

**APPROVED MINUTES  
OF THE CITY  
COUNCIL WORK SESSION  
CITY OF EAST GRAND FORKS  
TUESDAY, JUNE 12, 2018 – 5:00 PM**

**CALL TO ORDER:**

*The Work Session of the East Grand Forks City Council for Tuesday, June 12, 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 Members Clarence Vetter, Mike Pokrzywinski, Tim Riopelle, Henry Tweten, and Marc DeMers.*

*Karla Anderson, Finance Director; Nancy Ellis, City Planner; Steve Emery, City Engineer; Ron Galstad, City Attorney; Paul Gorte, Economic Development Director; Mike Hedlund, Police Chief; Charlotte Helgeson, Library Director; Reid Huttunen, Parks and Recreation Superintendent; Gary Larson, Fire Chief; David Murphy, City Administrator/Clerk-Treasurer; Megan Nelson, City Clerk; Jason Stordahl, Public Works Director; and Luke Welle, City Intern.*

**DETERMINATION OF A QUORUM:**

*The Council President determined a quorum was present.*

**1. LELS Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for K-9 Unit – David Murphy**

Mr. Murphy said this had been brought forward at a previous work session, it was referred to the personnel committee, and after they reviewed the MOU it was recommended not to move forward until there were modifications. He stated this was one time that he departed from that decision and was recommending that this MOU be approved. Council President Olstad said he is on the personnel committee and recommended that this be approved because it addressed the necessary items, it should be moved forward, and he backs this 100%. Council member DeMers said this was either a part of labor negotiations or it wasn't and the Council does not discuss labor negotiation strategy in open meetings. He added that it was up to the Council on how to continue with this but something like this should have been brought to a closed meeting. Council President Olstad stated the MOU had been discussed prior to the last work session. Mr. Murphy said the MOU had been discussed at the February 6<sup>th</sup> meeting.

Mayor Gander explained he had talked with community members about this item, there are issues with drugs in the community, and they don't understand what the issue is with this item. He said they will find a way to cover the costs, how this is a necessary component, and this is more of a housekeeping item. Council member DeMers said it was an additional \$10,000. He stated the Council had asked about wages, they were told there were not going to be additional costs, and how this position was going to be compensated by receiving overtime when called in. Discussion followed about the daily training that will take approximately a half hour a day and how the fundraising is supposed to cover the startup costs. Council member DeMers said \$10,000 is a quarter percent of property tax and that adds up, the levy used

to be 2.7 million, now it is over 4 million, and this doesn't consider any other wages. He added these little things add up. Council President Olstad asked if this had been budgeted for. Mr. Murphy said he didn't know for sure but thought there was an estimate for this position that was included in the budget.

Council member Vetter said this was not a community priority but an officer's priority, there is no way this was included in the budget, how he asked if this was going to increase expenses and was told no, and the community should not have to pay additional compensation. Discussion followed about when this was just brought forward, when approval was given to move forward, and how discussion started on this in 2017. Council member Tweten said he supported this expenditure, commented on how drugs are everywhere, and that this could help save lives. Council member Riopelle said he considered this a change order like on a city project and there should be a little extra built in. Mr. Galstad asked if there was anyone who remembered how this was handled the last time the department had a K-9 unit. Lieutenant Hajicek said he believed the officer received a half hour of overtime.

Council member Pokrzywinski said this received public support, he did vote against because he didn't want to increase the mission of the police department, he will support this now, but he is disappointed there was a change that they were told was not going to happen. He added he felt this was sold to the Council under false pretenses but again he will support it. Chief Hedlund said he apologized for any confusion, there was no ill-intent, they began fundraising after receiving approval from the Council, and with receiving the grant things moved forward quicker than expected. He apologized for any oversight on his part. Mayor Gander stated that not all good ideas come the top, officers have stepped up to serve the community better, and it is a testament to the Chief that he listens to these ideas.

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

## **2. Update on Up North Special Event – Justin Larocque**

Mr. Larocque informed the Council that things are moving along, ticket sales had started, and things are moving in the right direction. He said that before he had asked if they could use the Civic Center as a backup but at this time that isn't a huge area of concern. He asked if they could hang a banner by the bridge for their event. Mr. Murphy said they would have to get approval from MNDOT. Council President Olstad asked how things were going. Mr. Larocque said their goal was to create more events in East Grand Forks, they have partnered up with HB Sound, and they are looking to expand and enhance events. He added they are also looking at the possibility of holding two concerts at the Civic Center the following spring. Discussion followed about leaving the intersection open at 4<sup>th</sup> St and 3<sup>rd</sup> Ave and traffic control would be handled by the police department.

Mr. Larocque told the Council they had been approached by Leighton Broadcasting for an event in October and it is something they were trying to get going at the Civic Center. He said they were hoping to hold this event in the same footprint as their event but in the fall with an Oktoberfest theme. Mayor Gander said he had been asked to sign a proclamation the previous year and how this could grow year by year. Discussion followed about possibly using the parking lot behind the fire department if it continues to grow.

