

**APPROVED MINUTES
OF THE CITY
COUNCIL WORK SESSION
CITY OF EAST GRAND FORKS
TUESDAY, OCTOBER 11, 2016 – 5:00 PM**

CALL TO ORDER:

The Work Session of the East Grand Forks City Council for October 11, 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, Henry Tweten, and Marc DeMers.

Karla Anderson, Finance Director; Dan Boyce, Water & Light Manager; 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; Reid Huttunen, Parks and Recreation Superintendent; 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. Mike Moore introduced himself to the Council, told them about when he use to be a resident of East Grand Forks, how he has spent some time in the community, commented on how the community has rebounded since the flood, and what some of the issues are that he has come across while visiting with residents. He thanked the Council for their time.

1. Inquiry about the Purchase of a Lot – David Murphy

Mr. Murphy stated the Council should have received information about a request to purchase city property to build an apartment building. He explained the location of the lot which is the parking lot that is southeast of the VFW building and how it would include underground parking for the tenants. He added that \$87,500 had been received as earnest money and with conditions that would need to be met. He stated the department heads had some discussion about this and how he had been reminded of the recent policy that was adopted for the sale of city lots. Mr. Gorte explained how the policy set up the process, that it would need to be reviewed by certain departments, an appraisal would have to be done, and there would also need to be a public hearing. He stated there was a question about TIF which is being looked into in. Mr. Murphy stated that at this time they are looking for direction from the Council on how to proceed. Discussion followed about how these will be 35 upscale apartments, 35% of the first floor will be used as commercial space, and the tentative timeline for completing the process set by the City policy.

Mayor Stauss asked what it would cost to pave the lot that is currently gravel. Mr. Emery stated the estimate for concrete was \$120,000 and that it would be cheaper to put in bituminous paving but maintenance costs would be more. More discussion followed that this project would be around 4.5 million, that this would be similar to other projects done by Community Contractors which have had high occupancy rates, that electric and fiber optics will have to be moved if this project is done, and that they are interested in starting this project in August of 2017. Council member Pokrzywinski said to proceed with this like it had been suggested and if there is a road block at least there was an attempt made. Council President Olstad asked other council members if they are okay moving forward with the process set up by the policy and there were no objections to starting the process.

2. Request to Use Geophysical Techniques in the Greenway – David Murphy

Mr. Murphy stated that the City had received a request from the Geology Department from UND. He explained that a geophysics class would like to try and find the rumored Whitey's bootlegger tunnel. He said they would like to make sure the Council is aware and that the professor was present to answer any questions. Professor Will Gosnold explained that this project was for a senior class and would have a real life application. He reviewed the different methods they would be using and how each method is performed. Mayor Stauss stated they may find things since the area they will be looking into use to be the where a zoo was located. Discussion followed about the history of the area and how the class will be requested to report any findings back to the Council.

3. Request to File Assessment Roll & Set Date for Final Hearing – Steve Emery

Mr. Emery informed the Council they will be making the request to file the assessment roll for this year's street improvement projects and set the final hearing date. He stated that the final seal coat costs ended up being \$9.77 for front benefit and \$3.25 for end benefit and reminded the Council the estimated costs were \$13.75 for front benefit and \$4.58 for end benefit. He added how the final costs for mill and overlay were \$60.58 for front benefit and \$20.19 for end benefit and that the estimated costs were \$76.22 for front benefit and \$25.41 for end benefit. Mr. Emery stated that the final hearing will be set for November 15th.

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

4. Solicitation for Transportation Alternative Program Funding – Steve Emery

Mr. Emery explained that the City could apply for funds for alternative transportation projects. He stated included in the packet was a list of possible projects and that there is an 80/20 federal/local match just for the construction costs with the remaining costs being paid for by the City. Discussion followed about how the City was not awarded funds the previous year for the Bygland Road bike lane, how there could be items that could be selected from the Bygland Road Study, and that the letter of intent needed to be completed by October 31, 2016. More discussion followed about how the Bygland Road bike lane project should receive first consideration is used again, how more than one project could be submitted but that the funds would be capped for construction dollars, and that there is a separate solicitation for safety items such as the HAWK system.

