

**APPROVED MINUTES
OF THE CITY
COUNCIL WORK SESSION
CITY OF EAST GRAND FORKS
TUESDAY, JANUARY 14, 2020 – 5:00 PM**

CALL TO ORDER:

The Work Session of the East Grand Forks City Council for January 14, 2020 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, Tim Johnson, and Marc DeMers.

Karla Anderson, Finance Director; Nancy Ellis, City Planner; Steve Emery, City Engineer; Ron Galstad, City Attorney; Kevin Hatcher, Energy & Customer Service Specialist; Charlotte Helgeson, Library Director; Reid Huttunen, Parks and Recreation Superintendent; David Murphy, City Administrator/Clerk-Treasurer; and Jason Stordahl, Public Works Director.

DETERMINATION OF A QUORUM:

The Council President Determined a Quorum was present.

1. Request to Purchase Furniture for Cities Area Transit Facility – Nancy Ellis

Ms. Ellis explained Cities Area Transit was building a new facility utilizing federal dollars and how the City applied for a State grant to help but the request was denied. She stated the federal government transit partners said the City had federal dollars available that had not been appropriated and could be used towards this project. She asked the City accept the bid from Norby's for furniture and along with a few other items the project cost will be approximately \$160,000. She said there is an 80/20 split and the City of Grand Forks will be picking up the local share so it will not cost East Grand Forks anything.

Council member Vetter asked if the federal funds could be used for anything other than transit. Ms. Ellis said no because they can be used for capital or operating on transit. She added how currently the City is able to use more of the federal funds for operating but the funds used for this project were designated for capital. There were no other questions.

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

2. Request to Purchase Ticket Vending & Farebox Equipment for Transit Services – Nancy Ellis

Ms. Ellis stated fareboxes that are currently used are sold by GFI Genfare, which is the only United States supplier. She explained they are hoping to update the fareboxes on the East Grand Forks buses and purchase a farecard vending machine which means someone does not have to be available to sell these cards. She said they looked into this purchase and utilizing another company would require the

replacement of all of the hardware and software that is currently being used greatly increasing these costs so they are asking to use this sole source. She added the total amount of the grant was \$220,000 and the local share of \$44,000 was included in the 2020 budget. She commented how the Council will be asked to use a sole source for this purchase and accept the bid for this purchase.

Council member DeMers asked where the vending machine be located. Ms. Ellis said it was going to be at the downtown facility, they are looking at another location of South Washington and 17th Avenue because it is more of a central location, but at this time, the ticket machine will be placed at the downtown facility. Council member DeMers asked if Grand Forks was already using this system and if they had a vending machine. Ms. Ellis said they were but this would be the first vending machine. Council member DeMers asked if the cost could be shared. Ms. Ellis explained Grand Forks was purchasing the software and training which will allow people to have this system on their phone or online. Council member Riopelle asked if everything was ready. Ms. Ellis said this included purchase through installation. Council member Helms asked if there was a location in East Grand Forks to purchase these cards. Ms. Ellis said rider could purchase cards when they get on the bus and this system will allow riders to use most any type of payment.

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

3. Request to Purchase Snow Blower – Jason Stordahl

Mr. Stordahl requested to purchase a snowblower for the Public Works Department. He explained this would serve as a backup when the two blowers have gone down, be used to clear 23rd Street NW, the Industrial Park, and other areas where there are issues with drifting. He added it was not as large as the two other blowers but it can still be used to blow snow and fill trucks. He informed the Council how MNDOT and another city in Canada has been using these plows with good results and few issues. He said this was a budgeted for \$35,000, the State contract amount was \$26,121, and asked if there were any questions.

Council member Helms asked if this brand was not available at a local implement dealer. Mr. Stordahl said no and how it was heavy duty piece of equipment that both North Dakota and Minnesota State agencies use.

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

4. Request to Purchase Storm Water Pumps – Jason Stordahl

Mr. Stordahl informed the Council that lift 15 is a storm water lift located north of 23rd Street NW. He explained the pumps that were in the lift had been installed in 2005, how unlike other lift stations these pumps stay in the lift year round, and if there is water they are running. He stated they started having issues over this last summer and he is requesting to replace the pumps for a total of \$72,928.50, which does include installation. He added it was this lift station that lowers the water level in the swale north of 23rd Street.

