

**APPROVED MINUTES
OF THE CITY
COUNCIL WORK SESSION
CITY OF EAST GRAND FORKS
TUESDAY, APRIL 26, 2016 – 5:00 PM**

CALL TO ORDER:

The Work Session of the East Grand Forks City Council for April 26, 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, Mike Pokrzywinski, Craig Buckalew, Henry Tweten, and Marc DeMers.

Dave Aker, Parks & Recreation Superintendent; Karla Anderson, Finance Director; Nancy Ellis, City Planner; Steve Emery, City Engineer; Ron Galstad, City Attorney; Paul Gorte, Economic Development Director; Mike Hedlund, Police Chief; Charlotte Helgeson, Library Director; Jeremy King, Public Works Supervisor; Gary Larson, Fire Chief; David Murphy, City Administrator/Clerk-Treasurer; and Megan Nelson, Executive Assistant.

DETERMINATION OF A QUORUM:

The Council President Determined a Quorum was present.

1. Downtown Development Association – Stacey Majkrzak

Ms. Majkrzak introduced herself to the Council and told the Council about the Downtown Development Association. She explained how a small group came together and started to focus on the downtown area, that they requested and received funding from Grand Forks for three years to get started, and that she started with the organization in 2014 as the executive director. She informed the Council the three areas this organization focuses on which are clean-up the down town space, engaging the community, and helping down town businesses. She stated how there are bi-weekly cleanings in the summer of the downtown area, she listed the number of events that have been hosted to engage the community and bring them into the downtown area, and explained how they had helped a business with an issue.

Ms. Majkrzak told the Council the association is trying to be self-sustaining, that they will not be asking Grand Forks for more money, and that they would also like to work with East Grand Forks businesses. She stated they were very careful with the city funding and did not go outside of the city boundary while receiving funds from Grand Forks. She stated how they now have an opportunity to work with and help the down town areas of both cities grow together and asked if there were any questions.

Mayor Stauss thanked Ms. Majkrzak for coming to the meeting. He commented how it is important for the two downtowns to work together and draw people to the area. He suggested possible ideas to work on, that this could be good for the down town, and commented how good things are going on but that there is still room to make things better. Ms. Majkrzak stated how they could try and work on some of the ideas the Mayor suggested and how they are working on more ideas. Council member DeMers asked how many East Grand Forks businesses have joined. Ms. Majkrzak stated that she is trying to engage business owners in East Grand Forks and at this point there are only two members in East Grand Forks. She explained the only two ways they raise operation funds is through memberships and through revenue collected from their events. Council President Olstad thanked Ms. Majkrzak for attending the meeting.

2. Midwest Figure Skating Competition – Katie Boespflug

Ms. Boespflug informed the Council that she was representing the Northern Lights Figure Skating Club and explained how they had put in a respectable bid with the US Figure Skating Organization and were awarded the bid over 11 other offers. She stated how they had hosted this event in 2003 when it was just the Midwest region but now it includes the Pacific region also. She told the Council they expect over 200 teams to come to the event along with 35 national figure skating officials. She continued saying how this is a big deal for the area, it gets East Grand Forks on the map, and that they will be using the Civic Center and VFW Arena as unofficial practice ice which will be used during the day when nothing else is scheduled. She explained there is a contract being written with the Park & Rec for the use of ice and that this will bring in additional revenue for the City. She added those that are not able to use these arenas will be able to use the Gambucci or Purpur Arenas so that no other schedules for other sports are interrupted.

Ms. Boespflug told the Council they would like representatives from the City to welcome the teams. She explained that this event will be ran by volunteers and that it will be held at the Ralph Engelstad Arena because they have to be able to accommodate a high capacity of over 4,000 seats and both arenas will be used as competitive areas. She stated that this will run from Tuesday to Saturday night and if anyone was interested in volunteering to let them know.

Mayor Stauss thanked the club doing this. He explained how after the arenas were built all of the programs grew. He said the key to the arenas was to hold hockey tournaments and skating competitions which is what this group is doing. He continued saying how this will help out the businesses in the community with all of these people coming to town. He said this was great for the community, that he applauded what they were doing, and thanked them again for bringing this competition to town. Council Vice-President Grassel asked Ms. Boespflug what they would need from the City for this. Ms. Boespflug asked to have the maintenance kept up, that the arenas are ready for the teams, and to have everything clean and up to par when people start coming through the doors. Mayor commented that in 1990 the national bantam hockey tournament to town, that the City had success running the tournament, and that this group will be doing the same thing. Ms. Karen Peterson added that over 150 teams will be using the arenas which means a significant number of people going through the arena facilities.

