

**APPROVED MINUTES
OF THE CITY
COUNCIL WORK SESSION
CITY OF EAST GRAND FORKS
TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 10, 2019 – 5:00 PM**

CALL TO ORDER:

The Work Session of the East Grand Forks City Council for September 10, 2019 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, Dale Helms, and Tim Johnson.

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; Gary Larson, Fire Chief; David Murphy, City Administrator/Clerk-Treasurer; Megan Nelson, City Clerk; and Jason Stordahl, Public Works Director.

DETERMINATION OF A QUORUM:

The Council President Determined a Quorum was present.

1. Request for Declaration of Surplus Property – Jason Stordahl

Mr. Stordahl explained there were some vehicles and a flatbed that both Public Works and the Parks and Recreation Department would like declared as surplus and sell at the next city auction. There were no questions.

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

2. Consider Accepting FEMA AGF Grant – Gary Larson

Chief Larson informed the Council the Fire Department had been awarded a FEMA grant to replace the exhaust system that no longer functioned at Fire House 2 along with replacing outdated fire hose. He said the City's cost for the grant was about five cents on the dollar, which would be approximately \$4,500. Mayor Gander asked if there were funds available. Ms. Anderson said there were funds available. There were no more questions.

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

3. Request for Purchase & Install Flashing Crosswalk Signs – Michael Hedlund

Chief Hedlund told the Council his department has received requests from citizens about traffic safety

issues around some of the schools. He said there is an area on 17th Street NW that has a crosswalk and crosswalk signs in place but the request was made to enhance this area and add flashing signs to help children get across the street, which can be busy at certain times of the day. He explained he had looked into this signs and there were two examples of signs included in the packet, one option having to purchase two signs for approximately \$3,400 or another that comes with two signs for around \$2,500.

He stated the other area with concerns is around the Riverside Christian School. He explained a request for flashing signs was asked for but after looking the area over there are modifications that can be done first. He commented how Public Works will be making some of the modifications that include painting the crosswalk area and adding pedestrian crossing signs.

Council member Helms said he lives in this area and every day cars blow through the stop sign. He asked if adding flashing lights on the stop sign would help people see the sign and stop. Chief Hedlund said he did think it would help. Discussion followed about how expensive it would be to add the flashing crosswalk signs to all of the intersections in this area, the modifications should help, but if there are continued issues this can be looked at again. Council member Helms asked again about adding lights to the stop signs because people drive fast down that street and anything they can do for improvements at these intersections would be a good thing to help with pedestrian safety. He added he did not want to waste funds on items that will not help. Chief Hedlund said what they have planned will be a good first step. Mayor Gander asked if reflective strips on being put on sign posts. Mr. Stordahl said they do not but it is something they can look into. Chief Hedlund said he did not have a funding source for this and asked if there was an area where these funds could come from. Mr. Murphy said staff could look into finding a funding source.

4. Review of Amended Liquor Ordinance – Ron Galstad

Mr. Galstad stated he followed up on the request by the Council to remove the impairment for having interest in more than one on-sale license and the restriction for only being allowed to have one off-sale is the same as the State statute. Council member Johnson asked about the section on off-sale and if the businesses know, it is against the law to give out samples. Mr. Galstad said he would have to check into this. Council member Johnson stated what he was reading said it was illegal to consume anything on the premise of an off-sale location. Mr. Galstad said again he would have to double check and usually a tasting is allowed. Mayor Gander said they were looking at the section under microdistilleries and was not sure if that was for off-sale. Mr. Galstad said the State made changes a few years ago and the current ordinance mirrors the State statute and he would check on the sampling for an off-sale.

Council member Helms asked if this new ordinance would allow the new businesses to do what they would like to do. Mr. Galstad said yes as long as meet all other requirements. Council President Olstad said with no other questions this would be moved on to the next week starting the process of the two readings and then be published.

