

WEEKLY MEMO

Date: March 19, 2011

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

From: Scott Huizenga

RE: Weekly Update

UPCOMING MEETINGS:

March 22, 2011 – 5:00 pm – Work Session – Training Room

March 29, 2011 – 5:00 pm – Work Session – Training Room - If Needed

April 5, 2011 – 5:00 pm – Council Meeting – Council Chambers

April 12, 2011 – 5:00 pm – Work Session – Training Room

WEEKLY UPDATE:

I had a very busy week with Council deliberations, the annual Minnesota Clerks and Finance Officers Association (MCFOA) conference in St. Cloud, and a tentative legislative hearing regarding the Red River State Recreational Area (RRSRA – see below) in St. Paul. Therefore, I present the weekend edition of the Weekly Memo.

Labor update

The Water and Light Commission rejected the most recent tentative agreement with Teamsters Local 120 by a vote of 2-1 on Thursday evening. Both parties have agreed to convene early next week to discuss the differences between the first proposal, which the Teamsters rejected, and the more recent proposal rejected by the Commission. Both sides are confident an agreement in principle will be reached next week.

Red River State Recreational Area (RRSRA)

The City continues to work with its lobbyists and several legislators on an agreement to provide more operating revenue to the City. I discussed the City's legislation, HF 1030, in last week's memo. The City for several years has attempted to secure a new agreement with the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to fully fund the entire 1200-acre RRSRA. Currently, the agreement covers most – but not all – expenses for the campground portion only. An hearing on the entire DNR funding bill was originally slated for last Thursday. That bill will now be heard on Tuesday in the Senate. Several friendly legislators are working to include the additional RRSRA funding in the omnibus DNR bill. If successful, the City will not have to testify to the legislation as an amendment. All funding bills are working through their respective Chambers rapidly because the majority leadership has a self-imposed deadline of next week to pass the tax bills out of committees.

Other legislative news

The House removed from its tax bills provisions related to levy limits. Previously, HF 130 would have restricted cities and counties from increasing their levies beyond 2011 levels. That

provision no longer applies. Cuts to local government aid (LGA) and the Market Value Homestead Credit (MVHC) still apply. As I reported last week, East Grand Forks would lose over \$216,000 in MVHC in 2011. And, the City would be cut over \$550,000 in combined LGA and MVHC cuts in 2012.

Downtown Parking

I met this week with Rick Rich, who is the consultant coordinating the downtown parking study in Grand Forks with the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO). MPO has agreed to segment a portion of the study for downtown East Grand Forks based on available funding at no cost to the City. The study will explore several options, including the recent proposal to expand the parking on River Street in the Boardwalk area. The first draft of the report is due to the MPO on April 15. The final report will be completed in May. We should have good information with which to discuss the River Street option by mid to late April at Council work session.

Flood Update

As reported yesterday, City crews will begin constructing the “invisible” flood wall downtown on Monday. The process generally takes 3-5 days; and City crews will begin on the Cabela’s side of the wall. Parking will be restricted on River Street in the boardwalk and on a portion of the Cabela’s parking lot during construction. The City typically constructs the downtown wall first because access to the “wet” side of the wall is limited as river levels begin to rise. The DeMers Avenue bridge (Sorlie Bridge) and all other flood closures will remain open as long as possible. This is part of the City’s normal flood control process in which we get an early start on the invisible wall so that City crews can focus on other flood preparations, as needed. Interested persons can access updates to the City’s flood fight via the City’s flood page at www.egfflood.info or the main web site at www.egf.mn. Flood updates are also available via Facebook (www.facebook.com/EGFflood) and Twitter (@egfflood).

Tri-Cities Meeting

I have tentative scheduled the annual Tri-Cities meeting with the Cities of Crookston and Thief River Falls for **Wednesday, May 11** in East Grand Forks. I will meet with the cities’ respective City Administrators next week to finalize arrangements and discuss agenda topics. I appreciate all input regarding scheduling and agenda topics.

Senior Citizens Breakfast

The Senior Center will hold its annual Howard Rutherford Memorial Pancake Breakfast on Sunday, March 20 from 9:00 am – 1:00 pm at the Senior Center.

Council Vacancy

Applications for the current Ward 2 Council vacancy are due on this Thursday, March 24. We will send the applications to the City Council immediately so that the City Council has some time over the weekend to review and rank the applications. We expect a significant number of applications. As such, we will ask to have the Council’s rankings returned by 9:00 a.m. on Monday, March 28 so that staff can coordinate with applicants for their appearances at the work session of Tuesday, March 29. I recommend that the Council select 3-4 applicants for interview.

DEPARTMENT REPORTS:

Library, Charlotte Helgeson

The Library will be restructuring its Summer Reading Program and acquiring recording equipment. This activity is funded, in part, by a grant of \$9,470 from the Northwest Minnesota

Arts Council and the Minnesota arts and cultural heritage fund as appropriated by the Minnesota State Legislature with money from the vote of the people of Minnesota on November 4, 2008. The Friends of the Campbell Library are providing a 10% match.

AGENDA ITEMS:

1. Members of the State Aid Task Force will present its final recommendations to the City Council at Tuesday's work session. Previously, the State Aid Task Force presented a recommendation that included flat monthly fees per parcel to fully fund ongoing street maintenance. The City Council asked the Task Force to work on options that could potentially reduce the proposed monthly fee. Therefore, the Task Force devised an option that is based on average daily trips as devised by the Institute of Traffic Engineers (ITE). This model bases the fee on projected road use and wear so that commercial and industrial customers contribute more than single family residences. There are several other categories including distinctions for multi-family residences and senior citizen housing. A copy of the State Aid Task Force Final Recommendations is attached to the packet.
2. The City Engineer will present the proposed final design for the Civic Center locker room expansion. The City will solicit bids for the proposed project if both the City Council and the School District approve the design and the proposed intergovernmental agreement, which is currently under review with the school board.
3. The EDHA Director will discuss the proposed sale of a city-owned residential lot at the end of 3rd Avenue SE.
4. The Public Works Director will present preliminary findings for future costs of waste water treatment if the Council chooses to retain and/or expand its current lagoon facility. The broad analysis discusses potential added costs should the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) mandate the City to treat for additional compounds such as phosphorous.
5. The Finance Director will discuss proposed budget transfers for last year's 2010 Budget in order to close the books on the 2010 year. The transfers are largely routine; and they encompass previous projects that the Council has approved already.