

# WEEKLY MEMO

**Date:** October 29, 2010

**To:** Mayor Lynn Stauss. Council President Dick Grassel, Vice President Henry Tweten, Council Members Marc Demers, Craig Buckalew, Wayne Gregoire, Greg Leigh, and Mike Pokrzywinski.

**From:** Scott Huizenga

**RE:** Weekly Update

## **UPCOMING MEETINGS:**

*November 1, 2010 – 12:00 pm – State Aid Task Force*

*November 2, 2010 – Election Day*

*November 4, 2010 – 5:00 pm Regular Council Meeting (Note Date Change)*

*November 4, 2010 – 5:00 pm Water and Light Commission*

*November 9, 2010 – 5:00 pm Special Council Meeting*

*November 9, 2010 – 5:00 pm Work Session*

*November 10-12 – CGMC Fall Conference - Alexandria*

## **WEEKLY UPDATE:**

### **Health Insurance**

We expect to receive a final renewal quote on the City's health insurance policy next week. We have been informed to expect increases of between 9 to 12 percent. Employee demographics, ratios, and the federal health care legislation all contribute to the expected increase. Sadly, the renewable rates are reasonable relative to the overall trends in health care at the state and national levels. Our overall costs are generally below those of our municipal peers. The City's contribution increase is fixed. Therefore, employees will bear the burden for any increases beyond four percent of the current year contribution.

### **W&L Labor**

I met with the Water and Light Commission on Monday along with the Teamsters Local 120 to begin formal negotiations with the Water and Light bargaining unit on a new labor agreement. The City is proposing a two-year agreement that adopts the same compensation and leave schedules that the City already adopted for the other bargaining units. The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, November 4.

### **Budget Schedule**

The budget work sessions are complete. The remainder of the 2011 Proposed Budget discussions will take place in the Council Work Sessions. Staff will present the 2010 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter analysis on November 9. This will lead into the 2011 Proposed Budget with discussion of potential recommendations and changes. Another discussion will occur on the work session of November 23. The formal public hearing for the budget is scheduled for Tuesday, December 7. The City Council can adopt the budget after the public hearing.

## **Meeting Schedules**

This Tuesday is Election Day. Be sure to vote. But, do not come to the Council meeting because it will not be held on Tuesday. The Regular Council meeting will be on **Thursday, November 4**. The City will hold a brief Special Council Meeting on Tuesday, November 9 due to a change in state law regarding the certification of the municipal election results.

## **Department Reports**

### **Public Works, John Wachter**

#### **WASTEWATER**

The new motors and impellers at sanitary lift station #16 are working as expected. Since the installation we have not had any malfunctions or call outs for blockages.

The Water and Light IT section is working with the wastewater team to resolve a communications issue at sanitary lift station #6. The lift station continues to have communications failures that have caused late night response from the wastewater on-call operator. This is a nuisance alarm and at this time poses no threat to the overall operation of the lift station.

#### **FLOOD CONTROL SYSTEM/STORMWATER**

The work at both L8 (871 James Ave SE) and K1 (Valley Golf) storm lift stations has started. Additional pumps will be added to each lift station. Also, two gate shafts at the L8 storm lift station will be repaired. The original completion date was November this may be pushed back as there was an unforeseen delay in getting materials.

The road repair to James Avenue has begun. Removals have been completed and work will continue through this week on prepping. Concrete should begin next week, weather permitting.

#### **STREETS**

The banners that were placed on the poles downtown were destroyed with the recent winds. As soon as the new poles and banners arrive they will be in place. I will look into a design for future banner placement.

The replacement pole for Patriot Drive was delivered this week. Weather permitting Water and Light along with Public Works will install the base and pole the week of November 1<sup>st</sup>. The second pole will be ordered and placed in the spring.

### **Police Department, Chief Michael Hedlund**

Dispatch Center - The East Grand Forks Police Department is currently accepting proposals for a renovation/technology update in its dispatch center. The City's Information Technology Staff are working on a plan to update the technology of the center which should aid in the efficiency of the officers working in the dispatch center. The room is also going to be remodeled into a more user friendly and professional work space.

HVAC Unit – The Department is also accepting bids for the replacement of the building's HVAC system. The Department's current system is outdated and inefficient. A recent energy efficiency study of the Police Department building showed that replacement of the heating/cooling system with a high efficiency system would result in savings that could pay for the replacement system in just over three years. This has the obvious benefit of ultimately saving

the taxpayer money and getting a system that does a better job for the employees that work in the PD building.

#### Winter Driving Reminder –

As Winter weather arrives the Police Department will have to respond to a significant number of motor vehicle crashes that could be avoided if drivers would just slow down a little bit. Try to plan ahead and leave for your destination a few minutes early so that you can drive safely. Remember that intersections are often icy and you may not be able to stop as quickly as you normally would on dry pavement. Stay safe and avoid crashes by slowing down.

#### Watch for Wildlife –

There have been two car – deer crashes in EGF in the past couple of weeks. This is a time of year that many species of wildlife are very active. Be alert for the unexpected, whether that is a child chasing a ball or a deer or other animal crossing the roadway. Animals are especially common near the Greenway but can show up anywhere in the city.

#### **Fire Department, Chief Randy Gust**

The chief returned from MN State Fire Chiefs Conference in Rochester, MN. There were over 150 fire departments represented.

Crews are working at getting equipment ready for winter operations.

The Department is looking into the cost and availability of aerial trucks with vendors from the conference. One vendor discussed alternative ways to purchase or finance a truck purchase.

## **AGENDA ITEMS:**

Please note again that the Regular Council Meeting will be on **Thursday, November 4** due to the General Election.

The consent agenda includes a gambling permit, quotes for bleacher replacement, lift station repair, and the filing of special assessment rolls. The Council will hold public hearings on the Special Assessment rolls on November 16.

10. The revised parking ordinance is on the agenda for 2<sup>nd</sup> Reading, which is the final reading. The ordinance is effective 10 days after publication, which will be on the week leading up to Thanksgiving.