

**APPROVED MINUTES
OF THE CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF EAST GRAND FORKS
TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 18, 2018 – 5:00 PM**

CALL TO ORDER:

The Council Meeting of the East Grand Forks City Council for Tuesday, September 18, 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, Tim Riopelle, and Marc DeMers.

Karla Anderson, Finance Director; Nancy Ellis, City Planner; Paul Gorte, Economic Development Director; Mike Hedlund, Police Chief; Charlotte Helgeson, Library Director; Reid Huttunen, Parks and Recreation Superintendent; David Murphy, City Administrator/Clerk-Treasurer; Megan Nelson, City Clerk; and Jason Stordahl, Public Works Director.

DETERMINATION OF QUORUM:

The Council President determined a quorum was present.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

OPEN FORUM:

“An opportunity for members of the public to address the City Council on items not on the current Agenda. Items requiring Council action maybe deferred to staff or Boards and Commissions for research and future Council Agendas if appropriate.” If you would like to address the City Council, please come up to the podium to do so.”

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

1. Consider approving the minutes of the “Work Session” for the East Grand Forks Minnesota City Council of August 28, 2018.
2. Consider approving the minutes of the “Regular Council Meeting” for the East Grand Forks Minnesota City Council of September 4, 2018.
3. Consider approving the minutes of the “Work Session” for the East Grand Forks Minnesota City Council of September 11, 2018.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCIL MEMBER DEMERS, SECONDED BY COUNCIL MEMBER RIOPELLE, TO APPROVE ITEMS ONE (1) THROUGH THREE (3).

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

Voting Nay: None.

SCHEDULED BID LETTINGS: NONE

SCHEDULED PUBLIC HEARINGS: NONE

CONSENT AGENDA:

Items under the "Consent Agenda" will be adopted with one motion; however, council members may request individual items to be pulled from the consent agenda for discussion and action if they choose.

4. Consider approving the Exempt Gambling Permit Application for Sacred Heart Church and School to hold a raffle at the school located at 200 3rd St NW East Grand Forks, MN 56721 and waive the 30 day waiting period.
5. Consider approving the Exempt Gambling Permit Application for Northern Lights Figure Skating Club to hold a raffle at the Civic Center Arena located at 300 15th St NE East Grand Forks, MN 56721 and waive the 30 day waiting period.
6. Consider approving the Special Event Application for the VFW Post 3817 allowing the use of a portion of the gravel parking lot for a food stand from 10am until 2pm on Saturday, September 22, 2018.
7. Consider approving the Special Event Application for the Grand Forks Run for Fun organization for the Grand Forks Marathon which will including the closure of the Point Bridge for the race on Saturday, September 29, 2018.
8. Consider approving the Special Event Application for Leighton Broadcasting to hold a craft beer tasting event using the city parking lots located along 4th Street NW, closing a block of 4th Street NW on Saturday, October 6, 2018 from 1pm to 5pm, and including the requirement of clearing the parking lots as soon as possible after the event contingent upon approval from MNDOT for the closure of the street and the Administration Office receiving the insurance for the event.
9. Consider approving the Temporary Liquor License Application for Development Homes Inc for a beer tasting event on October 6, 2018 and who will be contracting for liquor services with Up North Pizza.
10. Consider approving the agreement between the City of East Grand Forks and the Department of Public Safety Driver and Vehicles Services for the leasing of office space at the Parks Shop located at 929 5th Ave NE East Grand Forks, MN 56721 to be used as a driver exam station.
11. Consider approving the Letter of Agreement between the City of East Grand Forks and Teamsters Local 120 to categorize the Parks Foreman position as a union position.
12. Consider adopting Resolution No. 18-09-57 authorizing the Police Department to enter into a grant agreement with the Minnesota Department of Public Safety for traffic safety projects.
13. Consider adopting the updated purchasing policy which will be implemented once adopted.
14. Consider approving the purchase of a GMC Sierra 1500 pickup from Ranger GM for a total cost of

\$27,117.70 for the Public Works Department.

15. Consider awarding the crack sealing job for 2018 to Northwest Asphalt & Maintenance to seal 100,000 linear feet for a total of \$75,000.

16. Consider accepting the Grow Minnesota! Report.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCIL MEMBER TWETEN, SECONDED BY COUNCIL MEMBER DEMERS, TO APPROVE ITEMS FOUR (4) THROUGH SIXTEEN (16).

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

Voting Nay: None.

