

**APPROVED MINUTES  
OF THE CITY  
COUNCIL WORK SESSION  
CITY OF EAST GRAND FORKS  
TUESDAY, MAY 9, 2017 – 5:00 PM**

**CALL TO ORDER:**

*The Work Session of the East Grand Forks City Council for May 9, 2017 was called to order by Council President 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 Steve Gander, Council President Mark Olstad, Council Vice President Chad Grassel, Council Members Clarence Vetter, Mike Pokrzywinski, Tim Riopelle, Henry Tweten, and Marc DeMers.*

*Karla Anderson, Finance Director; Nancy Ellis, City Planner; Ron Galstad, City Attorney; Charlotte Helgeson, Library Director; Reid Huttunen, Parks and Recreation Superintendent; Gary Larson, Fire Chief; David Murphy, City Administrator/Clerk-Treasurer; Keith Mykleseth, Water & Light Manager; Megan Nelson, Executive Assistant; and Jason Stordahl, Public Works Director.*

**DETERMINATION OF A QUORUM:**

*The Council President Determined a Quorum was present*

**1. Discussion of US 2 and US Bus 2 Study – Darren Laesch & Matt Pacyna**

Mr. Laesch introduced himself to the Council, how this item had been brought up last year, they would like this addressed in 2021, and are trying to make sure there is enough time to determine what improvement should be done at this intersection. He gave an overview of what the process had been up to this point to improve safety at this intersection. He then turned it over Mr. Pacyna with SRF Consulting who conducted the study that was done.

Mr. Matt Pacyna introduced himself to the Council, gave an overview of the study goals which included trying to identify the deficiencies of the area, evaluations of them, and design alternatives. He explained the large area they looked into, they identified issues, reviewed the crash history, capacity, access, environmental conditions, land use, and heavy commercial compatibility. He stressed that truck access and business access was very important in this area. He reviewed the crash information, how the steering committee was made up of a variety of people, many good discussions were had by the steering committee, and that two public meetings were held for additional public input. He reviewed the different alternatives that were reviewed, what the crash reduction was for each, the cost of each, and what the safety benefit was for each. He explained the focus was on four alternatives, how they were prioritized based on certain criteria and how they would recommend moving forward and looking more into alternatives 2A, 3A, and 3B. He said the next step was moving forward to complete the final report.

Mr. Laesch stated resurfacing was being scheduled from Fisher to the stoplights at 5<sup>th</sup> Ave NE in East Grand Forks in 2021 and how there was approximately \$2 million available for a project at this intersection. He said the bulk of the funds were to be used for resurfacing and some was also going to be used for other safety improvements as well. He added the next step in the process was to narrow this down to one option. Council Vice-President Grassel asked if there was any data on the R-cuts they were proposing because he thought they looked dangerous. Mr. Laesch said R-cuts were typically done on expressways and have cut down on severe and fatal crashes as well as provided a reduction in general for crashes. He added how there are very few vehicles at this intersection that make the turn north. Mayor Gander asked if they had looked into lowering the speed limit and the addition of lighting. Mr. Laesch said all of the options will include some component of lighting, maybe a warning device for cars on Highway 2, but they don't have the authority to lower the speed limit. Discussion followed about they don't want to have a large speed differential on the highway and currently there isn't enough to warrant reducing the speed limit.

Council member DeMers asked what issues they were having at the intersection of Highway 2 and 75. Mr. Laesch said there are some challenges with the curve in the road, some people are having a hard time with estimating how much space they have, and they are not sure why it is happening. He added how Alternative 2B is very similar to the intersection by Crookston but turning opposite directions. Council member DeMers commented that he liked the idea of an acceleration lane. Discussion followed about what would have to be negotiated for the different alternatives and that the costs are based on the project by itself so the costs could be reduced when bid with the resurfacing project.

