

**APPROVED MINUTES
OF THE CITY
COUNCIL WORK SESSION
CITY OF EAST GRAND FORKS
TUESDAY, JUNE 25, 2019 – FOLLOWING THE SPECIAL MEETING**

CALL TO ORDER:

The Work Session of the East Grand Forks City Council for June 25, 2019 was called to order by Council President Olstad at 5:12 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, Tim Riopelle, Tim Johnson, and Marc DeMers.

Karla Anderson, Finance Director; 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; David Murphy, City Administrator/Clerk-Treasurer; Megan Nelson, City Clerk; and Jason Stordahl, Public Works Director.

DETERMINATION OF A QUORUM:

The Council President Determined a Quorum was present.

1. Update on MN Highway 220 Corridor Study – Jairo Viafara

Mr. Viafara told the Council this was an update on the 220 North Corridor Study and turned it over to Mr. Michael Anderson. Mr. Anderson said he would be reviewing the study and recommendations that were made. He explained this was completed with the participation of the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), the City of East Grand Forks, the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MNDOT), and stakeholders along the corridor. He said there were five steering committee meetings, open houses, and an online survey to get feedback from the community. He reviewed the results of the survey which stated the top three most concerning intersections were at US Highway 2, 17th Street NW, and 23rd Street NW. He added the fourth item that said there were no concerns along this corridor. He explained the three intersections were also identified in the technical analysis of this study.

Mr. Anderson continued saying the safety concerns in this area involved speed and aggressive driving. He reviewed how there is a perception these are dangerous intersections, it's difficult to make left turns, and the top improvements for these would also include improvements for pedestrian and bike traffic. He added the improvements also take into consideration the agricultural traffic and trucks that move through this area. He added the goals were consistent with what they heard from public input, which focus on access along the corridor, improving mobility, safety, and pedestrian crossings. He explained they will be trying to balance the needs of all of the users, the results of the study will become a part of the implementation plan, and there are three stages of the plan. He reviewed the short term, mid term, and long term improvements that would be made over the years. He stated the next step is to have the MPO

amend and add these items into the 2045 transportation plan allowing these projects to be eligible for grant dollars from the different agencies. Mayor Gander thanked them for the working with the community, this was a good, exhaustive process, and things are moving in the right direction.

This item will be brought forward to a future meeting.

2. Review of Report of Feasibility for 6th Ave NE Improvements – Steve Emery

Mr. Emery reminded the Council a petition for improvements to 6th Avenue NE had been received and they were requesting these improvements to be done through the assessment process. He explained there would need to be drainage improvements and paving which was estimated to cost \$447,419.73 for the whole project. He added it would be for new construction so the total amount would be assessed, they have an assessment role with the properties that would benefit from this project, it would be feasible, and the next step is to hold the hearing. Council member Vetter asked if this was just to the railroad tracks or to Highway 2. Mr. Emery said the whole road to Highway 2.

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

3. Discussion on Establishing a Quiet Zone – Steve Emery

Mr. Emery informed the Council he had more conversations with BNSF to see what kind of incentives they would be willing to provide. He stated if the Council closed the intersection at 3rd Street NW the incentives would cover majority of the updates needed at the other two crossings. He added if the intersection at 3rd Street NW was left open a three or four quadrant gate would need to be installed which would add \$15,000 to \$20,000 in yearly maintenance. He said he was looking for a recommendation from the Council on how they would like to move forward.

Discussion followed about closing a crossing could cover most of the costs for the updates needed at the other two crossings, it would need to be determined how much the City would be spending on engineering and costs not covered by incentives, and the Council would need to engage the neighborhood to see what their thoughts are on this issue. Council member DeMers suggested holding a public hearing. Council member Vetter asked about sending out a survey with Survey Monkey. Mr. Murphy said that would cost something and required a valid email for everyone receiving the survey. Mr. Galstad suggested sending out letters to the neighborhood. Mr. Murphy said he would work with Mr. Emery to get the documentation put together. Council member DeMers asked if this quiet zone would connect with the one in Grand Forks. Mr. Emery said it would.

This item will be brought back at a future meeting.

4. Review of LaFave Park Proposed Improvements – Reid Huttunen

Mr. Huttunen told the Council the estimate for the park improvements were being handed out. He said they went back with the comments from the Council from the last work session and made some changes. He stated there were comments from Mr. Werner from the Army Corp of Engineers and it looks like it would be possible to make these improvements. He added the deadline to apply for funding is at the end of July, the funds would be made available in July of 2021, and the funding would be available for two years. Mr. Emery said it was a quick estimate at \$1.6 million but it also included 20% in contingency. He added they could break this down into two phases for funding purposes and opened it up for questions.

Council member DeMers asked if there were alternatives for the boat ramp and if the City was on a list of the DNR to have it redone. Mr. Emery stated there are concerns about the current so they will end up with maintenance each year on the ramps. Discussion followed about how the City is not on a list to have the boat ramp upgraded by the DNR, ideas were suggested to make some changes to the project to save money, and how the City has to ensure none of the property was paid from FEMA or federal dollars. Mr. Huttunen said they would be applying for DNR Legacy funds for this project, which would have to be awarded to the City. Mayor Gander commented there is a lot of activity down in this area and the City could intentionally make this into a gathering place for people to utilize down the road.