ACKNOWLEDGE RECEIPT OF REPORTS OF OFFICERS, BOARDS, AND COMMISSIONS:

17. Regular meeting minutes of the Water, Light, Power, and Building Commission for August 16, 2018.

COMMUNICATIONS:

18. Update on Grow Minnesota! Report from Mr. Barry Wilfahrt and Mr. Paul Gorte.

Mr. Gorte informed the Council the Council that he and Mr. Wilfahrt took part in the annual the Minnesota Chamber activities by meeting with businesses and how this year they met with 20 businesses. He explained how the things that were said last year were stated again this year. He commented the report shows the information from both 2017 and 2018, the report is favorable, they like doing business in East Grand Forks, and most of the businesses either increased their profits or increased their profitability. He added a large majority of the businesses in the community are locally owned and operated which shows their vested interest in the community. He said this was a strength for the City.

Mr. Wilfahrt told the Council the 20 businesses they visited have a total of 689 full time employees, 215 part time employees, and 434 seasonal employees. He said 11 of the 20 companies had increases in sales, two decreased, and seven of them were stable. He continued saying nine of the companies had increased profitability over the last year, 10 were stable, and only one saw a decrease. He commented at the end of the day the East Grand Forks business community continues to be stable, growing slightly, and if there is a challenge it would be the work force although they heard more about work force needs last year than this year. He stated they have figured out a way to work it out by either automating things or working with a smaller work force but the larger employers are still looking for employees.

Mr. Gorte said next year work was going to be done to down town Grand Forks but 3rd St was going to be open and allow access to down town East Grand Forks. He added they will be making a concerted effort to make sure people know they can still come across the bridge. Mr. Wilfahrt said the other beneficial thing about this is they learned how about four or five businesses are wanting to expand and these visits allow the City to see if it can help with that expansion because the City is really responsive to the business community. He commented how people speak very highly about doing business in East Grand Forks, they really appreciate the support from city hall, and East Grand Forks continues to have a stable business environment. Mr. Gorte said last year a few of the businesses from last year were assisted by loans from the City and this was a good way to find out what their needs are.

Mr. Wilfahrt told the Council that Representative Deb Kiel was able to attend some of these meetings. He added how this might become a best practice method they will follow each year and how other communities might follow this example. He stated it was nice to have a legislator hear firsthand the challenges that these businesses are facing whether it be regulations from an agency or minimum wage requirements. He said Mr. Gorte had invited her to go along on some of these meetings. Mr. Gorte added the invitation was always open to any of the council members that would like to be a part. Council member DeMers said there were 13 visits last year, 20 this year, asked what the selection process was for picking what businesses to visit, and if there were any that overlapped. Mr. Wilfahrt said three of the businesses overlapped, last year's focus was primary sector employers, this year they looked at the larger employers that had a regional impact, and next year they will visit another 15 to 20 businesses. Council member DeMers commented then this information couldn't be used to show a trend line. Mr. Wilfahrt said this information goes in with all of the other data that is gathered and it is reported out as an aggregate. He added this information is a snapshot in time and intended to see what the challenges are before the legislative session begins which is the Minnesota Chambers purpose. He stated the benefit for East Grand Forks is the community is being responsive to needs and they have uncovered things that needed to be corrected which is added value for this process.

OLD BUSINESS: NONE

NEW BUSINESS:

19. Consider approving the change order for the installation of an exhaust system for the interconnect lift station for a total amount of \$43,792.11.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCIL MEMBER POKRZYWINSKI, SECONDED BY COUNCIL MEMBER GRASSEL, TO APPROVE THE CHANGE ORDER FOR THE INSTALLATION OF AN EXHAUST SYSTEM FOR THE INTERCONNECT LIFT STATION FOR A TOTAL AMOUNT OF \$43,792.11.

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

Voting Nay: None.

20. Consider adopting Resolution No. 18-09-58 rejecting the quotes that were collected on September 7, 2018 for the 2018 City Project No. 3 – Parking Lot Improvements.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCIL MEMBER TWETEN, SECONDED BY COUNCIL MEMBER RIOPELLE, TO ADOPT RESOLUTION NO. 18-09-58 REJECTING THE QUOTES THAT WERE COLLECTED ON SEPTEMBER 7, 2018 FOR THE 2018 CITY PROJECT NO. 3 – PARKING LOT IMPROVEMENTS.

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

Voting Nay: None.

