

**APPROVED MINUTES
OF THE CITY
COUNCIL WORK SESSION
CITY OF EAST GRAND FORKS
TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 12, 2019 – 5:00 PM**

CALL TO ORDER:

The Work Session of the East Grand Forks City Council for November 12, 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; 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; and Megan Nelson, City Clerk.

DETERMINATION OF A QUORUM:

The Council President Determined a Quorum was present.

1. Presentation of Arena Feasibility Study – JLG Architects & Consultants

Mr. Huttunen said the City hired JLG Architects and their consultants to complete an assessment and feasibility study of the Civic Center and VFW Arena. He explained how staff and members of the Park and Recreation Commission participated in this study and they looked at every system in the buildings and the buildings themselves. He stated in this process they examined the buildings based on programming or possible uses, for users, and accessibility for anyone in the facilities. He thanked everyone that has been a part of this process. He added they are viewing this as a living document; they would like discussion, and get some direction on what the next steps might be. He introduced Mr. Scott Ward with B32 Engineering who handles ice rinks, Jeremiah Christenson from Obermiller Nelson Engineering who looked at the mechanical and electrical systems, Mike McClean from JLG Architects is the project manager, Ross Young was also with Obermiller Nelson, and Andrew Budke who was also with JLG Architects and were all involved with help developing the report.

Mr. Ward started by talking about the ice systems at the Civic Center. He explained a big part of the system is original; some things have been updated, so the City had gotten good use out of this system. He explained this is a R22 indirect system, which means most of the refrigerant stays in the mechanical room and glycol circulates through the rink floor. He continued saying the floor was only 26 years old, no reported problems other than the subfloor heat system does not work and because that doesn't work it limits the length of the season. He added there are options they could do and would recommend if the system were changed to use something natural like ammonia and move the system in the building if they are only going to change out the system.

Mr. Ward continued with the VFW Arena, which has a direct system that pumps R22 out under the floor. He explained this is one of the most efficient systems there is, there are some downfalls because of how much R22 is used, and the fact that it circulates R22 throughout the floor. He stated the floor was original to the building, which is usually the first thing to fail, the refrigeration system is older and was installed used, and the Council may want to consider replacing the system because of the age of the system. He added there is an exposure financially if this system were to leak because of the amount of R22 that it holds. He stated that was a quick overview of the two ice systems.

Mr. McClean stated the ice systems were a big part of this study but they also wanted to look over the buildings and other systems in the buildings. He explained they looked at programming needs by talking with a steering committee and this was how they developed an investment list to help illustrate the conditions and recommendations. He directed the Council to the appendix, which shows a detailed assessment of the general conditions of the buildings, systems, and photos of some of the conditions. He continued with the investment list which shows all of the identified items, how it is a working document, and it can continue to be used as discussion continues.

Mr. McClean continued with an overview of the Civic Center starting with how the parking lot needs to be fixed, there are accessibility issues into the building, and there is a lack of accessibility to the main floor. Mr. Christenson said the building did not have a sprinkler system, which should be addressed with a renovation project. He stated the mechanical systems are sparse, they do not meet the current ventilation codes, there is no dehumidification system, and the systems are not efficient so a looking ahead major infrastructure upgrade is being recommended. He said the fire alarm system should be improved and the City could add cameras, key card access, and upgrading to LED lighting. He added there is a lot to do with the mechanical and electrical systems. Mr. McClean explained when considering programming needs there is a lack of size and quantity of lockers and locker rooms, the location of some of the rooms are not ideal, and some of the rooms are not full size, which were some of the programming needs identified at the Civic Center.

Mr. McClean moved on to the VFW Arena and site improvements. He explained parking improvements were identified, drainage needs to be addressed around the building, and more lighting may need to be added on the sidewalk leading up to the VFW. He stated there is not a gutter system on the building so the water runs down the building and can cause issues if not addressed. He commented there are more items that need to be addressed on the VFW Arena building such as in the bathrooms, the concession area, and other interior finishes. Mr. Christenson stated a sprinkler system needs to be added, there is currently no dehumidification system, and overall an upgrade is needed on the entire mechanical system. He continued saying there should be a mass notification system, upgrade the fire alarm system, and upgrade the lighting to LED. Mr. McClean reviewed the programming needs, how a multi-purpose facility is needed, and this building has been identified as a possible location.