Council President Olstad asked what was being asked for. Mr. Huttunen said he would need Council approval to apply for legacy funds. He explained a local match of up to 25% was required, the percentage included would be chosen by the City, and the resolution would need to be ready by July 31st when the application is submitted. Mr. Huttunen told the Council he would have the information ready for the next work session for the Council to review. Discussion followed on how there is a list of what could be approved for the local match including cash or in kind and how the conversation will be started with the DNR about making improvements to the boat ramp.

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

5. Request for Dryland Training Space at VFW – Reid Huttunen

Mr. Huttunen stated Mr. Judd Stauss was present if there were any questions of the Blue Line Club. He explained there is a shooting cage currently at the VFW Arena, how the Blue Line Club would like to see improvements made, and they would like to see how the City moves forward with plans for the arenas. He said they would like to build out this space, donate the funds to cover the costs, and they are looking for approval to do so. Mr. Stauss said they did not know what direction the City would be taken and right now, this is the best way to move forward.

Council member DeMers said this would be a nice improvement and asked who would be setting the schedule and maintaining this or if it would be Blue Line members only. Mr. Stauss said it was for the youth hockey programs to use because it is a training specific area. Discussion followed about how it is suggested but not required for youth hockey players to be members of the Blue Line Club, this improved area would not need to be staffed, a sign can be posted on it, and it would be accessed by using a key or something similar. Council member Riopelle said groups would need to schedule their time in this area and they were considering something like a camera system to monitor this area. Council member DeMers asked if the hockey camps could use this area. Mr. Huttunen said they could and it was an amenity they could charge for.

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

6. Request to Start Hiring Register – Mike Hedlund

Chief Hedlund reminded the Council how they recently went through a hiring process and are working on the background of a possible new hire. He stated one of the current officers is being looked at by another agency so he would like to start another hiring register. He told the Council they had very few applicants and this is a national crisis because of the few number of people applying for police officer jobs. He added some places have started lowering their requirements but that has not happened in Minnesota. He said again he would like to start this process to have a candidate to fill potential opening. There were no

questions.

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

7. Consider Approving Memorandum of Understanding with Independent School District #595 – Mike Hedlund

Chief Hedlund reminded the Council this grant for \$125,000 was awarded back in 2014 and it was supposed to last for three years with an additional year paid for by the City and school. He explained it has lasted longer because of the times when the Police Department was not fully staffed so the agreement will extend until January of 2020. He said he would like to propose to the school to continue this position and split the costs based on the officer in the position once the grant is done and he will be addressing them at the July 8th school board meeting. He added that currently Corporal Gunderson is in the school resource officer position. Discussion followed about how the school will not be taking part in the labor negotiations for this position, how the school may not want to participate in the future because of an increase in costs, and how this position will be tracked to see if a 50/50 split is the right division.

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

8. Consider Approving Addendum #2 of the Joint Powers Agreement – Mike Hedlund

Chief Hedlund stated the Joint Powers Agreement was approved in 2018 between six agencies. He explained that the North Dakota Bureau of Criminal Investigation (NDBCI) wants to join the UAS team. He commented how the use of drones is expanding like crazy, it was discussed among the members, and there were no negatives to them being added to this agreement. Discussion followed about how the NDBCI would be a charter member, they would only be joining the UAS team, there is a possibility of them bringing more technology to the group, and currently there is a UAS team at Polk County and in Grand Forks County so there should not be an issue with either side crossing the border.

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

9. Review of City Goals & Plans – Mayor Gander

Mayor Gander stated he wanted to review the goals set by the Council in 2017 and consider what they have accomplished, what needs to be done, and when they should have another meeting setting goals. He reviewed the 10 goals set by the Council and the status of each. He explained there should be an effort to identify new issues and set new goals. He commented on the currently difficulty to retain retail stores and how some of these empty locations will be repurposed. He added they could listen to the community and bring that information into this effort. He stated he was proud of the progress made and asked when they should look at this again.

Council member DeMers suggested looking at this every two years, which will include the new council members. Mayor Gander agreed that was a good interval. Mr. Murphy stated that winter months usually work better. Council member DeMers suggested the year following an election cycle because those people newly elected will have insight from visiting with residents. Mayor Gander said they would be working on the budget coming up. Mr. Murphy said he would set up the meeting up for January.

OTHER:

Council member Vetter said there were five Tuesdays this month and asked if the meeting should be pushed back so there was no meeting the following week. Ms. Nelson reminded everyone that the public hearing for the American Crystal project had been set for July 2nd so the meeting will need to happen as scheduled.

ADJOURN:

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCIL MEMBER DEMERS, SECONDED BY COUNCIL MEMBER RIOPELLE, TO ADJOURN THE JUNE 25, 2019 WORK SESSION OF THE EAST GRAND FORKS, MINNESOTA CITY COUNCIL AT 6:45 P.M.

Voting Aye: Vetter, Riopelle, Johnson, Olstad, and DeMers.

Voting Nay: None.

Absent: Helms and Grassel.

David Murphy, City Administrator/Clerk-Treasurer