

**APPROVED MINUTES
OF THE CITY
COUNCIL WORK SESSION
CITY OF EAST GRAND FORKS
TUESDAY, JUNE 14, 2016 – 5:00 PM**

CALL TO ORDER:

The Work Session of the East Grand Forks City Council for June 14, 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 Members Clarence Vetter, Mike Pokrzywinski, Craig Buckalew, Henry Tweten, and Marc DeMers.

Karla Anderson, Finance Director; Mark Dragich, Interim Parks & Recreation Director; Steve Emery, City Engineer; Ron Galstad, City Attorney; Paul Gorte, Economic Development Director; Mike Hedlund, Police Chief; Charlotte Helgeson, Library Director; Gary Larson, Fire Chief; 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.

Mr. Kip Fontaine introduced himself to the Council and informed them that he had received endorsements from Leroy Stumpf and the DFL Party to run for the open seat in the senate. He informed the Council about his family, job his experiences, and ties to Northwest Minnesota. He thanked the Council for their time.

1. Future MNDOT Amendments to Transportation Plan – Earl Haugen

Mr. Haugen informed the Council he was at the meeting with MNDOT to discuss the process of adding an amendment to the MPO and East Grand Forks transportation plans for some MNDOT projects. He explained that an amendment takes a minimum of three months and it involves public engagement at meetings and open houses. He stated that the transportation plan is a fiscally constrained document that was adopted in 2013 and the projects that are going to be discussed were not identified at that time. He added how the MPO and MNDOT are focusing on preservation and these projects are identified as such. He said they were here to determine how the MPO, East Grand Forks, and MNDOT would like these projects to appear in the transportation plan. He added that once that was determined it would then go into project development to define what the actual project will be. He stated that MNDOT was present to go over the base projects as well as addressing other issues. Mr. Haugen stated they were not asking for action but just starting the process and turned it over to MNDOT.

Mr. Darren Laesch introduced himself as the planner in the district office in Bemidji. Mr. Luke Johanneck introduced himself as the assistant traffic engineer. Mr. Laesch explained how MNDOT makes plans for projects four years out, how they are developing a 10 year capital plan, and that these projects had not been identified. He added they are working on getting a better scope of the projects and gathering input. Mr. Laesch commented how there is paving that needs to be addressed which is driving this project and that they would like to hear about the issues with the corridor and how they will also be doing some culvert work as well as addressing safety issues.

Mr. Johanneck stated that a safety plan has been identified for the intersection of Business Highway 2 and Highway 2, how this issue was known about before, and that it has a higher than normal crash rate. He explained how they were looking at closing the median at the intersection of Highway 2 and Business Highway 2 to try and prevent accidents. He reviewed information about previous crashes, issues with having an intersection on a curve, and commented on other intersections in the district that have similar issues. Mr. Todd Gregoire asked why nothing has been done until now to make this intersection safer. Discussion followed about how the issue isn't so much of people not coming to a stop but of gap selection when trying to enter Highway 2. Mr. Ryan Gregoire commented how it is 50 miles per hour in this section and it may help to decrease the speed limit. Mr. Johanneck stated they could look into options such as rumble strips and added how the issue has more to do with the characteristics of the intersection. Discussion followed about looking at lowering the speed limit, the possibility of putting up sensors informing drivers that traffic is coming if there isn't too much traffic, and turning this street into a dead end would be detrimental to the businesses located along Business Highway 2. Council President Olstad commented how the closing of the intersection is a big concern, safety is also a concern, and how a lot of the traffic is truck traffic.

Mr. Todd Gregoire stated he was confused because if this intersection was such a safety concern why nothing had been done before. He commented how the grass needs to be mowed in the ditches to allow for better visibility and how there is close to 20,000 cars going through this intersection everyday with most being in a hurry and how some issues are because of human error. Mr. Laesch stated he would check with the maintenance crew to see when they would be able to address the ditches. Council member DeMers asked if MNDOT was going to propose the same thing for other intersections like this like at Highway 2 and Highway 75 in Crookston. Mr. Johanneck said it was something they would be looking into. Discussion followed on how this would cause problems for the businesses on Business Highway 2, if MNDOT could look into flattening out the curves, and even if traffic was encouraged to use 17 they would continue to use this access if it was left open.

