

**APPROVED MINUTES  
OF THE CITY  
COUNCIL WORK SESSION  
CITY OF EAST GRAND FORKS  
TUESDAY, APRIL 24, 2018 – 5:00 PM**

**CALL TO ORDER:**

*The Work Session of the East Grand Forks City Council for Tuesday, April 24, 2018 was called to order by Council President Olstad at 5:00 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 Chad Grassel, Council Members Clarence Vetter, Mike Pokrzywinski, Tim Riopelle, Henry Tweten, and Marc DeMers.*

*Karla Anderson, Finance Director; Nancy Ellis, City Planner; Ron Galstad, City Attorney; Mike Hedlund, Police Chief; Charlotte Helgeson, Library Director; Reid Huttunen, Parks and Recreation Superintendent; Gary Larson, Fire Chief; 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 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Rockin Up Northfest – Justin Larocque & Jesse Johnson**

Mr. Larocque told the Council they had taken some time to consider putting on another event, at this time they are looking at moving forward at hosting another Rockin Up North event, and this time they have partnered with HB Sound. He asked to block off the streets around the parking lot, how they are looking at bigger acts, retool the event some, and this time focus on beer and food. Council President Olstad said there will need to be MNDOT approval to close down a portion of 4<sup>th</sup> Street. Discussion followed about how there were not issues last year so they don't foresee any issues with this year with the road closures. Mr. Larocque also asked in the case of bad weather if the Civic Center could be used as a backup location. Mr. Huttunen said there would be the concerns of security and clean up since the facility is not staffed for events like this but they would be able to see if there was funding available to lock some of the equipment areas down. Discussion followed about using the Civic Center as a backup location. Mr. Galstad stated that many things could be addressed in a facility use agreement.

This item will be brought back to a future meeting for action.

**2. Discussion on Possible Paving of a City Parking Lot – Justin Larocque & Jesse Johnson**

Mr. Larocque informed the Council that the gravel lot really hindered the stage area last year during their event. Mr. Johnson stated it affects everyday business as well. Mr. Larocque added that sometimes they had to wait a day or two before it was plowed. Discussion followed about how the Council needs to

determine what will happen in the lot in the future, if it should be paved, what they would like to see on it, and how paving could help finish off the area if it will remain a parking lot. Mr. Larocque commented that if that lot will be sold for a building they might have to move their business across the river because they are already dealing with parking issues. More discussion followed about talking to staff about getting the lot cleared, how they Council should look at a long term plan, that close parking downtown is a luxury, and that businesses have been told before that parking is an issue in the downtown area. Mr. Larocque stated that the foot traffic doesn't extend past restaurant row. Ms. Helgeson informed the Council parking is crucial, people come to the East Grand Forks library because it is easier for them to park and walk in, and their parking lot is shared with the neighboring businesses. Council member Tweten commented that lots of communities would like to have this issue, the city is still growing, and it doesn't hurt to discuss this. Council President Olstad said there will be more discussion on this item. Mr. Johnson asked if asphalt was an option.

This item will be brought back to a future work session.

### **3. Request to Paint Tunnel to Sherlock Park – Megan Nelson**

Ms. Nelson informed the Council the city had been contacted by Ms. Gloria Bancroft who had a group that would like to paint the tunnel that goes under Highway 2. Ms. Bancroft told the Council that she wasn't there to ask for any money and that she works with the youth group at Mendenhall Presbyterian Church. She explained how some of the time they do service projects, how they already have cleaned out the tunnel last fall, they will be doing it again this spring, and that they would like to add clean graffiti or something positive in the tunnel. She asked the Council for permission to move forward and how they will supply their own paint for this project. Council Vice-President Grassel said he thought it was a great idea but that it might attract other graffiti as well. Council member DeMers added this was a great project and how they could look to cover it with a clear coat so other graffiti will be cleaned off. Mr. Huttunen said they could look into what could be done.

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

### **4. Request to Retrofit O'leary Tennis Courts into Pickle Ball Courts – Reid Huttunen**

Mr. Huttunen stated that Mr. Myron Johnson was a local pickleball player, he is a member of the Grand Cities Pickleball Club, they play in Grand Forks in the winter, and utilize the courts at O'leary Park in the summer. He said this group is asking to turn two more of the tennis courts into pickleball courts. He explained the City would cover the costs of nets and paint but the club would cover the cost of the standards which is the most expensive part. He added that Mr. Johnson was present to answer any questions the Council may have. Discussion followed about how there are other tennis courts at the school that can be used by the public, how the school doesn't always use these courts when there are tennis matches in the city, and how this is the way to go since the pickleball courts are getting used consistently.