21. Consider adopting Resolution No. 18-09-60 approving staff to help in the effort of the letter of intent and apply for grant dollars for the study on setting up a multi-cultural center in East Grand Forks.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCIL MEMBER GRASSEL, SECONDED BY COUNCIL MEMBER DEMERS, TO ADOPT RESOLUTION NO. 18-09-60 APPROVING STAFF TO HELP

IN THE EFFORT OF THE LETTER OF INTENT AND APPLY FOR GRANT DOLLARS FOR THE STUDY ON SETTING UP A MULTI-CULTURAL CENTER IN EAST GRAND FORKS.

Council member Vetter said he wanted to double check the facts and asked if this grant wouldn't be used for a building or infrastructure of any kind but just a study. Mayor Gander stated he could answer the question and apologized for not being able to be a part of the work session when this was discussed. He reviewed the history of how the school district had the idea of creating a multi-cultural center for all nationalities in the community to help them learn English and math skills so they are able to enter the work force. He stated other reasons for the cultural center is for all of the groups in the community to be able to connect in one place, to educate the parents so they are able to help their children with their school work, and it has been made very clear that this center would host many events through the year. He explained that Deka, who is a driving force behind the center, benefited from a place such as this in the Twin Cities, and she would like others to help others the way she was helped.

Mayor Gander stated child care would be provided so the adults are able to participate in the classes, the idea is to rent a space and not purchase any real estate, and this would have no religious component to it whatsoever. He explained the school would be the lead organization for the grant application, others that are participating tentatively include Northland Community and Technical College, Polk County Health, Global Friends Coalition, and the City if the Council approves joining the group. He added the City is not committing to spending any funds at this time but would have the City at the table for these discussions. He stated the grant that would be applied for would be coming from the Northwest Minnesota Foundation and can be for an amount up to \$100,000 according to what is needed for the project, they are currently working on writing the grant proposal for funds to complete a study as well as some funds for technology or to cover some of the basic startup costs for the center. He stated he liked the concept because it is for all residents that would like to learn English and math skills as well as times for fun gatherings. He continued saying one thing he does not want to see in the community is a subculture divided out based on ethnic or language differences. He said people are bigger than that, we are one community, and should move forward as one community which can happen with communication by sharing a common language.

Mayor Gander told the Council he grew up in this community and has always felt everyone here has a chance. He stated when he was in Chicago for school in the 1980s he was living in a community that was culturally divided. He explained how he saw the crime, squalor, and boarded up buildings. He said seeing this made him realize how he loved East Grand Forks where everyone has a chance, he is proud of the community, and the effort that is taking place to knit these people into the fabric of who this community is. Council member Vetter said this is government at its best, they have spent a year studying the issue, and now they are going to apply for a \$100,000 to study the issue which doesn't make any sense. He added he had thought a lot about this issue over the last week, he is all for integrating people into the community, and how they can is by utilizing community education by adding classes to learn to speak English or other classes. He stated they don't need a separate building for a cultural center because they should be integrated right into society with programs that are already in place.

Mayor Gander commented the trouble with that is it would educate them but not bring people together. Council member Vetter said there have been numerous get-togethers in the community, they are always well attended, and he doesn't see the need for a separate building to invite everyone because they can use the parks, City Hall, and the school district. He said there are community events that everyone is invited to. Mayor Gander said this effort started with the school and it has caught on with others such as the Global Friends Coalition. He stated looking long term to keep this funded he hopes businesses help fund this if they can successfully train a few hundred people for the workforce so this is a private sector effort

to help equip people so they are able to have a good life.

Council member Pokrzywinski said last week there were some questions on where these funds were going to be spent. He stated he is trusting that will be firmed up. He told the Council that his father went to school in Alvarado, Minnesota, spoke very little English, and was picked on for it. He commented how his family has a history of being in the same position as the New Americans are in now and whatever they can do now is a good thing. He added how immigrants are a part of everyone's past and they need to do the best they can for today's immigrants to help them fit in. Council member Riopelle said he thinks it should be private sector funds, the Council can support it, but dollar wise it should come from the private sector. Mayor Gander said he agrees.

Council President Olstad told the Council there are a lot of things that happen on both sides of the river. He stated the business that he works for is donating private funds to the LaGrave Learning Center in Grand Forks to help pay for computers and software to help people learn skills on the computer. He said they are going to be involved in classes to help them understand the basics of banking with savings and checking accounts. He commented backing the request for funding with the outlook of having the private sector helping in the future is what HUD wants. He said this will help train the work force, it's a good idea to take a look at this, for the City to support this, and this is a good thing for the whole community.