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

5. Request to Consider Paying for Hydraulics Study – Clarence Vetter

Council member Vetter stated since the 32nd Avenue bridge is in the long range transportation plan the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) has started looking at what needs to be done to continue this process. He explained they did a feasibility study for the Merrifield bridge location so the MPO Board

was asking to have one completed for the 32nd Avenue bridge location and to include three specific areas that are hydraulics, a traffic study, and school safety. He stated the MPO looked into funding and were not able to find funding that would cover the hydraulic study, the board members were supposed to ask city councils if they would help pay for the hydraulic studies, and the MPO board also requested to look at the Elks Drive and 47th Avenue locations. He continued saying the estimated cost for a hydraulic study was \$30,000 so each city would pay the \$15,000 and Grand Forks already has a list of engineers they are able to reach out to for completing this study. He added how the scope does keep changing but each time 32nd Avenue comes back at the best location and it is his recommendation to participate only in the 32nd Avenue hydraulic study at this time.

Council President Olstad asked if the City's cost would only be the \$15,000 with Grand Forks covering the other half. Council member Vetter said that would be correct. Council President Olstad asked if this had gone before the Grand Forks City Council. Council member Vetter stated he was not sure but that Mr. Feland was present at the MPO meeting. Mayor Gander thanked Council member Vetter for his service on the MPO Board, how serving on this Board can be challenging, and if the group would just like to move forward with 32nd Avenue he would support it. He added if this does not move forward the next step would be to consider Elks Drive. Council President Olstad asked where the money would come from. Ms. Anderson said \$34,000 was set aside for projects and those funds had not been used this year.

Council Vice-President Grassel reminded the Council the Grand Forks Mayor would veto anything for 32nd Avenue location, he will vote for this, but they will need the support from Grand Forks to move forward. Council member Vetter said the hydraulic study could help determine if a location can be used for a bridge and move this project on to the next step. He added the MPO would be waiting to do the studies for the other items until after the hydraulic study has been completed because a location may be ruled out. Council President Olstad asked to include a caveat requiring Grand Forks approval. Ms. Ellis commented that this item has not gone before the Grand Forks Council and there is a neighborhood meeting that is coming up for wards five and six. Council member Helms said he agrees but he is also worried about spending money that will not do any good. Council member Vetter said the hydraulic study has to be done regardless to see if a location can be used. Discussion followed about how there have been a couple people on the Grand Forks Council that have been very vocal about not allowing a bridge at 32nd Avenue; how things can change over the years it will take to get a bridge built, it is up the cities to take action to get a bridge built, and this is taking direction action to move this project forward.

Council President Olstad asked how they would like to move forward. Council member Vetter said he would like to move forward with 32nd and if that will not work to amend it later to Elks Drive. Council President Olstad asked to include that Grand Forks will also need to approve. Council member Helms said he is worried about what a south end bridge will do to downtown East Grand Forks and how people may not come down town anymore. Mayor Gander said the city's downtown is a draw for many in the region, he also is concerned, but there is also a duty to provide a sensible route.

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

6. Review of Department Changes for 2020 Budget – David Murphy & Karla Anderson

a. Economic Development Information

Mr. Gorte told the Council this budget had already been reviewed by the EDA Board and was recommended for approval. He explained he had made a couple changes since then and added \$1,200 to fund a commitment for professional services and the other is a \$500 increase under dues and subscriptions

for participating in the Greater Grand Forks Young Professionals. He continued saying he had received a request from the Small Business Development Center which is located in Crookston for a \$10,000, he refers many businesses to them because it is a free service for businesses to use, and he suggests approving the increase. There were no questions.

b. Police Department Information

Chief Hedlund said there were a couple modifications, he is still waiting on a bid for the controls of the jail system, the \$175,000 was based on the cost of the Fort Totten facility, but he does not have better numbers at this time. He continued with equipment and how they will only be requesting to purchase one squad car this year because the squad they were considering replacing has low mileage and operating well. He added he could not say he will not ask for three cars next year. He stated they are still working on the animal control funds so there is not a firm number for that at this time and they have finalized the school resource officer position with the school so those numbers are the final numbers.

