

**APPROVED MINUTES
OF THE CITY
COUNCIL WORK SESSION
CITY OF EAST GRAND FORKS
TUESDAY, DECEMBER 13, 2016 – 5:00 PM**

CALL TO ORDER:

The Work Session of the East Grand Forks City Council for December 13, 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.

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; Rod Hajicek, Detective Lieutenant; 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.

1. Request to Approve Report of Feasibility & Set Date for Hearing for 17AJ1 – Steve Emery

Mr. Emery handed out the report of feasibility for the proposed street improvement projects for 2017. He reviewed the estimated costs for seal coat and mill and overlay portions of the project. He then explained the different proposals and estimated costs which would not be assessed which included panel replacement on Bygland Road, parking lot improvements, an area of reconstruction, and bike path improvements. Council member DeMers asked when 4th Street was going to be redone with the construction still going on at the high school. Mr. Emery stated it was their intent to have that area done in late summer or early fall when the construction on the school should be close to finishing up. Discussion followed on how some costs like updating sidewalks have not been included with the assessed costs for the last two years, how there are different options to pay for the City's portion of these projects, and that including some of these items in with a bigger project has brought prices down compared to when they had been bid out separately.

Ms. Anderson commented that the Council could keep the proposals in, wait to see what the bids come in at, and then decide what they would like to move forward with. Council member Olstad asked if anything could be put off until 2018. Mr. Emery stated that this was the last of the three years of the street improvement projects and at this time there were not any major projects planned. He added the Council could bid out all of the proposals and decide what projects to award. Council member

Buckalew asked if there were any funds that were dedicated for flood projects because there was an issue with the dike by the veteran's memorial. Ms. Anderson stated that the funds were supposed to be used for infrastructure. Mr. Stordahl explained they were aware of the situation and were going to be looking in to it within the next year or two.

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

2. Update on the Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan – Jairo Vaifara

Mr. Vaifara informed the Council he was going to be giving them an update on the bike and pedestrian plan. He explained a number of activities had taken place to build public support for this plan which included meetings, surveys, and having information in the local media about the plan. He continued how they are moving on to the visioning of the overall plan while working with both cities and different entities within the cities. He stated the long range plan was to provide a variety of choices for transportation with community goals that include a focus on safety and promoting economic development as well as promoting community vitality. He told the Council there are two new factors which are MAP21 and FAST, what some of the new goals and objectives were which now include resiliency and tourism, and how the current existing conditions have been assessed. He explained how areas have been identified where improvements need to be made.

Mr. Vaifara told the Council that they are bringing forward the idea of complete streets. He explained that complete streets are streets that allow or provide space for all types of users. He added how they are looking at improving intersections, connectivity, and improving the area from the bronze level to a silver level. He stated this is where things are currently at, thanked the Council for their time, and invited them to attend upcoming meets.

3. Request to Submit TAP Application – Nancy Ellis

Ms. Ellis reminded the Council about the sidewalk project for 13th Street SE and 20th Ave SE. She stated the letter of intent had been approved and the next step was to submit an application. She reviewed the 80/20 cost split and how the City would have to cover the engineering fees. She explained the Safe Kids group and also sent in a letter of intent for non-infrastructure funds and the MPO had suggested putting both items on the same application since the City would need to act as the sponsoring agent for the Safe Kids application. She asked the Council for approval to combine the applications into one before moving forward. Council President Olstad asked if the funds that Safe Kids was going to receive would be used in East Grand Forks. Ms. Ellis stated the funds would only be used in East Grand Forks. She added how a resolution would need to be passed which included a guarantee the sidewalks would be maintained but did not have to specify it would be done by the City.

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

4. Request for Doors at Civic Center – Reid Huttunen

Mr. Huttunen told the Council part of the project at the Civic Center was to replace doors and windows in some of the doors. He stated how there was \$30,000 budgeted for signage, the signage was now complete and how there was over \$20,000 remaining to pay for the doors and windows. He stated this wouldn't be complete for a few weeks. He recommended accepting the bid from Sterling Carpet One for a total of \$19,353.15. Council member Tweten commented how important it was to keep up with

maintenance of the buildings and that he was in favor of accepting the lower quote.

Council member Pokrzywinski asked how things are now since the roof project is complete. Mr. Huttunen stated that he hadn't seen things before the fix was done but the snow is blowing off the roof, there was some build up of snow on the southeast edge of the building and he was told it was nothing like it had been before.