Council President Olstad asked if information will be on the website in case people ask how they can help. Ms. Boespflug said that people will be able to sign up on the website to volunteer and gave examples of different kinds of jobs they will need volunteers for. Council member DeMers commented

that he was excited for this and that this will be great for the area. He added how the Civic Center renovation was just completed and asked if anything needed to be done at the VFW arena. Mr. Aker said they were currently painting. Council member DeMers stated that the bathrooms may need to be looked at along with the front lobby area possibly this summer. Mayor Stauss said it needs a good touch up. Ms. Boespflug commented that the VFW arena will be used more than the Civic Center because of events that are already scheduled at the Civic Center. Council President Olstad thanked them for coming in. Mayor Stauss added that if they need something to let the Council know.

3. LRIP Grant Information – Steve Emery

Mr. Emery said that the grant agreement had been included in the packet. He explained how the project is estimated to cost \$450,000 and that the City will be receiving almost \$367,000 in grant dollars. He said the City's share will be around \$83,000. He reminded the Council this is for the lowering of 5th Ave NE and 10th St NE. He added that Exhibit C will have to be executed and that the City will have to pass a resolution accepting the grant. He said they were looking for approval for the grant agreement. Mr. Galstad commented that the grant funds would need to be deposited into a non-interest bearing account. Ms. Anderson said she will look into that and see if that was the case if they request the funds after a payment has been made.

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

4. Request to File Plans & Specifications for 16AJ1 Street & Bike Path Improvements – Steve Emery

Mr. Emery informed the Council that this was for the 2016 street improvement project and that it did include a portion of bike path on the wet side of levee north of O'Leary Park. He continued reviewing the project costs and soft costs of 1.45 million with approximately \$462,000 of that being City costs and \$988,000 being assessed to property owners. He explained that there was only \$30,000 available for the bike path improvements which would not cover what needs to be done so the City portion of the project would increase to \$520,000 and that it would also depend on what the bids come in at. He stated that they are looking to file the plans and specs along with authorization to advertise so they can set a bid date for this project.

Council member DeMers asked if they Council will see the full plans before next week. Mr. Emery stated that he could send the plans once they are at 100%. Mr. Galstad asked to coordinate and include language awarding the bid after the appeal period. Mr. Emery said language would be included for that.

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

5. Water Service for Interconnect Lift Station – Jeremy King

Mr. King explained that with the new lift station will need a potable water source to be used for pump and facility maintenance as well as for safety. He informed the Council that currently there aren't any sources in the immediate area and it was estimated by the City Engineers to cost over \$150,000 for the City to put the infrastructure to get water to the lift station. He added that Marshall Polk Rural Water has estimated it would cost them approximately \$15,900 to install the necessary infrastructure and how

their water rates are roughly the same as the Water and Light Department. He stated that the most cost effective solution for this is to have Marshall Polk Rural Water install the water line.

Mr. Murphy informed the Council that Mr. Boyce was unable to attend the meeting today but he did want the Council told he was in agreement with this recommendation based on feasibility, distance, long term maintenance costs, and accessibility. He added that the lift station will also be served by PKM. Council Vice-President Grassel asked if it was because the water stops by the town homes by the golf course. Mr. Emery said yes and that over a mile of water main would have to be installed just to get out to the site. Mayor Stauss asked if that was going to be permanent water line and asked if that cost was included in the project costs. Mr. Emery commented how there was a monthly fee of \$7.00 and with minimal water usage the monthly cost would be around \$15.00 per month.

Council member DeMers stated that this lift station is not within city limits and asked if they would have to go with Rural Water. Council member Vetter stated that this was not within the City's service territory. Mr. Emery stated how the City would have had to purchase the service territory if the City was going to service the lift station. Council member DeMers commented how there wasn't a question because it was the cheaper way.

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

6. Flying Field Site Agreement – Tom Stennes

Mr. Stennes introduced himself stating he was a long time resident of East Grand Forks and that he was coming to Council as the president of the Red River RC Flyers. He stated they are now a sanctioned flying club #490 by the Academy of Model Aeronautics known as AMA. He continued saying that they are bringing forward an opportunity for a venue of recreation to East Grand Forks of a hobby that can attract young kids to adults. He explained how this can be a multi-faceted hobby. He said there had been a proposed agreement in the packet and that he handed out pictures of flying sites in the surrounding area. He explained he handed out the site plan of what it could be and said he was looking for any questions there might be as well as reviewing the agreement. He added how some information is getting out there because of the articles in the paper and that there is a lot of interest in town. He stated how this is an opportunity for the City, that they need to be at least five miles away from the airport, he listed different groups that have shown interest in being involved, and that they are trying to find a place.