Council President Olstad asked how big the Fort Totten facility was. Chief Hedlund said he was not sure the City had four adult cells and two juvenile cells. Ms. Anderson said she had checked and Fort Totten had 54 units. Chief Hedlund commented how this system will also be controlling access points in the building. Mayor Gander stated there has been a lot of work on the Simplex system because it is very outdated and this system has been used to its limit. Council member Vetter asked if two cars were replaced this year. Chief Hedlund said they purchased the truck and replaced the K9 unit vehicle. There were no other questions.

c. Parks & Recreation Information

Ms. Anderson stated Mr. Huttunen was not present but had sent extensive information to the Council. She explained they are considering having UND complete a tree study, there was an increase to wages in playground because of the increase in participants, an increase to the swimming pool is for being open a full year, and how there was also an increase in revenue for the pool. She explained there was increase in maintenance in the park areas, there is a request for matching funds for the Red Lake Corridor, and they are looking at replacing the park shelter at Stauss Park, which would come out of the building maintenance fund. She continued saying they are looking at purchasing a smaller loader with a snowplow to move the snow off the trails and parking lots, considering purchasing a baseball groomer, and purchasing deck chairs that will last for the pool. Ms. Anderson said they would also like to purchase another columbarium because the one purchased in 2016 is already 50% full and the funds for this would come out of the perpetual care funds. She asked if there were any questions.

Council Vice-President Grassel reminded the Council how the Park Department is in charge of clearing the greenway trails but they are not receiving any maintenance funds for equipment which to clear the trails and the safe routes to school sidewalks. Mayor Gander added calls come in during the winter months when the trails are not cleared. Council President Olstad asked if there was anything else to add. Mr. Murphy said staff is coordinating with the County so the public meetings are not held on the same evening. He said they would also need to know what the preliminary levy should be set at. Ms. Anderson said they would need pass the preliminary levy at the next meeting and the set the public meeting. Discussion followed about holding a special meeting on Tuesday, December 10th, all of the items can be included on the agenda to be voted on, and if the hearing needed to be continued it could be held on December 17th. Mr. Murphy suggested holding the special meeting at 6pm and the work session after since there usually is not much at the work session in December.

Mayor Gander asked if anyone wanted to suggest what the levy should be set at. Mr. Murphy reminded them they can go down but cannot increase. Mayor Gander suggested 5% and how this may allow for an inflationary increase for residents. Council member Vetter asked if the County had any indication when they would have property values available. Ms. Anderson said that would not be available until after the truth and taxation statements came out but there was an increase in value of \$12 million from the previous year. Council member Vetter asked if that was new properties. Ms. Anderson said she was not sure. Discussion followed about what that \$12 million could include, the total of abatements was increased, and if the Council was okay with setting the preliminary levy at 5%.

Council member Helms asked when this has to be finalized. Ms. Anderson said the preliminary levy has to be approved the following week and the final budget needs to be approved in December. Council member Helms said he was good with a 5% and they could try to get it down from there. Council member Vetter, Council Vice-President Grassel, and Council member Johnson all stated they were okay with setting the preliminary levy at 5%.

Council member Helms asked if it was common practice to furnish chairs at the pool. Mr. Murphy said it was, people seem to argue over chairs and shaded areas at the pool, and there is a big demand for comfortable seating. He explained they have tried a few different types of chairs but none has held up to the type of use. He added if there are not enough chairs the lifeguards hear complaints.

Chief Hedlund reminded everyone of the City Showcase that will be held on Wednesday, September 18th. He explained they have expanded this event to include the county, local schools, and Northland College. He said they are moving this event to the Civic Center and will hopefully be outside. He added there will be more activities, two restaurants will be giving away samples, and there will be information handouts. Mayor Gander asked about the dunk tank. Chief Hedlund stated there was going to be a dunk tank, they will be taking cash or food shelf items, and all proceeds and items will be donated to the local food shelf. He added it would be held from 5:30pm to 7:30pm.

ADJOURN:

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCIL MEMBER GRASSEL, SECONDED BY COUNCIL MEMBER HELMS, TO ADJOURN THE SEPTEMBER 10, 2019 WORK SESSION OF THE EAST GRAND FORKS, MINNESOTA CITY COUNCIL AT 5:51 P.M.

Voting Aye: Johnson, Olstad, Grassel, Vetter, and Helms.

Voting Nay: None.

Absent: DeMers and Riopelle.

David Murphy, City Administrator/Clerk-Treasurer