

WEEKLY MEMO

Date: December 3, 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:

December 7, 2010 – 7:00pm Council Meeting – Council Chambers

December 14, 2010 – 5:00 pm – Work Session – Training Room

December 21, 2010 – 5:00 pm – Council Meeting – Council Chambers

December 24, 2010 – City Hall Closed – Christmas

December 28, 2010 – 5:00 pm – Work Session – Training Room

December 31, 2010 – City Hall Closed – New Years

WEEKLY UPDATE:

Spice update

The Federal Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) has begun a 30-day process that would make “Spice” illegal. The DEA regulates the substance on its own authority for at least a year; or until state and federal legislatures can officially codify new laws against the so-called synthetic marijuana.

Campground revenue

The Red River State Recreation Area (RRSRA) campground grossed \$204,769.47 in 2010 according to Department of Natural Resources officials. Of that total, \$19,341.65 was state sales tax and surcharges. The remainder \$185,427.82 results in a revenue-sharing check back to the City of \$10,353. The state also has assumed the utility expenditures for the state campground. Utilities typically run about \$12,000 per year. Therefore, the City has captured over \$22,000 from the campground annually in addition to the base fee of \$109,000 per year. We are awaiting word back from DNR regarding an expanded agreement that would cede ownership of RRSRA land back to the state. The City would receive in exchange reimbursement for maintenance activities provided by the City including mowing and trail maintenance. These reimbursements would net another \$25,000-\$30,000 annually.

Budget forecast

The state is showing a \$399 million surplus in the current biennium according to the just-released state budget forecast. The bad news is that the projected deficit for the next biennium grew slightly - from \$5.8 billion to \$6.4 billion. Federal health care stimulus dollars was the primary driver of the small surplus for this biennium. This means that there will be no further unallotment for 2010. The report was characterized by most, including Rep. Morrie Lanning (R-Moorhead), as “Nothing earthshattering.”

Meeting with Representative Kiel

We are finalizing arrangements to meet with Representative-elect Deb Kiel next week along with officials from the City of Crookston and staff from the Coalition of Greater Minnesota Cities.

Compliance Checks

You may have seen recent reports that the Police Department will soon begin compliance checks on alcohol serving at liquor permit holders in the City. This round is funded by a grant. The Police Department is also planning compliance checks on alcohol server training and for tobacco sales. All of these items are required in the City Code of Ordinance.

MPO Work Plan

The Grand Forks-East Grand Forks Metropolitan Planning Organization will consider its biannual work plan draft at the next Technical Advisory and Executive Committee meetings. Both of East Grand Forks's requests are included in the proposed draft. The study recommendations are: 1) Traffic impact study for the proposed 5th Street NW Intersection project; and 2) Study of a potential new development ordinance to address infrastructure in new subdivisions.

DEPARTMENT REPORTS:

Fire Department, Chief Randy Gust

The Fire Department is in the process of finishing out our 2010 Aid to Firefighter Grant with the purchase of a hose drying rack and air cylinders. This grant provides us with a 5 cent cost per dollar spent. Public Works Maintenance Department has fixed our plow and we are now able to clean our fire stations and help with cleaning of Police Department and Library when possible. The hiring process is continuing for the new firefighter position.

Parks and Recreation, Dave Aker

1. The Christmas decorations are all up.
2. The outdoor ice is getting close, next week we should have the rink at Greenway ready to go and the following week we should be finished with Nash and Stauss Park.
3. We continue to move snow downtown, the bike paths, the sidewalks and the arenas.

Public Works, John Wachter

FLOOD CONTROL SYSTEM/STORMWATER

The work at both L8 (871 James Ave SE) and K1 (Valley Golf) storm lift stations is still ongoing. The additional pumps have been added to each lift station and we are waiting for the electrical side to be completed. The two gate shafts at the L8 storm lift station are still under repair.

The sill plate at Demers has been injected with epoxy to fill the large voids. The plate will be entirely replaced next year as part of the Corps "loose ends".

The road repair to James Avenue is completed. We were able to convince Corps to remove and replace more curb and gutter than originally planned. There is still an outstanding issue with the pedestrian approach that will be replaced in the spring.

STREETS

The snow removal crew was very busy the last week and will continue to move snow. We have had some operational issues with some equipment and it is being repaired as needed. The snow blowers had safety switch failures, the 624 loader blew hydraulic lines, and the rental grader is still down due to hydraulic cylinders. With all the equipment issues the team continues to amaze me with their resourcefulness and dedication.

The downtown area is scheduled for cleaning next week (weather permitting).

WASTEWATER

The wastewater team finished discharging from the stabilization ponds in November. This was our third discharge of the year. To my knowledge this is the first time that we have completed three discharges of the ponds. There is a significant amount of work that has to go into discharging and both operators (John Grenier and Bert Roberts) should be commended for their outstanding work on the system.

Library Director, Charlotte Helgeson

Santa and one of his elves will be at the Library on December 9th at 5 p.m. for photos. The Railroad Club will be here with an operating model train. The Doll Club has their annual display in our lobby.

Our Fire Department has taken thermo-imaging photos of our meeting room roof. The prints have been emailed to Tom Spoor and Tom Behm of JLG Architects for review. After the review, a meeting with Mark Cowger Construction will be set and our next step will be determined.

AGENDA ITEMS:

Next week's meeting will start at **7PM** to accommodate the state requirement that the final budget meeting starts after 6:00.

The consent agenda includes several permit applications and awards, the Police Department dispatch center remodel, and window shades for City Hall. Items 13-15 all relate to the budget. The final proposal authorizes a 4.4 percent levy increase; an adjustment to figure skating recreation fees for 2011; and a full reimbursement of the Civic Center loan to the Water and Light Department.