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

## **3. Paving of the Downtown Parking Lot – Paul Gorte**

Mr. Gorte said he had put together a proposal for the paving on the gravel parking lot downtown. He stated the engineer's estimate was for around \$93,000, TIF dollars could be used on this project, and the recommendation is to have the lot paved. Council member Riopelle asked if this lot was for sale. Mr. Gorte said not at this time and added there was a list of city lots put together for sale but this was not included on that list. Council member Riopelle commented that this lot was not for sale and they were going to put \$100,000 into it. Mayor Gander stated that this lot had been sitting like this for 20 years, it should be conformed to the City standard of a hard, striped surface, and it is easier to pick up asphalt than concrete. Discussion followed about how to move forward, how a hard surface would be easier to maintain, and how there are other city parking lots that need attention.

Council member DeMers said the City is not open for business, parking is a perceived problem, how there had been a strategy, there was a lot investing in the downtown, and now there is pushback from those getting benefits. Discussion followed about how there is a difference in clientele between downtown Grand Forks and downtown East Grand Forks, how a good quality of business shouldn't have to have free parking, and how the downtown parking can be considered a huge asset. Council member Riopelle said he wasn't against parking but maybe businesses can help with the maintenance for the lots. Mayor Gander asked who would build a fee schedule. Ms. Ellis said she had a parking study and already had information from Grand Forks on their fee schedule. Mayor Gander asked to have it brought back to a work session for further discussion. Discussion followed about how it didn't need to be an absorbent amount and how it is based on the number of spaces and size of the office like in Grand Forks. Council member DeMers commented that parking should be the City's brand.

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

#### **4. Consideration of Bids for 18CP2 Master Lift Station Rehabilitation – Steve Emery**

Mr. Emery stated bids had been opened on Tuesday for the rehabilitation of Lift No. 1. He said two bids were received, for this project the flowmeter will be replaced so a bypass is needed, and alternate two will actually be a deduct to the project which is the coating system they will be using. He explained if they award the base and both alternates there would be a \$50,000 reduction on the lowest bid but first they want to check references regarding both coating systems and he will bring a recommendation to the meeting next week.

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

#### **5. Request for Playground Equipment at Griggs Trailhead – Reid Huttunen**

Mr. Huttunen stated that Mr. Andry was present to help answer any questions regarding this item. He explained that Sacred Heart will be expanding its school and would like to place some playground equipment in Grigg's Park. He said he had checked easements and there are a couple areas where the playground equipment could be located and how he had received an email from the Corps with approval for those locations but if the project moves forward something more formal was needed. He continued saying Sacred Heart was going to purchase the equipment and suggested preparing a lease similar to what the public school has with the City for the use of the arenas. He asked for the input before moving forward.

Mr. Galstad stated this would be establishing a precedent using a public park for a private entity and how this may open up other issues. Council member DeMers asked what the difference was between a park and an arena since they are both public facilities. He also asked if this was going to be temporary. Mr.

Huttunen told the Council that once the equipment was installed it would then become City owned. Discussion followed about possible issues. Mr. Andry stated they were not looking for exclusive use of the park. He explained they need to remove their equipment, would install brand new equipment so the students had a place to play during construction, and after construction they will have their own playground back on their property. He added how this would be a benefit to the City and they would not be putting up a fence. Council member DeMers said they could consider this a donation. More discussion followed about how these were new details, how this was just a temporary situation, and how an agreement could be drafted for use of the playground similar to the football and ball fields.

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

#### **6. Request for Greenway River Access Plan for Red & Red Lake Rivers – Reid Huttunen**

Mr. Huttunen informed the Council that the Red Lake River Corridor had applied for and received \$200,000 in funding but none of the funds would be used in East Grand Forks. He said they are looking for discussion and direction on possible projects that could be done in East Grand Forks and he was looking for project ideas from the Council. He added how the boat landing was a bigger project and could be included and asked if there were others. He stated the resolution supporting this would need to be adopted at the July 17<sup>th</sup> meeting because the application was due at the end of July.

Council member Vetter asked if they could include the trail connection from the Kennedy Bridge. Council member DeMers suggested a natural playground that had been proposed a few years before in LaFave Park, a handicap accessible pier, adding other fishing locations, and adding barriers to areas that there shouldn't be traffic. Council President Olstad said barriers would be good, the boat landing would be good, and asked how often the handicap fishing spot is used. Mr. Huttunen said daily. Discussion followed on what the priorities were for the corridor group, how Mr. Huttunen now serves on that committee, and another idea would be to try and shape things up in the greenway.