Mayor Stauss said he thinks this is great but the one concern he has is that if there is any property nearby with a home. He commented how a home is the biggest investment a person makes in most cases and he doesn't want to have a big noise factor or have the residents bothered by this continuously. He added that he hopes this is an area where that doesn't happen. Mr. James Wilson, 2415 8th Ave NW, told the Council that he hates these planes because they are noisy and how he has been tempted to call the cops on the people who are flying the planes. He explained how he has to close his windows because of noise, that the planes drive his dog crazy, and that he has talked with his neighbors about this issue. Council President Olstad commented he had talked with residents from this area as well as Mr. Stennes and at this point Mr. Stennes had been the only one from the club that had flown a plane in that area to try and map it. He asked who else would have been out there without authorization flying a plane and how that needs to be looked into. Discussion followed about how there is a person going out in this area flying a noisy plane and how more traffic would be traveling on 8th Ave NW because of the park.

Council President Olstad said the current issues that are taking place need to be addressed because these items are outside of what is being requested. Mr. Wilson commented how the other issue he and other residents are concerned about is their privacy. Council President Olstad stated members of this club will not and cannot fly over anyone's house and that the flying area is restricted. He said again if there are other issues in this area that the residents need to call in so they can be addressed. Mr. Stennes stated he wasn't sure who was flying in the area, how there are people flying these planes around town, and how he is concerned about safety. He explained he was in favor of having a site to try and help control this. He added how there are people flying over homes or backyards which he doesn't approve of. He stated how the AMA has guidelines which do not allow them to fly over homes, people, or anything like that.

Council member Tweten said that personally he is vehemently against this and said this group could locate out by the lagoon without causing any problems. He said the contract is three years with the expectation of it being renewed. He continued saying how a number of people have contacted and worked with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources to make this area a natural resource learning center and multipurpose park. He stated the college is interested in the park and that the park could help sell lots which would increase the tax base. He said again the flying field could be moved further out without causing a problem. He commented how Mr. Stennes means well but that this was not in the best interest of the City.

Council President Olstad commented how this was a three year contract but it will be reviewed annually by both the City and the club. He added that the contract includes a 10 day written notice to cancel the agreement with the club. He stated that it would be great to allow the club to be out at the lagoon and that is where they may be in the future but at this time it will not work until the process is complete with the interconnect project. Council President Olstad said he would like to get the right information out there. Council Vice-President Grassel said he was at the site in the golf course for the demonstration and asked Mr. Stennes how many planes could be in the air at the same time. Mr. Stennes said the maximum would be five planes in the air at one time. Council Vice-President Grassel asked what the area that these planes would be allowed to fly. Mr. Stennes said the planes cannot fly farther than sight and that AMA asks to try and keep the planes within 400 feet. He added how the golf course site would work but there would have to be a road so they are able to get in there. He stated that they would prefer to be out by the lagoons but currently the property is wet, low, and would need work done before it would be ready to use.

Council member Buckalew commented was also at the demonstration last fall which he found very interesting. He stated that he was shocked at how quiet the planes were and that there was no sound with the electric planes. He added how this is an opportunity that the City can't wait five years to get going otherwise people will be flying everywhere. He stated how this site is only going to be a short term and how they could eventually move out by the lagoons. He said that he will be supporting this group at this time. Council Vice-President Grassel asked if it was possible to move the runway further north. Discussion followed about the possibility of moving the dirt mound, how a certain amount needs to be kept, and how the flying space could not go west of the fence line with most flying will be done over the fields.

Council member DeMers asked who enforces the rules at the flying field. Mr. Stennes said this would be an AMA club so they would require anyone flying out there to be a member of the AMA. He stated that the reason for this was because members of AMA have a \$1.5 million liability policy with the City

receiving a 2.5 million dollar liability policy since it is city property. He said another reason for this was the safety guidelines show all of the rules and regulations which they would enforce upon themselves but that does not stop others from going out there so the City may also have to help with enforcement. More discussion followed about how the club's liability insurance would be used before the City's policy, how there is a possibility to limiting the flying field to electric planes only, and that a hold harmless portion needs to be added to the agreement. Council member DeMers asked if it was proper to have a hearing and answer questions before moving forward with the flying field. Mr. Murphy said there was no legal requirement to hold a public hearing but the Council can if they so choose. Council Pokrzywinski asked to have the neighborhood notified about a public hearing for this. Discussion followed about the procedure to follow to notify the residents about the hearing. Ms. Anderson added that the hearing could maybe include a demonstration. Mr. Stennes said they certainly could do that.