Council President Olstad asked if any of the business owners had any comments. Mr. Todd Gregoire asked for a no littering sign to be put up along the highway. Mr. Trent Peabody stated he had sat through the meetings, still had some questions, and how looking into the speed limit and lighting would be the least expensive thing to do. He added he was uncomfortable with the R-cut and liked Alternative 2B the most because it allowed for stacking but if they had to give a concession they would prefer Alternative 2A. Council President Olstad said he was glad they were going through this process and glad the discussion was going to continue. He asked what the timeline was going to be. Mr. Laesch said they were looking at a year from now to have it down to one alternative and then update the Council again. Mayor Gander commented how they didn't want to hear this intersection was to be closed down and thanked them for looking into alternatives.

## **2. Update on Transit Development Plan – Teri Kouba**

Ms. Kouba informed the Council they were in the last stages of the transit plan updates. She reviewed the process they had gone through to get to this point and how priorities were set which included looking into increasing frequency on routes and expanding night service. She explained there were budget constraints for both cities when it came to expanding services but East Grand Forks was getting additional funding from the State to expand services. She then gave an overview of the goals and performance measures that were already being measured because this service is based on performance. She went over the financial information, how there needs to be additional funds included in the budget for capital improvements, and to ensure there are enough funds for operation. She added how they are now coordinating with Human Service Transportation plan which use to be separate. She asked if there were any questions. There were none.

### **3. Approval of New Service Expansion funding from MNDOT – Nancy Ellis**

Ms. Ellis informed the Council that the State of Minnesota has different plans and regulations than the State of North Dakota and how they focus on the Olmstead Plan which is a federal requirement to provide more services for the disabled and seniors. She stated how this would also be setting hours so there are 12 to 16 hour days of service adding a night and Sunday service. She explained how expensive it would be to have services on Sunday so at this time it is a non-option. She stated they were looking at having more frequent service and night service. She said they were looking at changing routes 3, 5 and 8. She said they are looking at transferring at the Grand Cities Mall which would allow for more connections and because most of the East Grand Forks riders want to get to Grand Forks.

Ms. Ellis explained they looked into the costs, that an additional bus would be needed, and an additional \$115,000 would be needed each year for service. She explained that because of MNDOT's goals they are providing 100% of the funding until 2020 for this service along with \$460,000 for a new bus, and that this would need to be formally accepted by the Council to move forward. She then explained how they are looking at what changes could be done to maintain these services after the funding changes. She stated that it costs approximately \$325,000 to run the current fixed routes, majority of it is paid for by the State at an 80/20 split, and the City would be able to use federal funds. She said in the past Minnesota has required the City to use 50% of the federal funds for operations and save 50% but since the City only purchases a bus approximately every seven years and receives funding for the purchase of a bus they are looking to see if more funds could be used for operations. She added how some of the transit funds have used for sidewalks. She stated how they have received a verbal agreement to use more of the federal funds for operating starting in 2020 so that even though operating costs will increase the State will still cover the 80/20 split and the City portion would increase by approximately \$35,000. She said they will be watching ridership, if routes may need to be modified, or if in a couple years they may need to re-evaluate. She added the City will need to accept the funds or the State will give the funds to someone else. Council member DeMers commented he was glad someone was budgeting into 2020. Council Vice-President Grassel agreed as well.

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

### **4. Request for Station 2 HVAC – Gary Larson**

Chief Larson informed the Council they had been having trouble with the rooftop unit at Station 2, it is very difficult to get parts to fix it anymore, it had been included in the capital improvement plan, and now the unit no longer works. He explained that the Water and Light Department did an energy study and because of that they will be able to receive energy credits on this item because of the energy efficiency. He said the quotes were quite close; \$8700 had been included in the budget for this item, and recommended awarding the job to Anderson Heating and Cooling for \$8,549.92.

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

### **5. Promotional Process Request – David Murphy**

Mr. Murphy stated that Sergeant Demers was retiring and the sergeant position will need to be filled. He explained that Chief Hedlund has wanted to have a promotional process in place and as long as the Council doesn't have any objections Chief Hedlund would work with human resources and himself to develop this process particularly for the sergeant's position.