Council member Riopelle asked what they do with the old pumps. Mr. Stordahl said the one pump is worthless because of the shape it is in and the other pump will be used as a backup like they have done at other lift stations or it will be used for parts. Mayor Gander asked if either could be rebuilt. Mr. Stordahl said they will rebuild the one but they will not be able to rebuild the other. Council member DeMers

asked how this fits in the plan of pump replacement. Mr. Stordahl stated they try to replace one waste water pump each year if it is needed, storm water lift stations are not used as much, sitting dry isn't good for them either, and the replacement for these pumps would be around a 15 year rotation schedule. Council member Helms asked if these included motors or if the old motors were going to be used. Mr. Stordahl said the entire pump and motor was going to be replaced. Discussion followed about the quality of these pumps that are used in both the storm and sanitary lift stations and how these pumps will be replaced in the early spring.

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

5. Request to Purchase Toro Infield Pro 5040 – Reid Huttunen

Mr. Huttunen told the Council funds had budgeted for this year for an infield groomer. He explained this would be a new piece of equipment for the department instead of using drags behind an ATV. He stated how this piece of equipment is specialized and if it is ordered before the end of January, they can still get the 2019 price. He added how they have talked with other communities who uses this piece of equipment and got advice on what additional attachments to get as well. He stated this would be primarily housed at Stauss Park; it would be utilized mostly at this location, and would be trailered to other locations when needed. Council member DeMers asked if they had a trailer that would work for this. Mr. Huttunen said yes.

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

6. Consider Becoming a GreenStep City – Kevin Hatcher

Mr. Hatcher stated this was a follow up on the discussion from last fall about this program, he reviewed what agencies were involved with this program, and how this is a voluntary program with goals of promoting quality of life and sustainability. He explained he had attended an event in Detroit Lakes and received lots of positive feedback, this is done at the City's pace, not all steps have to be completed, and the City would be the one to decide how much it will spend for this program. He added he had included a letter from the City Administrator of Warren about the program and asked if there were any questions.

Mayor Gander stated Mr. Hatcher will be the coordinator for this program and asked how excited he was for the City to be a part of this program. Mr. Hatcher said he was excited to be involved with the community and being able to contribute and set practices to improve the quality of life for residents is what makes this program beneficial. Mayor Gander asked if will attract more residents and businesses. Mr. Hatcher explained they were already doing many of these things and this program will bring more awareness to what is already being done. Council member Riopelle asked if some of these things were already completed. Mr. Hatcher stated they were with changing to LED street lights, the flood control project, and planting trees were just a few of the examples. Council member Johnson asked why there is only 132 cities that participate out of the over 850 cities in Minnesota. Mr. Hatcher said most of the cities that participate are in the Twin Cities and there are a few in the Northwest region of the State.

Ms. Brown asked what the benefit is for the city to participate if they are already doing many of these things. Mr. Hatcher said the step by step process that can give them ideas they may not have considered before, getting the recognition statewide, and working with a team to improve the City. Ms. Ellis added there are some loans available being a participant of this program to help pay for projects which can save the City some money. Council President Olstad commented how this came before the Council about six

months ago, the discussion was more in-depth, and the biggest concern was the costs related to participating. He added how the City does not have to move forward with something or spend funds if not necessary. Mayor Gander asked if there was loan money available for the private sector. Mr. Hatcher said he would check into that.

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

7. Review Report of Feasibility for Reconstruction for 5th Avenue NW and 20th Street NW – Steve Emery

Mr. Emery stated the report of feasibility was completed for the replacement of the street and utilities on 5th Avenue NW and 20th Street NW. He explained Public Works has done patching and repair work over the years but there are many issues so they looked at replacing the street, storm water system and a parts of the waste water system. He said they have talked with the Water and Light Department on replacing watermain in this area while this project is going on. He added they would be adding in catch basins along the corridor with a drain tile system to help keep the subgrade dry and help with the longevity of the street. He reviewed the street that would be constructed and the installatopm a complete sidewalk system. He stated the estimated cost for the drainage and storm water improvements was \$272,810 and the estimated cost for the street improvements was \$1,883,903 to an estimated total project cost of \$2.1 million. He reviewed the assessment rates and based on the current assessment policy this would be 100% assessed.

Mr. Emery continued with the review the map of the project area showing what properties would be effected, the itemized costs, and a proposed assessment roll. He stated the typical lot of around 75 feet receiving both a front and end benefit would be around \$41,000 and added the next step in the process is usually a preliminary hearing. Council President Olstad stated it was his understanding the next step was the Mayor was going to bring this information to a neighborhood meeting. Mayor Gander said before moving forward this project would need to be brought forward by a petition from the neighbors. He added how difficult it would be to hold a meeting without this information because no one knew what the costs would be so the next step is to hold a neighborhood meeting, give out the information, and let them decide how they would like to move forward. He explained how they would be informed the Council would wait until the objection period was over before moving forward with the project. He said they will have information available on what the repairs have cost of the last five years, that these streets are past their usable life, and there has been an aggressive effort to patch this area which the City does not have the ability to continue.

