

**APPROVED MINUTES
OF THE CITY
COUNCIL WORK SESSION
CITY OF EAST GRAND FORKS
TUESDAY, JULY 26, 2022 – Following the Special Meeting**

CALL TO ORDER:

The Work Session of the East Grand Forks City Council for Tuesday, July 26, 2022 was called to order by Council President Olstad at 5:14 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 Tim Riopelle, Council Members Clarence Vetter, Dale Helms, Tim Johnson, and Brian Larson.

Staff Present: Karla Anderson, Finance Director; Jeff Boushee, Fire Chief; Nancy Ellis, City Planner; Steve Emery, City Engineer; Ron Galstad, City Attorney; Paul Gorte, Economic Development Director; Michael Hedlund, Police Chief, Charlotte Helgeson, Library Director; Reid Huttunen, Parks and Recreation Superintendent; David Murphy, City Administrator/Clerk-Treasurer; and Megan Nelson, City Clerk.

DETERMINATION OF A QUORUM:

The Council President Determined a Quorum was present.

1. Discussion on Federal Subtarget Projects – David Murphy

Mr. Murphy told the Council that a decision needed to be made or they would not be able to meet timelines for using the funding and the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) was at the meeting to help answer any questions. He reviewed the options of the roundabout, the maintenance projects, or not utilizing the funding. He added that the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MNDOT) had indicated it would be reluctant to do another funding swap.

Council Vice-President Riopelle stated he would be interested in Option 2, he was not in favor of the other options, and asked how many projects they could do. Mr. Murphy explained he depended on costs and asked the Council to rank the projects based on priority so they could do as many projects as possible based on the available funding. Mayor Gander asked to have a cost for each project to see how far the funding could go. Council member Johnson said he was in favor of the second option and asked if they needed the permission from the MPO. Discussion followed about how the MPO Executive Board would need to approve the change. Council member Larson stated the Council did not have the votes to override the veto, asked to have the information prepared for the maintenance projects, and said it would hopefully be approved by the MPO Board. Discussion followed about an area on 5th Avenue NE that was heaving that may need a sign and the timeline for amending the plan with the MPO which might take until November or December.

Council President Olstad said the best thing was to proceed forward and start the process with the MPO.

Council member Vetter asked what happened if the changes were not approved by the MPO then they would lose the funding. Discussion followed about how Grand Forks individuals were upset with the process with things changing but if the representatives from the City Council on the MPO Board showed support for this change it would help. Council member Vetter commented they were tired of amendments and last-minute changes so it could be hard to pass. Mayor Gander said the roundabout would be a scramble to get done in the time and the maintenance projects would help improve the community. Mr. Emery explained there could be difficulties with moving the utilities out of the space that was needed for the roundabout and with all that needing to be done, construction on the roundabout would more than likely not start until 2024. Council member Vetter said there had been eight years to have prepared for that project. Mr. Murphy stated the consensus was to move forward with Option 2 and would bring that forward for approval.

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

2. Consider Approval of the Safe Streets & Roads for All Program Funding Request – Nancy Ellis

Mr. Ellis stated there was a new funding opportunity and required a comprehensive safety plan that included all modes of transportation. She explained there were two parts to the grant program which included action and implementation plans, there would be an 80/20 split, the plan would cost \$500,000, \$400,000 would be covered by federal funding and the remaining be split 50/50 between the two cities. She said this was not currently required to participate in, but she could see this being required in the future. She told the Council the information would be more detailed and look at the level of service, areas with issues, and include local streets as well as State Aid and Federal Aid streets. She asked to budget for this under professional services.

Discussion followed about how studies with the MPO were paid for, currently it was split 50/50 with Grand Forks, and a request was made to see if it could be split based on population density. Council member Johnson commented there was no education piece as a part of this. Ms. Halford explained that would be a part of the implementation plan. More discussion followed about how funding for this program could be utilized city wide to see what could make them safer and again how this was currently discretionary but could change to mandatory. Ms. Halford told the Council a joint application would be considered strong and positive. Mayor Gander asked if this would help enhance the Bygland Road study. Ms. Ellis said yes and she would ask about the funding to see if something could be changed.