## **6. Request to Start Hiring Register for Secretary/Dispatcher/Jailer – David Murphy**

Mr. Murphy explained the person in this position currently has given a verbal notice that she is planning on retiring in September. He said they would like someone in place by the time the retirement takes place so the transition is as smooth as possible. He said the request is to start the hiring process for this position.

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

## **7. Request to Purchase Wastewater Pickup – Jason Stordahl**

Mr. Stordahl explained there was money budgeted to replace the Waste Water pickup, how they had pricing from the State contract page for the new pickup, and if approved they would also be trading in a pickup from the Parks Department. He stated how there was a pickup in the Public Works Department that could be given to the Parks Department which had a lot less miles than the pickup would be traded in. He recommended to purchase the new Dodge truck from Nelson Auto Center for \$29,227.97 and declare unit 302 as surplus to be used as trade. There was a short discussion about how there had been some issues and what may happen if the contract changes.

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

## **8. Request for Sand/Salt Storage Building – Jason Stordahl**

Mr. Stordahl reviewed how the bids in 2016 for this project came quite high, all bids were rejected, they looked into completing this project in parts, how there is an issue with the stability of the ground which could be a substantial cost, and WSN has looked into this issue along with other options. He asked for authorization for staff to prepare plans and specifications and advertise for the building foundation. He said \$200,000 had been budgeted with the estimated cost of the building at \$90,000 and estimated cost of foundation work is a little over \$100,000.

Council member DeMers asked if there was any other place that this could be put. Mr. Stordahl stated they had looked at other possible locations at Public Works and other areas around town which then would require them to go to another location. He added how usually only call one person in to sand streets and if it were at a different location it would require two since they would need both a loader and a truck. He said how Public Works is relatively centrally located in the City so it would make sense to keep it there.

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

Mr. Stordahl informed the Council that the loader that was going to be traded in is in need of repair which could be expensive. He explained they were looking to see if it could be traded in as is or if a repair needs to be done before it can be traded.

## **9. Discussion on City Clerk Position – David Murphy**

Mr. Murphy informed the Council that Ms. Nelson had been promoted to the Executive Assistant position in 2012 and was told she would be going through the training to become a Minnesota Certified Clerk which is a three year process with the intention of becoming the City Clerk. He said there is a

City Clerk position that was previously pointed and approved. He stated that Ms. Nelson received her certification back in March of 2016, it was brought to his attention by others that she had completed this process, and that he was asking to start the process which includes going through the Civil Service and asked for questions.

Council member Tweten commented how Ms. Nelson is capable, anticipates what the Council and department heads need, and says what she is going to do. Council member DeMers said Ms. Nelson has worked hard for this and his only concern is that the City Clerk position is called out on a lot of specific items in the City Charter that haven't been cleaned up yet. He said some of these roles would be handled by the City Administrator, he didn't want to hold up the promotion, but the language charter needs to be cleaned up. Mayor Gander said he does not plan to obstruct the promotion of Ms. Nelson. He added his main concern with this promotion was she wouldn't be available to continue in the partnership but was assured by Ms. Nelson she would continue taking care of all of the duties she currently is doing. He stated that Ms. Nelson does bring a customer service mentality to the job, tries to get things addressed as quickly as possible, and that will continue even with the promotion.

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

Mayor Gander informed the Council that his son Tom has been diagnosed with cancer and has started chemotherapy which will continue over the next six to eight months. He said that they have a pact that once he starts losing his hair, Mayor Gander will be shaving his head along with his other son, and that he did not want to startle anyone when his head was shaved.

**ADJOURN:**

**A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCIL MEMBER POKRZYWINSKI, SECONDED BY COUNCIL MEMBER DEMERS, TO ADJOURN THE MAY 9, 2017 WORK SESSION OF THE EAST GRAND FORKS, MINNESOTA CITY COUNCIL AT 6:21 P.M.**

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

*Voting Nay: None.*

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David Murphy, City Administrator/Clerk-Treasurer