Mr. Trent Peabody stated that these businesses on Business Highway 2 are retail businesses and the closure of the intersection would be the death to these businesses. He commented how the speed limits could be dropped, changing the route to County 17 would not be any safer, and how a vast majority of traffic comes from the east heading west on this road. He added how the businesses were told that they were get streetscapes but that didn't happen, and that the potato warehouses have been changed into other businesses. He said the proposal was foolish in his opinion and asked MNDOT to look at everything again.

Council member Vetter stated that the fix at intersection Highways 89 and 2 was overkill but that would be something that could work for this intersection. Mr. Johanneck commented how that intersection was one of the worst in the State. Mr. Laesch said that project wasn't their first choice but what they had to

move forward with. He said he understands what is being said, that these comments will be taken back and they will look into other options. Mayor Stauss stated this was about safety and business, both were important, and that MNDOT should consider what is the best fix and not necessarily what is the cheapest fix.

Discussion followed about a possible new truck route going on 11th Ave NE for the trucks going into and out of the beet factory. Mr. Laesch commented how that currently was to be a future site of a signal but since crashes increase with the installation of a new signal if the City would consider other options and eliminate the need for a signal. Council member DeMers asked if it was safer to make a U turn than drive across. Mr. Johanneck explained that J turns are safer and how they are able to make adjustments to allow for heavy commercial vehicles to fit. Mr. Peabody commented how the J turns were just scrapped in North Dakota. Mr. Johanneck commented that they have been found to be very effective. Discussion followed about how J turns have reduced crashes, how people may avoid using the J turns, and how MNDOT could consider reducing the speed limit on this section of Highway 2. Mr. Laesch asked the Council to keep these things in mind when it comes to future development because they are trying to prevent issues like the issues they are dealing with at Business Highway 2.

Mr. Laesch continued commented on the 4th Street bridge project. He said this wasn't scheduled until 2025 and that Mr. Paul Konickson was the bridge engineer who could inform the group on what was going on. Mr. Konickson reviewed the current condition of the bridge and what some of the possible repair options are. He stated that at this time it hasn't been determined what needs to be replaced. Council President Olstad said how there are have been previous discussions on the on-ramp when heading west because of the lack of a merge lane and the concerns about safety. He asked if any of the issues that had previously been discussed will be considered and addressed. Mr. Laesch stated these issues can be looked into. Discussion followed about how putting a stop sign here instead of merging more than likely would not solve the issue, how the options will depend on what project they move forward with, and how there may be more issues the removal of the median from the bridge.

Council member DeMers asked if there was the possibility for bridge removal and move forward with an at grade crossing. Mr. Laesch commented how there are already safety issues at the intersection of Highways 2 and 220 and this could just add to that problem. Discussion followed about how the MNDOT would not pick up the costs to raise River Road, how there would be challenges to work in the flood plain, they would not recommend it at this time, and that once the median is taken out on bridge there will be more crashes. More discussion followed about the placement of the pedestrian walk way being on the north side of the bridge and how cost estimates will needed for these possible projects.

2. Change Order for Lift Station #5 Replacement – Steve Emery

Mr. Emery informed the Council that a change order has been requested for the lift station replacement project. He explained that they had to change the concrete from 3000 psi to 4000 psi which cost \$6,932.85, that there was duplication of a disconnection switch which was a credit of \$4,189.50, and that the third item was for additional bracing and supports that were needed. He explained they ran into stiff soils which required further excavation and bracing which cost \$52,292.00. He stated that the two items and the one credit totaled \$55,036 which would be paid for by the contingency funds. He added there was still \$58,000 available in the contingency after this change order was paid for. Council member Tweten asked if there were sufficient contingency funds to complete the project. Mr. Emery stated there

were.

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

3. Change Order for the Pool Project – David Murphy

Mr. Murphy informed the Council the base for the handicap ramp was not adequate and had to be redone. He explained it was only \$1,292 that the project had been completed, but the Council should go through the process of getting the Council's consent. Council member DeMers asked what the costs looked like with this now included. Mr. Murphy said even with this additional cost the pool should still come under budget. Discussion followed about how good the pool has turned out and that there have been terrific crowds at the pool.