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

5. Consideration of Setting Policy for Outdoor Rink Rate – Megan Nelson

Ms. Nelson informed the Council the Administration Office had been contacted and asked about a reduced sewage rate for putting an outdoor rink in the back yard. She reminded them this had been brought up the winter before, it had been discussed to set a policy but at this point it hadn't been done. She asked how they would like to move forward. Discussion followed about setting up a policy and having it ready for the Council to vote on at the next meeting.

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

6. Discussion Regarding Legislative Day – Mark Olstad

Council President Olstad reminded the Council about the upcoming Legislative Day that was going to be held at the State Capitol on February 1st. He stated that the rooms needed to be booked before the end of the month asked who would like to attend. He added how the reservations could always be cancelled. He explained how the day is set up with meetings with legislators, it ends with a dinner, and they would come home the following day. Discussion followed about who would like to attend and how City shirts or name tags could be ordered.

7. 2017 Budget & Levy Discussion – Karla Anderson and David Murphy

Mr. Murphy reviewed what the budget process had been up to this point, how the Council could consider approving the levy and budget at the December 20th meeting, and that staff went back through the budget while reviewing priorities. He explained how items were removed from the budget, that they are recommending an increase to the franchise fee for the Water and Light Department, and looking to charging for employees' time for special events. He added that with all of the changes the budget was only short \$15,000 from the goal of getting 32% percentage in reserves. He added the unknown was if the \$30,000 for Valley Golf was going to be included in the budget and if it wasn't they met the goal. Ms. Anderson reviewed the revenue and expenses. Mr. Murphy then asked for questions or comments from the Council.

Council President Olstad asked about the payments that were taken off for the Central Equipment Fund. Ms. Anderson explained they found the equipment had been paid for along with interest so those payments were no longer needed and how that process was going to be reviewed. Council member DeMers asked about charging for events and if events wouldn't be held because of the additional costs. Mr. Murphy gave examples of how there are some events that do take a considerable amount of staff time to set up. Mayor Stauss commented how he hates to see events being charged for because it is hard enough to put a parade together. Council member DeMers commented how there may be some fall out if the City starts charging for events. He added that he was not in favor of increasing the franchise fee and asked what the breakdown was for that. Mr. Boyce explained how it was based on usage and that

there weren't many changes to electric rates for 2017. Council member Buckalew commented that businesses in the area receive border city credits so this would be a way to get businesses to contribute more. Council member Vetter commented that he was not in favor of increasing the franchise fee, he didn't like how this budget process has gone, and gave suggestions on how things should have changed. Discussion followed about removing the \$30,000 for the golf course, if the library should hire another full time person, and if not they would be cutting back hours.

Mayor Stauss asked what the State requires. Mr. Murphy explained the State recommends a 35% to 50% in reserves and how it could affect a City's bond rating if it was lower than that. Mayor Stauss commented that the City still needs to function but they need to find a way to keep costs down which may include a wage freeze. Discussion followed about how the City collected \$93,000 in addition to the \$100,000 from campground revenue. Mayor Stauss suggested the flowers be paid for with these funds and both the City and DNR use revenue funds to split the costs which then could be removed from the budget. More discussion followed about how the library does provide some assistance to the schools, how there are many functions the library helps with, that they doubled the room rental fee and they haven't see a decrease in usage. Council member Pokrzywinski explained why he was supporting the additional position for the library. Council member Tweten also voiced his opinion supporting the additional person for the library as well as how important the library was in the City.

Mr. Murphy continued saying how he appreciates the comments from the Council and explained an article he handed out about how to improve financial structural imbalance. He stated the Council has the ability to make any changes to the budget they so choose but there may be some consequences. Discussion followed about how gradual changes should have been done, how the \$30,000 for the golf course needs to be removed from the budget and how the Council can't count on the State Legislature holding a special session.

8. Other

Mr. Murphy informed the Council he would like to hold a vision and goal setting session to update the City's strategic plan in January or February and asked the Council and Department Heads to check their calendars to see what Saturday would work.

ADJOURN:

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCIL MEMBER GRASSEL, SECONDED BY COUNCIL MEMBER BUCKALEW, TO ADJOURN THE DECEMBER 13, 2016 WORK SESSION OF THE EAST GRAND FORKS, MINNESOTA CITY COUNCIL AT 6:43 P.M.

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

Voting Nay: None.

David Murphy, City Administrator/Clerk-Treasurer