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

#### **7. Rental Lease Agreement with Tri-County Community Correction – Nancy Ellis**

Ms. Ellis stated that Mr. Larson was present for this item. She reminded the Council the rental request had previously been brought forward, staff reviewed the office space, and at this time storage needs would not allow for offices to be combined without requiring renovations. She stated because of that this request is coming before the Council again because it needs to be determined if this space can be rented to Tri-County. She added that there was a question about security and included in the packet was a proposal from the IT department for installing a camera system in City Hall. She added how that was for everything including installation and all equipment and how they might be able to work out something with Tri-County on this system. She reminded the Council they would be paying \$10 per square foot for renting the space.

Council President Olstad thanked Ms. Ellis for including the camera system information. Council member DeMers apologized if his previous comments were misconstrued. He explained it was his intent to have the space rented but to look at how things were done and see if they could be reconfigured.

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

## **8. Request to Approve Transit Route Changes – Nancy Ellis**

Ms. Ellis reminded the Council that the MPO and Cities Area Transit had been working for the last year and a half on this project. She stated that ridership had started to decline which does come with lower gas prices but another reason was because of the reliability of the bus system. She explained that it could take someone up to two hours to get across town so they worked with MNDOT to get more funds for expanding the routes. She explained they have come up with more direct routes, connections at more centralized locations, there will be more buses during peak times, and there will be night service available in East Grand Forks. She reviewed how costs for services will increase and most of that cost will be covered by State and federal funds but there will be about a \$20,000 increase to the local match. She added how more of the federal dollars can be spent on operations instead of just capital as well as administration fees so that will help offset the cost.

Ms. Ellis told the Council these changes came from recommendations from public meeting, speaking with development homes, and addressing other groups to help improve service for everyone. Council member DeMers commented how people wouldn't be able to get to work or appointments on time which is part of the reason ridership is down. He added he appreciated the work this group did, they did a good job changing the system, they addressed many issues, and he hopes that this helps increase ridership again. Ms. Ellis added they are also going to be trying to provide service through demand response so it would be similar to Uber which will hopefully attract the younger generation as riders.

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

## **9. Request to Rezone Property by Greenway Boulevard/Consider Approval of Emerson Estates 2<sup>nd</sup> Addition – Nancy Ellis**

Ms. Ellis said both items could be addressed together and that these items were going before the Planning Commission on Thursday. She stated the north side of the road had been developed by Robertson and how they are looking at building a tri-plex along 14<sup>th</sup> Ave SE south of Greenway Boulevard. She said currently the property is zoned as urban expansion with R-1 as a place holder but they are requesting it is changed to R-2 which would allow for the three unit townhome with access onto 14<sup>th</sup> Ave SE and only develop a portion of the property. Council member Riopelle said these are very nice townhomes. Ms. Ellis stated that the developer has done everything they were asked. Mr. Murphy said they have been good to work with. Council member DeMers asked if there were going to be sidewalks. Ms. Ellis said there would be along 14<sup>th</sup> and would be done with the driveways.

Council member DeMers asked about the drainage, if there was going to be an issue with this subdivide, and if there would be an issue addressing it in the future. Ms. Ellis said that has been discussed and will be brought forward on future developments that are more than one acre. She explained they are working to get a handle on that situation, there hasn't been large areas developed at one time, and they are working on a flow chart of what needs to happen and who is in charge of what for staff. Mr. Murphy said they are working towards that and will have ghost plats showing how things need to be built out. Council member DeMers commented that was the way to go and to account for the elevation or lack thereof. Mr. Emery said they will be requiring a grading plan.

These items will be referred to a City Council Meeting for action.

## **10. Update on Border City Tax Credits – Paul Gorte**

Mr. Gorte stated this was just informational and that East Grand Forks uses border city tax credits differently than other cities. He said they have been used to reduce property taxes and the State and County were not aware of how that worked. He explained they are finding businesses are either eligible for the disparity credit or border city tax credits, how some have significantly used up their tax credits, and how the Council may want to consider using them over a period of years instead of an allocated amount. He said he had to amend one agreement for this already, the tax credits will need to be replenished by the Legislature, and once they use up their tax credits they will qualify for the disparity program again.

**11. Amendment to Limited Use Permit for Non-motorized Recreation Trail – David Murphy**

Mr. Murphy stated he made a mistake on the RCA and this was not for the Kennedy Bridge connection. He explained this was to get permission from MNDOT to extend the trail from 17<sup>th</sup> down to Highway 2 and the Council can add the trail as needed. Mr. Emery said part of the trail will be put in under the federal project that was going to have a bid opening the following week. He added this was a 10 year agreement at which time it will be reviewed by MNDOT and as long as there aren't any issues it would be renewed.

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

**ADJOURN:**

**A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCIL MEMBER VETTER, SECONDED BY COUNCIL MEMBER RIOPELLE, TO ADJOURN THE JUNE 12, 2018 WORK SESSION OF THE EAST GRAND FORKS, MINNESOTA CITY COUNCIL AT 6:53 P.M.**

*Voting Aye: DeMers, Vetter, Pokrzywinski, Riopelle, Tweten, and Olstad.*

*Voting Nay: None.*

*Absent: Grassel.*

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David Murphy, City Administrator/Clerk-Treasurer