators about the bonding bill. Mayor Stauss added this is when the City can get commitments from the legislators.

#### **10. Other**

Ms. Nelson informed the Council that there is going to be a liquor license application coming before them at the beginning of April.

Mr. Galstad stated he had been contacted about the empty lot next to the VFW and if it can be leased.

Mr. Murphy reminded the Council about the joint meeting between the City of East Grand Forks and Grand Forks at the Chamber on February 4<sup>th</sup>. He added that both Economic Development departments had been invited to this meeting as well.

Mr. Galstad asked for an update on the special election. Ms. Nelson gave the Council an update.

#### **ADJOURN:**

**A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCIL MEMBER GRASSEL, SECONDED BY COUNCIL MEMBER VETTER, TO ADJOURN THE JANUARY 12, 2016 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.*

*Absent: Pokrzywinski.*

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David Murphy, City Administrator/Clerk-Treasurer