Mr. McClean stated they reviewed all of the information and came up with the recommendation of adding another ice sheet at the Civic Center and converting the VFW Arena into a multi-purpose facility. He explained having one ice system and adding another sheet of ice at the Civic Center was logical from their perspective because the costs could be reduced with two ice sheets under one roof over the long term. He said the needed upgrades to the locker rooms could be addressed, visitors could have a better experience with two rinks at one location, and additional renovations would enhance what has already been done. He added VFW Arena could be converted to a multi-purpose facility that could include field turf, a walking track, and other groups could use it.

Mr. McClean continued with the Civic Center expansion and considered expanding on the east and west sides of the building. He reminded the Council this was a study, not a design, and how a west side expansion allowed for an accessible entrance, allowed room for more locker rooms, shared viewing space, a centrally located ice plant, and the weight room could be converted into a use for the ball park. He stated the minor bowing issue would be addressed with an excavation with a west side expansion. Mr. McClean then reviewed the possibilities with an east expansion, which would bring the facilities closer to the ball fields, there were some concerns about the water table on this side, utilities would need to be expanded, and the flooring would need to be addressed since the floor sinks down. He stated both expansions would maintain about 600 parking spots and there were no significant changes to the VFW Arena building other than adding some parking.

Mr. McClean told the Council they had come up with a budget summary for the recommendations. He stated the proposed expansion for the Civic Center is estimated to cost \$9.5 million, the renovation for the Civic was \$3.6 million, renovations at the VFW Arena are estimated to cost \$2.7 million, and adding the site renovations the total construction costs are estimated to be \$21 million. He then reviewed the soft cost estimates, which were \$3 million for a total estimated project cost of \$24 million. He then asked for questions and thanked the Council for their time.

Council member DeMers asked if an expansion was done on the Civic Center if it were to be possible to add another expansion on in the future. Mr. McClean stated that was not something they looked into, it could be possible, but there were limitations because they would be taking over parking or taking over ball field space. He added if a new ice system was put in they might want to consider needs of the future. Council member DeMers asked if the flooding issues on the north end of the Civic Center were addressed. Mr. Huttunen said they did not get into anything that far and there was still water seeping in on the east side of the building. Discussion followed about the utilization of the lot on the east side of the VFW Arena, if it could be enhanced, but if this arena is no longer an ice arena there may not be any more issues with parking.

Council President Olstad asked about ADA compliance and how much would be required with a renovation. Mr. McClean said the Civic Center is grandfathered in and it would depend on the project that was done. He added if they added an addition the sprinkler system would need to be installed and the new building would need to meet the current building code. Ms. Ellis stated the last renovation did not meet the threshold requiring additional the ADA compliance but the City does have a plan in place that shows all buildings will eventually be brought up to code. She added there were also ADA compliance issues at the VFW Arena that would need to be addressed. Discussion followed about how if projects are done the ADA compliance needs to be included so these projects are not pushed off while still being realistic.

Mayor Gander stated this study came forward because renovations are needed. He asked what the were costs to retrofit the buildings. Mr. McClean said it was about \$14 million for the upgrades along with addressing code and accessibility issues. He said if they replace what is currently there for the ice systems it would cost around \$3.3 million and reviewed other possible options for upgrades. Council member Helms asked how the buildings looked overall. Mr. McClean said they were sound buildings, supports were added to the wall at the Civic Center, there were some cracks by the locker rooms, but there was nothing significant that they saw. Discussion followed about the parking lot repairs, grading, and adding storm water improvements were included in the site work. Council member Helms said he had a big issue with the amount included for contingency. Mr. McClean explained there are some unknowns that exist, it was currently set for 15% of the project, and as the project starts and more details are known the

percentage would go down. Council member Helms asked about the professional fees. Mr. McClean explained that covered the architects, engineering, design development, and construction administration. He added the percentage usually is 6% to 10% and depends on the project and amount of people.