Mr. Haugen suggested about possibly adding in the project connecting the Kennedy Bridge trail to the rest of the trail system. Ms. Ellis asked if there was a minimum project amount that was required. Mr. Haugen stated the minimum project cost would be \$100,000. More discussion followed about how to pick projects. Council President Olstad asked to have possible projects listed for the following work

session and to have a special session following to vote on what projects to include in the application.

5. Presentation from the Metropolitan Planning Organization – Earl Haugen

Mr. Haugen introduced himself along with Ms. Teri Kouba and Mr. Jairo Viafara. Mr. Haugen explained they developed a communication plan to engage both City Councils. He reviewed what the Metropolitan Planning Organization was and how they not only work in both communities but the surrounding areas as well. He explained how there is a MPO board, a MPO website, and reviewed current projects they were working on which included updating Grand Forks' Land Use Plan, I29 transportation study, and a study of the intersection of Highway 2 and Business Highway 2.

Mr. Haugen turned it over to Ms. Kouba who reviewed transit. She explained they were working on improving the current system, they have completed many of the necessary steps, how they were trying to reduce the number of transfers, and they were also looking at trying to improve night and Sunday services. Mr. Viafara informed the Council that they were also working on updating the bike and pedestrian plan. He stated the next meeting was the following evening at the East Grand Forks City Hall and he invited everyone to attend. He added how people are riding the trails as well as in other areas to see what is working and what may be needed. He showed the Council examples of comments that had been received in this process. Mr. Haugen informed the Council that the MPO is soliciting ideas from both councils on what they should study in the next two years so if the Council had an idea to submit it to them for consideration.

6. 13th Street & Bygland Road Discussion – Mike Hedlund

Chief Hedlund told the Council there has been a variety of issues this fall at the intersection of Bygland Road and 13th Street or Greenway Boulevard as well as issues at this intersection in the past. He stated they are trying to figure out a direction to take to in regards to this intersection. He explained how they have tried to have officers at the intersection when possible but even when officers have been present there have been close calls. He said there has been signage placed informing people to slow down but they continue to go quickly through the intersection. Council member Tweten commented they should have the State for assistance. Mr. Emery said that since this wasn't a state highway they may not provide assistance. Council member Tweten said to ask anyway. Council Vice-President Grassel informed the Council at South Point there were so many bikes from students riding to school that they had to borrow a bike rack. Discussion followed about the HAWK crosswalk system, how it acts like a traffic light to stop traffic for pedestrians but it is not put on a timer, and that it this system requires lots of education.

Ms. Ellis reminded the Council the HAWK crosswalk system had been suggested in the Bygland Road study and until something is put in place that crossing guards could be used. Council member Vetter asked to have that study redistributed to the Council for review. More discussion followed about who may be able to volunteer as a crossing guard, how it can be difficult to see the children in the morning, and even putting up a caution light could possible help slow down the traffic at this intersection. Council President Olstad asked how much the HAWK system would cost. Mr. Emery said the estimate in the Bygland Road study was \$280,000 and that it was suggested to go just across Bygland Road, not at the intersection so cars are only going in two directions and there wasn't turning lanes. Council member Tweten said to ask the general public if they have any ideas and if so to contact the City Administrator with them.

7. Request for Digital Sensor & Valve for Swimming Pool – Reid Huttunen

Mr. Huttunen informed the Council there was a request to install a digital sensor in the surge tank at the pool. He stated this request came from the Minnesota Department of Health inspector who explained the water level needed to be lowered and to change the sensor because the stem system that is currently regulating the system could bend and break. He explained that while the pool was open staff was manually making adjustments to the surge tank. Mayor Stauss asked about the cost. Mr. Huttunen stated it would be \$3,507. Council member DeMers asked if this was a regulation change. Mr. Huttunen said this sensor was not regulated but that the request was being made to prevent an overflow of water in the pump house. Council member DeMers commented these were the reasons why engineer consultants were hired and stated to send them the bill for this. Council Vice-President Grassel stated that there have been more issues and overages on this project, how the Council has been holding the City Engineers to a higher standard of service, and it is time they do the same with EAPC.