Mayor Gander asked Mr. Gorte if he had anything else to add. Mr. Gorte said they met with the Northwest Minnesota Foundation along with Representative Deb Kiel and one of the difficulties for the school district is they are not able to qualify for grants that the City and others can qualify for. He said they are denied funding up here and this is a way to address some of those issues. He added Representative Kiel was not aware of so it was a way to educate the state legislator on how things work and the difficulties that can be faced when it comes to grants.

Council member DeMers said he supports the effort for this, the argument has been made for this, and the way they need to look at this is how to build integration. He stated he is skeptical on whether or not a facility is actually needed. He commented how the City already has a lot of resources, the Senior Center already started the process of having different meals from different cultures, and instead of having a separate facility to use different facilities in the community. He added they could look at more than just obtaining a facility but utilizing resources that are already there. He added he hoped through this process that could be considered and involve different entities or by using sports through the parks program. He commented that maximizing these other programs could reduce the need of having one location and he will be supporting this.

Mr. Dale Helms, 613 2nd Ave NE, said they keep talking about getting a \$100,000 grant for a study, he asked who would be hired to complete the study, and why is it going to take \$100,000 to figure this out. Mayor Gander explained the grant would top out at \$100,000, they may ask for less than that or up to that amount, the study would be far less than that amount, and they will also be applying for funds to cover the startup costs for the center. Mayor Gander said the study was not going to cost \$100,000, it will be bare bones will be all the way through, and they will be as efficient as possible because they will be relying on volunteers to help run the program. Mr. Helms said they already talking about buying furniture for a building. Mayor Gander stated it would be in a leased space. Mr. Helms asked who would be responsible for that space and if the City was going to be paying for everything. Mayor Gander said that the City wasn't going to be responsible, the school will be very involved, and there has been discussion on having other existing community agencies may also locate in this space part of the time. He commented they will need people to run the programs, running this will have costs, and that will all need to be worked out.

Mr. Helms said if they need people to make this work Community Education already has them in place. Mayor Gander said Community Education is a wonderful thing but they might miss some of the items on cultural collaboration. He added he didn't start this but he heard from those who would like to get this going and if there is a chance to do it he will help try to get this done.

Council member Pokrzywinski stated that both Mayor Gander and Mr. Gorte have been talking to the Council about this and that he would like to meet some of the people involved and asked them questions that the Council doesn't have the answers to yet. Council Vice-President Grassel told the Council that Community Education has been involved with this process the entire time, Ms. Stordahl has been working with this group, and they are trying to do this successfully so parents are able to bring their kids to school and fill out the paperwork without having to ask for help in doing so. He asked the Council to put themselves in others shoes, how these people want to go to work, but there is a language barrier. He said they need to try to meet these people with their kids and see the looks on their faces when they feel helpless which is part of the problem and this has created the drive behind this group. He added the other part of the problem is transportation and they are not able to get to where they need to go. He stated there is public transportation but there are all kinds of things that have been considered and looked at. He said when the next meeting is held it should be posted so everyone could attend and listen to what is happening. He stated the process is to try to get something to help with these immediate needs, asked the Council to consider being in their situation, and they are just trying to get this up and running to help people feel comfortable and safe.

Council member DeMers said part of the things he sees are with the kids, the kids are able to pick up language pretty quickly, he has seen them be the interpreter for their family, and this is to really help the adults who have many things to take care of along with the addition of trying to learn a language. He added the Tech school has had some success with their programs but he wants to make sure things are taken care of. Mayor Gander stated how when college students come to the US from foreign countries they often take a semester of English immersion before they even enroll for the rest of the curriculum so their studies make sense. He said he agreed with Council member DeMers and if these people only end up in the cultural center they have failed because the goal is to connect once they are up to speed with language and other skills. Council member DeMers said the report given stated work force is needed but understanding the language is the first step. Council President Olstad asked if there were any other questions or comments.

Ms. Shar Pape, 1621 19th St NW, said she understands there is a problem but when these people started coming into the community years ago she had asked Representative Kiel and others how they were being prepared to integrate into the community. She explained she was told that Lutheran Social Services and other agencies were going supposed to teach these people how to read, write, and other things before they even moved into communities. She asked if these services were being looked at to help with the needs they are trying to address now. Council Vice-President Grassel stated those people have been a part of these discussions. Ms. Pape asked if they are willing to help out because of the influx of people into the community that need help and that she feels sorry for the school system. She added she knows there is a problem but they really need to look back at those services and get them involved with this as well. Council President Olstad said that will be included with the study and that it was a good question to ask. There were no other comments.

Voting Aye: Olstad, Grassel, DeMers, Pokrzywinski, Riopelle, and Tweten.