Mayor Gander said the next step is to roll something out to show the community and begin the conversation to find funding and volunteers. He asked if groups would be allowed to volunteer. Mr. McClean said they could design some visuals to help show what the project could be. He added the volunteering would depend on the contractor and usually demolition is the easiest thing to have help with. Mayor Gander said the next steps would be taken internally with the Parks Department. Mr. Huttunen stated if there is interest to continue forward they would need more of a design and start talking with current and potential users. He added that there has not been too much community input and the City has not talked about funding sources although there is potential for naming rights, in-kind work, and fundraising help from user groups. He said moving forward they will start to engage the community. Discussion followed about prioritizing what has been offered, how there needs to be more than a vague concept, and the timeline for the proposed project is estimated to be two and a half to three years.

Council member DeMers asked how this project could potentially affect the local economy. Mr. Huttunen said it was impossible for him to know for sure and with two sheets of ice under one roof the opportunities are endless. He reminded the Council about the regional skating competition that was held the previous year and the only reason they could not hold it at the Civic Center because it did not meet the requirements for the needed locker room space. Council member Riopelle said after the ICON Arena was done Grand Forks holds 14 to 16 tournaments a year and it usually brings around \$350,000 to the community per event in Grand Forks. Discussion followed about how this could create a great environment and how combining the facilities can save on operational costs.

2. Discussion on South Bridge Hydraulic Study – David Murphy

Mr. Murphy said the Metropolitan Planning Organization has contracted with consultants to conduct the hydraulic studies to help determine a possible bridge location. He reminded the Council the City only had approved the one location. He explained the City of Grand Forks has approved three locations with the understanding East Grand Forks is unable to participate in the 47th Avenue location because it is outside of the flood protection but they would like to split the costs of the Elks Drive location. Mr. Murphy stated the City could amend the resolution to include the Elks Drive location and again the cost for each location for the city would be \$15,000. He added he would take any questions.

Mayor Gander said a south bridge has been included in the long-range transportation plan and applauded those who have kept this moving forward. He commented Grand Forks has agreed to spend funds on the study at 32nd Avenue so the Council may want to consider adding Elks Drive to help this process move forward and possibly help compress the time line. He added he would support a study at both locations. Council President Olstad stated they had met with Mr. Wilfahrt and spoke with Grand Forks Council President Sande about this. He explained the appropriate thing is to move forward with this, it will help give a better understanding, and help find a bridge location.

Council member Helms asked if it was going to be a wet or dry bridge. Mayor Gander said it would be a wet bridge because the cost for a dry bridge would be at least double and could be considered to excessive. He added they could make the Merrifield bridge a high and dry bridge. Mr. Murphy asked if the consensus was to move this forward. Council President Olstad asked and the consensus was to move this on for a vote.

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

3. Request to Prepare Report of Feasibility for 20th Street NW & 5th Avenue NW – Mayor Gander

Mayor Gander stated how the streets around 20th Street NW and 5th Avenue NW are in need of replacement. He explained he would like to hold a neighborhood meeting to let the property owners what the process would be to get a new street but the first step would be getting a report of feasibility done so potential costs could be shared. He said the cost of this report would eventually be rolled into the project and is needed for this conversation so it will be going before Council for consideration. Discussion followed about including a map of the area affected, how property owners have said no to this before, currently there is no petition brought forward for the Council to consider, and if the project is not completed the City will end up paying the costs for this report. Council member Vetter suggested creating an informational packet so people know what the process is for a street replacement. Mayor Gander said the more information they can give the better it will be. Mr. Murphy added that if this was brought forward by petition and the project did not move forward the City would also be absorbing those costs as well.

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

ADJOURN:

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCIL MEMBER HELMS, SECONDED BY COUNCIL MEMBER VETTER, TO ADJOURN THE NOVEMBER 12, 2019 WORK SESSION OF THE EAST GRAND FORKS, MINNESOTA CITY COUNCIL AT 6:22 P.M.

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

Voting Nay: None.

Absent: Johnson.

David Murphy, City Administrator/Clerk-Treasurer