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

### **5. Discussion on Special Event Request from the Iron Pigs Motorcycle Club – Reid Huttunen**

Mr. Huttunen reminded the Council about the request from the Iron Pigs Motorcycle club from the year before but there just wasn't enough time to get the ride on the newly named trail approved. He explained this year they started this request earlier in the year and plan on entering the trail in the North Dakota side

and ride it to River Road in East Grand Forks. He added that at this time he didn't think this request had went before the Grand Forks City Council but it had been discussed at the Greenway Technical Committee. He stated they had come up with criteria for the ride to make it safe for all those involved and how the ride would have to be communicated to the public so they were aware motorcycles will be coming through the trails and how this group already has enough volunteers to be at every entrance informing people the motorcycle ride was going to be passing by. Officer Nichols from the Grand Forks Police Department said they will be putting up signs notifying people as well as having the volunteers around to help let people know the riders would be coming through. Mayor Gander asked about the ride. Officer Nichols said it was more of a celebratory ride where generally it will be a fun time but there will be those moments when they remember Officer Kenneth Olson and other fallen law enforcement.

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

#### **6. Discussion on 2017 Year End Transfer for Special Assessments – Karla Anderson**

Ms. Anderson stated in the 2017 budget there is supposed to be a transfer from the 280 fund to the general fund for specials and at this time the 280 fund is already in the negative. She asked the Council if they still wanted the transfer done which would put the account further in the negative or if it should be left as it is. She explained that things are changing with the \$5,000 incentive program ending which was being paid out of the 280 fund. She added that the budget showed there should be a surplus of \$492,000 but the actual is approximately \$728,000. Council member DeMers asked how much left was owed on the special assessments. Ms. Anderson said \$109,000 had been included in the tax levy and would come out of the general fund. Discussion followed about how many lots sold on the north end in 2017, how there is a program in place where developers are building homes on these lots and selling them, and at this time there was not a recommendation from the Economic Development department. More discussion followed on if the transfer should be done and if it should be shown as a loan. Mayor Gander asked how it would be paid back. Ms. Anderson said it would be lot sales. She added that based on the discussion the transfer will be done and the explanation will be included on the financial statements.

This item will be referred to a future meeting for action.

#### **7. Request for Direction on 2019 Budget – David Murphy**

Mr. Murphy stated the request had been made to start the budget process early by getting direction from the Council. He asked the Council what they would like to see so priorities could be set. He said how before it was keeping up the fund balance, capital improvements, and something that had been discussed was adjusting the assessment policy which may require a funding source. Council member Vetter said his preferences would be to see all of the city fees taken off of the Water and Light bills, have that be brought back into the general fund, and then try to hold down the Water and Light bills. Council President Olstad asked about the audit. Ms. Anderson stated it should be ready in the middle of June and they were still working on things. Council President Olstad asked Mr. Murphy to bring forward examples of what city costs would be if the assessment policy was at 30%, 50%, and 70% assessed.

Mayor Gander said to look at other city policies for assessments to help guide the 2019 budget process and how since the reserves are where they should be the increases should be closer to an inflationary increase rather than what they had been. Discussion followed about reviewing the valuation statements and how the Council could start budgeting long term by setting metrics with the information being easily communicated. Mr. Murphy said there were some projects that could be included such as the resurfacing

of the Civic Center parking lot, the ice making machines in the arenas, and the assessment policy if it is changed. Council member DeMers said there may be some sticker shock but five years out is more manageable than having to handle something right away. Mr. Murphy said he could start putting together some of this information and reminded the Council that the biggest cost is staff.

This item will be brought back to a future work session.

#### **8. Request to Change Representative on Red Lake River Corridor Commission – Marc DeMers**

Council member DeMers informed the Council this commission has now changed more into a technical committee and he thinks it would be better to have a staff member representing the city since they are more aware about what resources they have available and what had been allocated for the year. Council President Olstad asked if there were any questions. Mr. Huttunen said he was okay with sitting on this commission. He explained he had attended a meeting that day and how this group had been awarded \$200,000 for a project but that it did not include the East Grand Forks portion of the River. He added how grant awarding group seems to like to see projects finished like in the Detroit Lakes project so more money might be awarded over the next few years and the City will need to have the matching funds. Council member Pokrzywinski commented that East Grand Forks did receive the first grant dollars which created the greenway system so it is good that other communities are first in line with these grant dollars. He added he did support the change in representation as well.