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

8. Request for Winter Equipment Lease – Jason Stordahl

Mr. Stordahl reminded the Council that an additional motor grader is leased every winter season. He asked to move forward with a lease agreement with Butler Machine. He explained based on an average of snow or even more than an average year of snow this lease would work better for the City. Discussion followed about possibly having additional help lined up if needed. Mr. Stordahl stated that was something that was done every year.

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

9. Human Resource Generalist Position – David Murphy

Mr. Murphy stated there were a couple reasons for this request. He explained the study that was completed by the group the previous year had suggested this position for the future and at this point the Human Resource Specialist/Accounting Tech has been spending about 75% of her time on human resource items and only 25% on accounting items so the time for a change to a Human Resource Generalist is now. He stated how the person in this position would need to be SHRM-CP certified. He said that he would like feedback from the Council. Discussion followed about how the Accounting Technician has taken on more of the day to day entries and the Accountant in Water and Light has been helping with the oversight of bank reconciliations. Council member DeMers asked what the ramification was to not having the certification by January 1st. Mr. Murphy stated the person hasn't started the certification process and would need more time to complete it. He added that if the person in this position was not able to obtain the certification he would then recommend moving them back to the original position. He commented how it had been suggested in the study to give this person their own space which is something that is being looked into.

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

10. Assessment Policy Update – David Murphy

Mr. Murphy explained that there had been discussion with the Council about the assessment policy. He told the Council a team of staff have met and discussed the current policy which is not adequate. He stated there were three areas they were looking into and needed direction or input from the Council. He

said three areas were new construction, reconstruction, and maintenance. He reviewed the current policy for reconstruction and said the group was looking at changing the cost from being 100% assessed to a split between the City and property owner. He added there were approximately six identified reconstruction projects coming up and to cover the City's portion a direct general obligation bond could be done or the levy would need to be increased. He continued on with new construction since there are issues with not all of the information being given to buyers so they are unaware of the special assessments, that this had been previously discussed in 2011, and reviewed the four options regarding new developments and the possible requirements of developers. He added that when Grand Forks does maintenance improvements they assess a larger area. He asked for questions.

Council member Vetter stated that he was not in favor of splitting costs, added how they had discussed adopting assessments before awarding the job so the costs would be known, and that he does not want to assess everyone. Mayor Stauss commented that there are concerns about taxes, people need to pay their own assessments, and that contractors need to inform the buyers of the assessments. Council member Tweten commented that the Council would be asking for trouble if they asked the entire City to pay for street improvements. Discussion followed about how there needs to be more discussions on this before adopting a new policy, how the streets are a network like the water and electric systems, and how there isn't a specific timeframe to complete this update in. More discussion followed about street improvement districts, that they still haven't been approved by the State Legislature, and that waivers signed by developers cannot be transferred to the buyers of the properties. Mayor Stauss suggested that the new Council review and consider this item.

11. Request for use of Parking Spot – Megan Nelson

Ms. Nelson informed the Council that Little Bangkok had contacted the office and was requesting a no parking sign on 2nd St NW during certain times of the day. She explained they were expanding service to the Air Force Base and would be loading up a truck every day in the morning and unloading in the afternoon. She asked the Council how they would like to proceed. Mr. Galstad stated that since this was a street and not a parking lot reserved parking was not allowed. Discussion followed about putting up a loading zone sign and how some Council members will not be supporting this request.

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

Mr. Dan Boyce introduced Mr. Keith Mykleseth who is the new general manager of the Water and Light Department. Mr. Mykleseth informed the Council that he was looking forward to working here. Mr. Boyce invited the Council to stop by and meet Mr. Mykleseth.

ADJOURN:

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCIL MEMBER POKRZYWINSKI, SECONDED BY COUNCIL MEMBER GRASSEL, TO ADJOURN THE OCTOBER 11, 2016 WORK SESSION OF THE EAST GRAND FORKS, MINNESOTA CITY COUNCIL AT 7:39 P.M.

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

Voting Nay: None.

Absent: Buckalew.

David Murphy, City Administrator/Clerk-Treasurer