Voting Nay: Vetter.

22. Consider adopting “Life Connected” as the city wide brand.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCIL MEMBER DEMERS, SECONDED BY COUNCIL MEMBER GRASSEL, TO ADOPT “LIFE CONNECTED” AS THE CITY WIDE BRAND.

Mr. Gorte referenced well knows brands along with the professional sports organizations, how there is a common theme for each of the different sports, and yet all of the teams have different logos. He stated a theme was created for the community, it came from the citizens, the Economic Development Board adopted it, and recommended the City Council adopt this as well. He commented how there will be a soft launch, each department can continue to use their current logos, but all can remain connected with this theme. Council member Pokrzywinski thanked Mr. Gorte and AE2S for the work they had done on this and how the brand will need to be embraced by the Council. He said this needs to be launched so they can get the most out of it. Mr. Gorte said they have been looking at how this can be launched, what can be done with the individual departments, and asked if there were any other questions. Council member DeMers commented if this is adopted the Council should consider how to incorporate the brand in the decision making process or have this reinforced with the decision making process. Discussion followed about how staff will look into integrating this into the decision making process.

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

Voting Nay: None.

23. Consider adopting Resolution No. 18-09-59 approving the 2018 tax levy collectable in 2019 for a total amount of \$5,404,166 and set the Public Budget Meeting for December 4, 2018, with a continuance hearing, if necessary, December 18, 2018.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCIL MEMBER DEMERS, SECONDED BY COUNCIL MEMBER RIOPELLE, TO ADOPT RESOLUTION NO. 18-09-59 APPROVING THE 2018 TAX LEVY COLLECTABLE IN 2019 FOR A TOTAL AMOUNT OF \$5,404,166 AND SET THE PUBLIC BUDGET MEETING FOR DECEMBER 4, 2018, WITH A CONTINUANCE HEARING, IF NECESSARY, DECEMBER 18, 2018.

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

Voting Nay: None.

CLAIMS:

24. Consider authorizing the City Administrator/Clerk-Treasurer to issue payment of recommended bills and payroll.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCIL MEMBER DEMERS, SECONDED BY COUNCIL MEMBER GRASSEL, TO AUTHORIZE THE CITY ADMINISTRATOR/CLERK-TREASURER TO ISSUE PAYMENT OF RECOMMENDED BILLS AND PAYROLL.

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

Voting Nay: None.

COUNCIL/STAFF REPORTS:

Mayor Gander said as they are talking about economics and the branding effort he does believe that the

City does give really good customer service. He commented how each department head each day is involved with customer service, staff do not act like this is a monopoly but rather a private entity, and exceed the expectations of residents. He added he hears good things all of the time about all of the departments and how people are very pleased with the level of service they receive. He said something can't be branded if those involved cannot be proud of the organization and back up what they are branding. He added he thinks the City backs things up every day with the great customer service. He then told the Council that he and Mayor Brown helped kick off Grandtoberfest and was also invited to the Air Force 71st Wingding birthday event which was a pleasure to attend. He said thank you for the support of the center, he thanked Ms. Pape and Council member Vetter for their thoughts, and asked to have their feet held to the fire to help keep this project on task to help serve the community the best. He asked everyone to stay engaged to help guide this process in the most favorable way.

Council President Olstad asked Mr. Stordahl what was going to be closed down during the weekend. Mr. Stordahl stated Demers Avenue will be closed during the Potato Bowl Parade which has been scheduled from approximately 9am to about noon. Council President Olstad added that by 10pm the Kennedy Bridge will be reopened that evening.

Mr. Galstad told the Council the charter commission information is before a judge and he is waiting for it to be signed which he will follow up on.

Mr. Emery informed the Council Opp Construction has been making progress with the ADA complainace changes along 17th Street NW and within the next week or two they should also be seeing progress to the multi-use trail along Highway 220. He said they will also be starting soon on the sidewalk on Greenway Boulevard.

Chief Hedlund said a letter was going to be sent out to the neighborhood in the Greenway Boulevard area because of some issues with pets and people not cleaning up after them. He added it was a reminder to make sure people are taking responsibility for their pets and that there are leash laws.

ADJOURN:

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCIL MEMBER DEMERS, SECONDED BY COUNCIL MEMBER GRASSEL, TO ADJOURN THE SEPTEMBER 18, 2018 COUNCIL MEETING OF THE EAST GRAND FORKS, MINNESOTA CITY COUNCIL AT 5:52 P.M.

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

Voting Nay: None.

David Murphy, City Administrator/Clerk-Treasurer