

**APPROVED MINUTES
OF THE CITY
COUNCIL WORK SESSION
CITY OF EAST GRAND FORKS
TUESDAY, OCTOBER 8, 2019 – 5:00 PM**

CALL TO ORDER:

The Work Session of the East Grand Forks City Council for October 8, 2019 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, Dale Helms, Tim Riopelle, and Marc DeMers.

Nancy Ellis, City Planner; Steve Emery, City Engineer; Ron Galstad, City Attorney; Paul Gorte, Economic Development Director; Kevin Hatcher, Energy & Customer Service Specialist; Charlotte Helgeson, Library Director; Gary Larson, Fire Chief; David Murphy, City Administrator/Clerk-Treasurer; Keith Mykleseth, Water & Light Manager; Megan Nelson, City Clerk; Jason Stordahl, Public Works Director; and Jared Quanrud, Police Sergeant.

DETERMINATION OF A QUORUM:

The Council President Determined a Quorum was present.

1. Update from Heritage Village – Teri Hammarback

Ms. Hammarback introduced herself to the Council and told them she volunteers at Heritage Village. She thanked the Council and staff members that helped during Heritage Days this year, they were very appreciative of the help, and explained this event helps bring in money so the Foundation can pay their bills for the year. She added that everyone that works out there is a volunteer and no one that is paid. She reviewed what their mission is, buildings and facilities they have on the property, how many community organizations use their facilities throughout the year, and they give tours to different groups throughout the year, which have included visitors from Norway, China, and Japan. She informed the Council they would be adding a sawmill at Heritage Village. She thanked everyone again that helped out, asked if they would consider helping out again next year, and she left information about memberships.

Mayor Gander thanked Ms. Hammarback for all that she and the Heritage Foundation group does. He commented how this year he had attended a wedding at Heritage Village and what a great venue it was for that event. He added he has attended many Heritage Day events, this event draws people to the community, and he would like to continue to judging in the hotdish contest. Ms. Hammarback told the Council they are now hosting wrestling practices as well since they have heat in the building and thanked them again for volunteering.

2. Update on Jurisdictional Transfer of Business Highway 2 – Steve Emery

Mr. Emery explained this was a follow up from the last discussion about the possible jurisdictional transfer of Business Highway 2. He stated one of the reasons for this was because the State has set aside funds to restore trunk highways that are being turned back to local jurisdictions. He added how questions had been raised and he tried to address the questions in a memo that was included in the packet about how this change would add \$38,000 to the City's State Aid it receives every year and how some of the road could be urbanized if it is turned over. Mr. Laesch stated urbanization usually happens when there are all types of users such as pedestrian and bicycle traffic. He reminded the Council there is not much service life left in the trunk highway, there are different repairs that could be considered, but based on the current conditions the City would want to have a full reconstruction done. He reviewed the accident information, the intersections where they have occurred, and how some of these areas have site line issues.

Mr. Emery stated they have discussed the scope of a full reconstruction, how the City could accept a lump payment for this project, develop a project and be fully reimbursed, or do nothing. Mr. Laesch said there are challenges for funding these bigger projects. Discussion followed about the advantages and disadvantages of this project, the project on Highway 2 will be completed in 2021, and how this project would have to wait until this the work on Highway 2 is over. Mr. Laesch stated to move forward the Council would need to pass a resolution and the next step would be negotiating the terms of the agreement. He added they would like to get the project locked in for funding and anticipated this project starting in four or five years.

Council member Helms said he does not understand trading a half a mile for 2.1 miles, this seems more like a liability, and does not seem to benefit the City. Mr. Laesch said they would be getting the funds to fix all of the issues with this stretch of road. He added MNDOT does not want to set the City up for failure and this change would add another \$38,000 to State Aid each year. Mayor Gander thanked Mr. Laesch for being so candid about the current condition of the road. He commented how this change will create long-term costs for the City, there will be low maintenance for a long time, he liked that this was Business Highway 2, and he does share the concerns about the possible change. Council member DeMers stated they should look at what possible assessments might be for the businesses and property owners along Business Highway 2 and how that could affect them in the future, how they might use the lump sum for a revolving fund to pay for projects, but this shifts the burden of risk to the City. Discussion followed about how the lump sum would be added to the City's State Aid fund, it needs to be determined when 23rd Street will be paid off, and how the resolution might want to be contingent upon approval of negotiations.

Mr. Laesch told the Council the first resolution is not binding, but lets the State know the City is serious about taking over the section of road. Discussion followed about how costs could change, if the City is reimbursed all costs of the project would be covered, and if there is something the City would allow that the State does not that might help benefit businesses. Mr. Laesch reminded the Council if this change is made those along DeMers Avenue would then be under the State right-of-way restrictions. More discussion followed about how the classification of the road would dictate what would be allowed. Mayor Gander suggested that talking with the business owners and having them apart of this conversation could help. Mr. Emery asked what the next step would be. Mr. Laesch said if they are leaning towards no not to pass the resolution. Council member DeMers suggested holding a mock hearing with the business and property owners so the Council can hear some of their opinions.

Mayor Gander asked if they were considering the total reconstruction. Council member DeMers said yes and how at some point in the future the road will need to be rebuilt again; they could have a meeting, and

let the people voice their opinions for a first step. Mayor Gander said he did not know how the City could take a lump sum and then assess property owners, which does not sit well with him. Mr. Laesch stated if the City decides to do this and is reimbursed, the City would not be allowed to special assess properties. Council member Helms said they should move forward with a meeting with the businesses. Mr. Laesch commented the template of the resolution is just that and can be revised.