7. Request to Approve the Purchase of Mobile Data Computers – Mike Hedlund

Mr. Hedlund stated that periodically they need to replace the mobile data computers in the squad cars. He said that they have reached the point of replacement and that he has been working with staff and the IT Department on what work best. He told the Council the quotes were include in the packet and that he was recommending purchasing five Panasonic Toughbook computers from Bizco for \$18,100. Council member DeMers asked if it was necessary to purchase toughbooks and was concerned about the costs. He asked what the need was for a toughbook, explained how the computers have improved since the last time these had been replaced, and how they could purchase six computers for about half the cost and would have one on hand just in case. Mr. Hedlund said he wasn't an expert, how they had problems with the other computers before, but that he was not opposed to looking at other computers. Council President Olstad asked if he could have the information by next Tuesday. Mr. Hedlund said he would look into it.

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

8. Greenway Project Request – Mike Pokrzywinski

Council member Pokrzywinski told the Council this request had gone before the Greenway Technical Committee and that he was asking the Council to support this. He said Guillermo, the artist, was at the meeting to answer any questions. He added that he supported this project and said again how he hopes the rest of the Council will do the same. Mr. Guillermo Guardia told the Council that he brought samples of what would be placed in the greenway. Council President Olstad stated how this would be done on June 18th and asked if it was just for one day. Council member Pokrzywinski said it was only for one day, that they won't harm anything, and that it could generate some discussion. He added this was funded by a grant from the Community Foundation. Mr. Guardia explained he had applied for the grant last December, how his idea was to use bridges for this originally, but now they will be using the banks of the river. He added that he would like to bring this to other cities in the region and farther is possible. Mr. Guardia said there would be about 100 figures on the East Grand Forks side and another 200 in Grand Forks. Council President Olstad thanked Mr. Guardia for coming and said that it was great that he was involving both of the communities.

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

9. Request to Use City Property Discussion – Megan Nelson

Ms. Nelson told the Council there is a possible project to install a driveway by the lift station at the Blue Moose. She explained that they have a bean bag league on Monday evenings in the summer months and that they are requesting to use the wet side of the flood wall for this league. She stated that after discussing this with Mr. Murphy it was determined the City needs to limit its liability since they would have alcohol involved with the league and to accommodate them if and when the driveway is installed. She added that once completed they would then return to their property. She said that she wanted to inform the Council about this since it is dealing with liquor and that this will be brought forward for the Council to vote on if the driveway is installed. Mayor Stauss asked who would be installing the driveway. Ms. Nelson stated it would be the City. Mayor Stauss said he had an issue with that since the Blue Moose had received \$50,000 because of the construction of the manholes and servicing that would need to be done there from time to time at the lift station. He said that before city workers would put boards down, currently there aren't any marks or issues, and he wouldn't have a problem if they wanted to put in the driveway. Mr. Galstad said he would review liability for city land and how there may be a need for a special permit.

10. Other

Mayor Stauss said he mentioned previously the possibility of having a lodging tax for the state park. He explained that a \$2 fee could be added to the daily charge and how those funds could be used for the beautification for the down town area. He said it had been suggested by DNR representatives and how the City may have to check with the Department of Natural Resources to see if that was a possibility. He stated how the Council is always looking at ways to bring in new revenue into the community as well as looking to the possibility of trying to match the Canadian dollar. He commented how these were two things the Council should be aware of, asked if they were in agreement on them, and if they should be voted on at the next meeting.

Council member Vetter said there was a current lodging tax for hotels, that the City had a contract with the Convention and Visitors Bureau regarding the lodging tax, and asked if these funds would be a part of that as well. Mayor Stauss said he thought it would be separate since it would be collected from the State Park and not the hotels. Council member Vetter asked to have that checked on. Council member Pokrzywinski asked if it was going to be a \$2 fee added on and if it would be collected and kept here in a separate account. He also asked the Mayor to be more specific on what he meant by beautification. Mayor Stauss said it would be for flowers. Council member Pokrzywinski asked if that would replace the flower budget from the general fund. Mayor Stauss said yes. Council member DeMers asked how much it may generate. Discussion followed about how there are 113 sites available and how they could look at numbers from last year to estimate a possible amount that could be generated. Mayor Stauss commented how this should be implemented before the park opens for the year. Council member Pokrzywinski asked if the City would have the authority to do that. Mr. Galstad stated that he would have to look into this.

Council member DeMers stated how a few years ago there was a project to place way finding signs around the City. He commented how it didn't really go anywhere and how one of the complaints about the City is that it is hard to find where things are. He said how the City might want to look into this again to help people find the VFW Arena or get them to the down town area.

ADJOURN:

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCIL MEMBER DEMERS, SECONDED BY COUNCIL MEMBER GRASSEL, TO ADJOURN THE APRIL 26, 2016 WORK SESSION OF THE EAST GRAND FORKS, MINNESOTA CITY COUNCIL AT 6:13 P.M.

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

Voting Nay: None.

David Murphy, City Administrator/Clerk-Treasurer