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

4. Discussion on Lease Agreement with Verizon – Ron Galstad

Mr. Galstad stated the agreement had been revisited. He reviewed how the tower can allow up to three providers, how originally the agreement stated the rent would total \$12,000 per year but the Council had requested \$24,000. He added that Mr. Buell was at the meeting to answer any questions. Mr. Buell informed the Council that the original offer of \$1,000 per month with a 10% escalator was not a low offer. He explained this is what the City of Grand Forks had agreed to after a study was done and that this amount is higher than what they usually pay per month for renting space. Council member DeMers stated he would be okay with the \$1,000 per month and inflator as long as the property is parceled out. Mr. Buell said he understood and that could be done. Mayor Stauss asked how many people this would serve. Mr. Buell explained that it would be hard to quantify how many people are served by the towers and added how usage has continued to increase which is creating the need to increasing the capacity. Discussion followed about how the Council would agree to the terms with a smaller foot print. Mr. Galstad asked if the exhibits needed to be updated. Mr. Buell stated he would review the exhibits and shrink the foot print.

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

5. Request to Formally Accept DNR Grant – Mark Dragich

Mr. Dragich stated the City had applied for a \$50,000 grant from the DNR for the pool project. He stated the City had been awarded the grant and asked the Council to formally accept the grant and authorize staff to submit the information to collect the funds. Council member DeMers asked where the grant came from. Mr. Dragich said it was from the land and conservation fund.

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

6. Request Regarding Short Term Storm Shelters – Gary Larson

Chief Larson informed the Council that he had been reviewing the storm shelter plan. He stated that currently the Civic Center and VFW Arenas are opened and people are allowed in without supervision.

He said he would like to include Park and Rec employees in this process and start having designated areas along with a sign in sheet for those that come to take shelter. He added that he had spoken with the Grand Forks Emergency Manager and asked to have a 2 sided shelter page that had the information for the shelters in both Grand Forks and East Grand Forks so the public is aware they can seek shelter in both cities.

Council member DeMers asked if that was something that could be handed out to the campers when they check in. Chief Larson stated that currently the campers have gone to the Fire Station and how they are looking for funding to build a shelter for the campground. Discussion followed about possible alternatives for the campers to seek shelter than at the fire station. Council member Tweten commented how an interpretive center could be built and serve a dual purpose and that legacy funds could be used for this project. Mayor Stauss commented that the Commissioner of the DNR seemed very receptive to that plan and to bring it back to his attention. Chief Larson said they would continue to work on a plan for the campers.

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

7. Request Regarding Paid On Call Staff – Gary Larson

Chief Larson told the Council that a few of the paid on call members had retired and there could be a couple more getting ready to retire. He asked to hire more paid on call members so they are back up to 25 on call members again and if they go below that number that he is able to start the hiring process and inform the Council when they have started another process. Council President Olstad asked if the minimum was 35. Chief Larson said there wasn't a minimum but the maximum was 35. He added those hired will have to complete 120 hours of training.

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

8. River Road Rehabilitation – Jason Stordahl

Mr. Stordahl informed the Council that he had been approached by both Polk County and Zavorals about the possibility to rehab the 940 feet of gravel on River Road the City is responsible for maintaining. He stated there is lots of truck traffic that is on this road and it is in tough shape. He explained lime would be hauled in to help firm up the road and the cost of the project would be approximately \$8000. Council member Buckalew asked what the time frame would be for this project. Mr. Stordahl stated that this project could be done fairly quickly and not interfere with any other projects.

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

9. Mosquito Control Equipment – Jason Stordahl

Mr. Stordahl asked the Council to purchase additional mosquito spraying equipment. He explained how long it takes for the Public Works employees to spray East Grand Forks, how an additional unit will help complete the task more quickly, that the spray is most affective when it is sprayed during peak times when mosquitoes are out, and that he was also requested the GPS units for each sprayer. He stated that

the GPS units tracks speed and adjusts the spray according which will help save on chemical.

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

ADJOURN:

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCIL MEMBER BUCKALEW, SECONDED BY COUNCIL MEMBER VETTER, TO ADJOURN THE JUNE 14, 2016 WORK SESSION OF THE EAST GRAND FORKS, MINNESOTA CITY COUNCIL AT 6:37 P.M.

David Murphy, City Administrator/Clerk-Treasurer