This item will be brought back to a future meeting.

3. Discussion on the Green Step City Program – Kevin Hatcher

Mr. Kevin Hatcher said he was at the meeting on behalf of the Water and Light Commission who has appointed him the coordinator of the program. He explained Council member DeMers asked about the Green Step Program, the Clean Energy Resource Team came in and gave a presentation about the program, and at this point, the discussion needs to include the City Council. He explained the program correlates with the clean air act, they use best practices, and 129 cities are participating in this program, which includes Warren, Crookston, and Moorhead.

Mr. Hatcher continued explaining the program, how the first step is to pass a resolution, there is five steps, each step has a certain amount of requirements, and the idea of the program is to improve energy measures and make the facilities more energy efficient. Council member DeMers said the conversation has been started again, the program has been around since 2007, the City has considered it a couple times, but this could be used as a great marketing tool. He added it is a voluntary program that does not have a set schedule, so the City would be able to move forward through the steps at its own rate. He added again this could provide a positive message and be a positive marketing piece. Mr. Hatcher commented this would be a good way to recognize what the City has already done such as changing to LED street lights. He added that once step three is reached there are requirements.

Mayor Gander asked to have the information about this emailed out. Council President Olstad asked if they can see what the costs could potential be for moving forward in the steps and the requirements that go along with them. Mr. Hatcher said the costs would depend on what best practice or requirement they choose. Council President Olstad asked if they could estimate or determine what the average costs might be. Council member DeMers added if they proceed they can recognize what has already been done and how there is a community component with the formation of a committee for this. He stated the City can only do so much and they will need participation from the private sector to make impacts. Discussion followed about how it is expensive to refit or rehab, there is potential to do something with the arena project, if a direction could be given on what practices they might do, and if something ends up costing too much money, they do not have to move forward with it.

Council member Helms asked if the Water and Light Department would help pay the fees. Mr. Mykleseth said they appointed Mr. Hatcher to be the coordinator of the program and take the lead on the committee but they would still need approval from the City Council. Mr. Galstad asked if there were any penalty provisions. Mr. Mykleseth said no and all decisions were left up to the City. Council President Olstad said there are a few things to look at and consider.

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

4. Consider Penalties for Tobacco License Violations – Michael Hedlund

Sergeant Jared Quanrud introduced himself to the City Council and that he was sitting in on the discussion for Chief Hedlund. He said he would do his best to answer any questions. Mr. Murphy explained the tobacco compliance has not been done yearly like the alcohol compliance but they are starting to. He stated one of the businesses failed and when Chief Hedlund was reviewing the ordinance there was not clear penalty provisions like there is with the alcohol ordinance, he is asking to have one put together, and is wondering if it should just be a fine or a matrix like in the alcohol ordinance. Mayor Gander asked if this would be coming back for approval. Mr. Murphy said it would.

Council President Olstad stated it would make sense to have it mirror the alcohol ordinance. Mr. Galstad explained in this circumstance the person was cited for selling to a minor but the business was not. Council member DeMers asked if it could be retroactive. Mr. Galstad said no. Discussion followed about using the same penalties for tobacco as there are for alcohol compliance failures, which includes a suspension of a license.

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

5. Request for Motor Grader Rental for 2019-2020 Winter Season – Jason Stordahl

Mr. Murphy said Mr. Stordahl was unable to be at the meeting and this is regarding the lease for a motor grader they do yearly for the winter season. He explained that RDO does not have a machine available for rent this year so the only rental quote was from from Butler Machine. He said the quote is \$6,045 a month, which is \$50 less per month than last year's quote and the request is to move forward with renting this machine.

Mr. Murphy commented Mr. Stordahl is not happy about the predictions but Public Works is getting ready for snow removal, the machine is not ready to be picked up yet, and there may be another motor grader available they could use for the time being.

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

OTHER:

Mayor Gander introduced two exchanged students that were attending school in Fisher and how both worked very hard for scholarships for their programs because there is only a 3% acceptance rate for these programs. He added they have to continue working hard not only at school but they have other projects they need to complete including 50 hours of community service. He asked each to introduce themselves.

Valters stated he was from Latvia, he has been in the United States for about a month, and is loving it. He explained he likes to compare the two countries, that he participates in debates, that has increased his interest in politics, and he was thankful for getting a chance to listen to and hear how decisions are made here. Council member Helms asked what the climate what like in Latvia. Valters stated the climate of Latvia was similar to here but it does not get as cold back home.

Naufal thanked the Council for allowing him to be a part of this meeting. He said he had also been in the country about a month, he likes it so far, but he may not survive the winter. He added he is from Indonesia and the climate is very different and this will be the first time he will experience snow. He stated one of

their projects was to shadow a leader, which is why they were shadowing Mayor Gander. He said they have learned some things from him, it has been fun to see how decisions are made in the city, and thanked them for letting him be there. Council member Helms welcomed them and commented this Council does get along very well and is able to discuss everything. Mayor Gander thanked them for coming.

ADJOURN:

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCIL MEMBER GRASSEL, SECONDED BY COUNCIL MEMBER RIOPELLE, TO ADJOURN THE OCTOBER 8, 2019 WORK SESSION OF THE EAST GRAND FORKS, MINNESOTA CITY COUNCIL AT 6:17 P.M.

Voting Aye: Vetter, Helms, Riopelle, Olstad, Grassel, and DeMers.

Voting Nay: None.

Absent: Johnson.

David Murphy, City Administrator/Clerk-Treasurer