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

3. Review of Outdoor Basketball Court Estimates at DanMor Park – Reid Huttunen

Mr. Huttunen stated he requested new quotes for this project and received two back which included an accessible sidewalk for ADA compliance. He explained Cariveau Construction was the low quote at \$19,012.50, a suggestion was made use a cast iron panel instead of the plastic, and he would bring an updated price to the next meeting. He asked what the preferred court location was at the park. Discussion followed about how most of the council members preferred the Option B location, how Mr. Pokrzywinski requested Option A, how some of the neighbors would like to see a picnic space in Option B, but Option A was close to a front yard.

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

4. Consider Arena Lease Agreement with Independent School District 595 – Reid Huttunen

Mr. Huttunen stated this was a three-year renewal for the school's use of the arenas. He explained the first year the amount did not change but it did increase for the next two years, this agreement would carry through to 2024, and that was when there might be a vote on the possible arena renovations so it would put the City in a good place until that time. Council member Helms asked about the yearly amounts. Mr. Huttunen said the first year was going to remain the same at \$105,000 and then would increase to \$110,000 for the next two years.

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

5. Discussion on Business Registration – Paul Gorte

Mr. Gorte stated there needed to be a good contact list for businesses, there was a list currently, it was not complete, and they would be requesting minimal information. He asked to have a list created and to have all departments participate. He commented a request for certificate of occupancy would be something separate and would require a fee and inspection. Council President Olstad asked if this did not already fall under the EDA. Mr. Gorte said the request was to have all departments provide information to the EDA and to have the City Administrator have the departments provide the information to the EDA. Council President Olstad asked if there was a form or who should be taking care of this. Mr. Gorte said it would be the EDA Director that would be keeping the list, he would create the form, it would be available on the website, and again when a business applied for a permit or sets up a Water and Light account that the information be shared with the EDA.

6. Request for Combination Liquor License – Megan Nelson

Ms. Nelson stated a request was coming forward to see if the Council would support a combination license, the on-sale had been approved at the previous council meeting, and that would be the only thing that would be needed from the Council. She explained after speaking with the alcohol inspector they would work with the licensee about where the product could be sold within the premises so the only thing the Council needed to consider was the combination license. There were no questions.

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

7. Consider Hiring Incentives for Police Department – David Murphy

Mr. Murphy told the Council the City of Morris, Minnesota closed their police department because they could not get any officers. He explained it was estimated there were 800 openings, there were 600 in training, and not everyone in training would be hired but that still left at least 200 openings, so they were looking at possible incentives to help attract potential employees. He stated North Dakota had different standards than Minnesota, to be hired in Minnesota a person had to be POST license eligible, and it was not as costly to become a police officer in North Dakota. He said they were looking at hiring, retention, and relocation bonuses. He asked for feedback from the Council so staff could work on an incentive package. He reviewed what other cities had offered or how they were placing officers higher in seniority based on experience, but he could see that causing issues. Council President Olstad said this had come before the personnel committee and one thing they had talked about was reimburse of tuition. Discussion followed about looking at other possibilities, relocation expenses, discounts on items in the community, but asking the police officers a vast majority said money would be the best incentive. Chief Hedlund told

the Council out of the last five hiring processes they had completed they had only hired one person. More discussion followed about how there was also a down trend for fire but so far, the Fire Department was able to fill their vacancies.

Council member Vetter said they were fortunate because the community supported the Police Department so that was something they needed to exploit or get that message out there and possibly offer a welcome pack with discounts to various places that showed the community supported the police. Chief Hedlund said he had stressed that in the last few processes they had done, and the support was appreciated by the officers. More discussion followed about helping with student loan debt, trying to hire experienced police officers, or trying to recruit from the Grand Forks Air Force base. Mr. Murphy thanked the Council for their comments.

This item will be brought back to a future meeting.

ADJOURN:

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCIL MEMBER JOHNSON, SECONDED BY COUNCIL MEMBER RIOPELLE, TO ADJOURN THE JULY 26, 2022 WORK SESSION OF THE EAST GRAND FORKS, MINNESOTA CITY COUNCIL AT 6:16 P.M.

Voting Aye: Riopelle, Johnson, Olstad, Larson, Vetter, and Helms.

Voting Nay: None.

Absent: DeMers.

David Murphy, City Administrator/Clerk-Treasurer