

WEEKLY MEMO

Date: April 8, 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:

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

April 12, 2011 – 5:00 pm – Alternative Board of Appeals, EGF County Building

April 19, 2011 – 5:00 pm – Council Meeting – Council Chambers

April 26, 2011 – 5:00 pm – Work Session – Training Room

May 3, 2011 – 5:00 pm – Council Meeting – Council Chambers

May 11, 2011 – 6:00 pm – Tri-Cities Meeting – Mamma Maria's

WEEKLY UPDATE:

Flood Update

As of Friday afternoon, the Point Bridge is closed; and the Sorlie Bridge is scheduled to be closed Saturday at noon due to rising flood waters. The National Weather Service projects a crest of 50-52 feet by Tuesday or Wednesday next week. City staff will determine Monday whether or not to install a small clay levee at 1st Street SE/3rd Ave SE near the Louis Murray Bridge. If the crest prediction is under 50 feet, the levee potentially could keep the Louis Murray Bridge open. Anything above approximately 49.5-50 feet will necessitate the temporary closure of the Louis Murray Bridge.

The City provides several online mechanisms to keep up with the latest flood developments and closings as they occur.

web site: www.egfflood.info

Twitter: [@egfflood](https://twitter.com/egfflood)

Facebook: www.facebook.com/egfflood

Campground Update

The natural resources bills are currently in conference committee between the Minnesota House and Senate. The Senate bill provides an additional \$34,000 to East Grand Forks for one year expenses related to the Red River State Recreational Area (RRSRA) above and beyond the current joint powers agreement (JPA) with the Department of Natural Resources (DNR). The JPA agreement provides approximately \$120,000 per year with revenue sharing. The House Environment, Energy, and Natural Resources chair Denny McNamara (R-Hastings) has expressed reservations about including East Grand Forks in the bill as a standalone provision.

Mayor Stauss and I are *tentatively* scheduled to appear before the Legislature on Wednesday, April 13 to discuss the RRSRA. DNR does not support the measure. We will discuss several options with legislative leaders and DNR including the current Senate bill provision. The DNR has indicated some support for allowing the City to assume complete operations of the RRSRA, including all revenues, while retaining RRSRA's state designation and continued inclusion in the state's campground reservation system.

Labor Update

The Water and Light Commission approved the latest tentative agreement with the Teamsters Local 120 on Thursday evening. The final tentative agreement is substantially similar to the agreements settled with other bargaining units. The agreement "grandfathers" the current employees pay grade system while approving the adopted Citywide pay grade system for all future employees. The agreement also reduces vacation and sick leave benefits for future employees. The Teamsters bargaining unit approved the agreement Friday morning pending review of the final language. Water and Light Department non-union personnel will also receive similar pay grade adjustments. Although the City and the Commission conceded the grandfathering of current personnel, the assimilation of future employees into the broader citywide pay scale is big leap for the city both in terms of finances and state pay equity compliance.

Legislative Update

The House and Senate tax bills are heading to conference committee. The House bill still contains large cuts for Minneapolis, St. Paul, and Duluth while other cities retain Local Government Aid (LGA) for 2011. All cities would be cut in 2012. Many have considered this bill a red herring to rural areas that disguises an intended phase-out of LGA. The Senate version contains more LGA funding overall, but all cities would be cut in 2011 as well as 2012. Both bills cut the Market Value Homestead Credit (MVHC), effectively eliminating funding provided to cities for the state-provided property tax credit. The Senate version contains a measure that eliminates the MVHC by reducing the tax capacity of properties that qualify for the credit. This represents a *de facto* property tax increase for all properties that do not qualify for the MVHC – primarily commercial and industrial properties.

The House and Senate public safety bills both propose to transfer varying levels from the state fire training fund and the statewide public radio fund to the state's general fund. These funds are intended provide training and equipment funds to local governments for public safety purposes.

DEPARTMENT REPORTS

Library, Charlotte Helgeson

Bob Rawski from INSPEC has started the investigation of the roof leakage on April 6, 2011. The roof will be accessed from outside and inside to begin the process.

Anita Poss, Program Coordinator, will be accepting the 2011 Northwest Minnesota Arts Advocate of the Year Award on April 17 during an Artist Reception for the Northwest Minnesota Art Exhibit. The reception is from 1:30-3:30 at the American Legion in Crookston with the program beginning at 2 p.m. She will be presented with an engraved award and a monetary prize. Anita promotes the library as a central player in our community by encouraging and offering opportunities to artists, amateur and professional, to work with our patrons. Anita is

responsible for the library's story time, summer programs, festivals and art exhibits, to name just a few of her projects. To work with Anita once is inspiring and will often lead to more programs, funding, volunteers and participation in our library. Anita is an East Grand Forks treasure.

AGENDA ITEMS

The City Council will first hold a special meeting to appoint a new Council Member for Ward 2. Then, the City Council will adjourn to its regularly scheduled work session.

1. The City Engineer will present three options for the proposed Civic Center locker room expansion. Option #1 is the larger northeast corner expansion based on a question posed by Mayor Stauss at a recent work session. Option #2 is the "under the bleachers" option that has been the primary proposal to this point. Option #3 is a newly-proposed southeast corner expansion. The City Council asked staff to reevaluate options after Option #2 was estimated at approximately \$160,000 (38 percent) over the original budget. The East Grand Forks school board is scheduled to review the same options on Monday evening before the Work Session. The Council selection, if any, may be largely based on the outcome of the school board meeting.
2. The City Planner will discuss the proposed 2011 Transportation Enhancement Project and request the City Council to file plans and specifications. The project provides a sidewalk and trail system along both sides of DeMers Ave from approximately 9th Street NE (near Sanford Health/Cetero building) to 14th Street NE. The system continues along 10th Street Northeast. The project has a substantial state cost share through the Transportation Enhancement program. The local match is proposed from Tax Increment Financing (TIF) and budgeted General Funds.
3. The Public Works Superintendent will discuss quotes for the annual waste water line cleaning program. The City would implement a three-year line cleaning cycle per the recommendation of the League of Minnesota Cities Insurance Trust, the City's insurer. The previous cycle was every five years.
4. Other business could include a discussion of the RRSRA per the information provided above; and any other business that may come before the Council.