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

#### **9. Request to Purchase Zamboni Ice Resurfacer – Reid Huttunen**

Mr. Huttunen told the Council \$115,000 had been budgeted for a new Zamboni in 2018. He stated that the National Joint Power Alliance had the price of \$102,915.30 for a gas powered 546 Zamboni. He explained that with this purchase the other Zambonis would be shifted around the arenas and all would be kept so there would be one for back up just in case. He stated the lead time for ordering is about 240 days which would mean its arrival time would be at or around the end of the year. Mr. Huttunen added the other thing to consider was an electric Zamboni which does cost around \$150,000 but those machines are really new and they would like to wait a cycle to see how they perform before purchasing one of those machines. Council member Riopelle said the City of Crookston was able to purchase two electric Zambonis for the price of one because of a grant they received but that grant has now been discontinued. Council member Pokrzywinski asked why they didn't get one that ran on LP. Mr. Huttunen explained those give off more emissions and there could be an air quality issue.

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

#### **10. Request to Update Seasonal Summer Pay Scale – Reid Huttunen**

Mr. Huttunen stated the last time the part time pay scale had been updated was 2016. He explained he has worked with the HR department on this scale to make sure things were up-to-date and how there were 2% increases between the steps. Mr. Murphy informed the Council this may need to be looked at each year since the minimum wage could be changing each year. Mr. Huttunen stated that this was just for the summer help and he needed to spend a little more time working on the winter part time pay scale because some of the rates are outdated and they are having a hard time finding referees to work.

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

Mayor Gander asked Mr. Huttunen to speak on the upcoming clean up. Mr. Huttunen said the Sentence to Serve group was looking for cleanup projects this month. He explained they would go to homes and clean the yards with chaperones watching them and said how they are looking for more yards to clean so if anyone was interested to contact the Parks Department for more information.

### **11. Request for an Administration Intern – David Murphy**

Mr. Murphy stated how from time to time an intern can be helpful and that he usually works with UND. He explained how he had interviewed and found someone he thinks could help out for the summer both in the Administration Office and the Community Development office. He stated this position had been budgeted for and would allow this person to work for approximately nine weeks. Council President asked if there were any questions. There were none.

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

Mayor Gander asked about the Charter Commission. Mr. Murphy said he needed to contact the individuals and was going to try to set up a meeting in a week or two.

### **12. 2018 Election Absentee Location & Charges for Election Equipment - Megan Nelson**

Ms. Nelson informed the Council during the last election cycle rules were changed allowing anyone to vote absentee without having to have a reason to do so. She explained many people voted early because of this change and the biggest complaint was that people from the city were not happy about having to go to Crookston for an absentee ballot. She said because of this the County had reached out and asked the City to be an absentee location where they would only have absentee ballots for the city wards. She explained that after speaking with Mr. Murphy staff agreed to become an absentee location and how she will be attending election training the following week. She also explained how the County received grant dollars to replace the election equipment and how there is an estimated cost of \$1,200 for each precinct to help with the replacement cost and software upgrades that are needed for the new machines.

Council member DeMers asked how much time this will take up. Ms. Nelson stated she wasn't sure and how it would be more time during the general election than the primary. Council member Vetter said the County is supposed to run the election and to see if they are able to charge the City for election costs. Council member DeMers asked if the City would be reimbursed for mailing out absentee ballots. Ms. Nelson said she wasn't sure but should learn more in the coming weeks.

Ms. Ellis informed the Council a meeting was going to be held at the City Hall on Thursday regarding proposed transit route changes so anyone interested should attend.

### **ADJOURN:**

**A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCIL MEMBER GRASSEL, SECONDED BY COUNCIL MEMBER VETTER, TO ADJOURN THE APRIL 24, 2018 WORK SESSION OF THE EAST GRAND FORKS, MINNESOTA CITY COUNCIL AT 6:39 P.M.**

*Voting Aye: Vetter, Pokrzywinski, Riopelle, Tweten, Olstad, Grassel, and DeMers.*  
*Voting Nay: None.*

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David Murphy, City Administrator/Clerk-Treasurer