Council Vice-President Grassel asked how long this would be assessed for. Mr. Emery said usually 20 years. Council member DeMers said when Pioneer Court was constructed and 9th Avenue was done there was lime rock included. He said he did not want to add cost to the project and asked if lime should be included to help with the longevity of the road. Council Vice-President Grassel asked about the fabric that was mentioned. Mr. Emery said geogrid fabric, which gives structural benefits. Council member Vetter asked if drain tile was added to the area where they added lime rock. Mr. Emery said he does not think they did. Council member Vetter asked if the drain tile would do the same job as the lime rock. Mr. Emery said the biggest issue is being able to construct the road in this area of poor soil. He explained the idea behind the 10-inch subgrade and fabric is because this is what was done when they redid the intersection of 3rd Avenue NW and 20th Street NW and it has been holding up. Discussion followed about how lime rock has helped stabilize an area and that should be included in the costs before it becomes a change order on the project.

Council member DeMers asked if they should also include the costs for asphalt. Mr. Emery said they could but they would need to educate them on how they will have ongoing maintenance. Mr. Galstad said there is a city policy where the City was only going to be putting in concrete streets. Council member Johnson said the road is currently lined with mailboxes and with the addition of sidewalks if that would allow them to get their mail to the house. Mr. Emery said that would have to be answered by the post office and they would need to look at the right-of-way during the design phase. Mayor Gander asked if changes to driveway aprons were figured in with the addition of sidewalks. Mr. Emery said they would need the flat area for the sidewalk.

Council member Helms asked what the difference was between the engineering fee and construction administration fee. Mr. Emery said the engineering fee was the cost to complete the plans and specifications and bidding services. He stated the construction administration covers the costs of staking, construction observations, and inspections along with project management. Council member Helms said he understands this road needs to be replaced but the fees really drives the costs up. Mr. Emery said for preliminary numbers he has contingencies built in and they are hopefully reduced or eliminated when the bids come in because it is based off full plans and specifications. Council member Helms said it seems these numbers never seem to go down. Mayor Gander stated there have been projects where the final numbers come in lower than the proposed assessment roll.

Council member DeMers asked if the road should be narrowed. Mr. Emery said that could be brought up at the neighborhood meeting, it would help with the sidewalk placement, and would help reduce costs. Council member DeMers said he was trying to figure out where they might be able to cut some costs and bring some of those preliminary numbers to the meeting. Mayor Gander said they would need to look at the category of this street. He asked to move forward to find a place to hold a neighborhood meeting, notify all affected property owners, post a quorum may be present, and go to the next step. Council President Olstad said that sounded good and there were no other comments.

8. Discussion on Proposed Engineering Contract – David Murphy

Mr. Murphy informed the Council this had been worked on for the past several months, they revamped the contract, and Mr. Jim Strommen from Kennedy and Graven helped in this process. He explained they started over with the contract, it protects the city more than the previous contract, and there has been several rounds of negotiations with WSN. He stated WSN has proposed to include the General Provisions for Professional Services agreement, Mr. Galstad has suggested everything be in one contract, and there are three items that still need to be approved by Mr. Strommen. He said both parties are in agreement with the major terms of the contract and he would be working with Mr. Strommen, Mr. Galstad, and Mr. Emery this week to put the contract in its final form for the next meeting. He informed the Council he would be out of the office on Wednesday and Thursday for a funeral and he would be able to answer questions regarding the general provisions.

Mr. Murphy informed the Council they had reviewed the contingency amounts, how it is based on the projects, and what is received for construction oversight. He stated these things were looked at in-depth and they agree on what industry standards are. Council President Olstad asked how they would move forward if this were not completed. Mr. Murphy stated it depended on if Mr. Strommen was able to get him his opinion prior to leaving. Council President Olstad said he did not want to see it contingent upon Mr. Strommen reviewing this so to wait until the next meeting. Mr. Murphy said the old contract has expired, both parties are operating under the terms of the old contract, and the new contract is proposed to continue indefinitely which he is not comfortable with and would recommended a two year contract.

Mayor Gander asked what length of time these contracts had been. Mr. Emery said they were typically a three-year contract. Mayor Gander asked the reason to change from three to two years. Mr. Murphy said it keeps it more up to date, they have had to meet to clarify information and fees before. He added in his opinion it keeps this more on the forefront and they can address items that may come up during the contract period. Mayor Gander commented on how much time it takes to negotiate contracts and it will happen more often if the contract term is only two years. Mr. Murphy said this took longer because they started over on this contract and he was out of the office during part of this time so he doesn't see the next contract taking nearly as long. Mr. Emery said he agreed with Mr. Murphy and the next time it would not take as long.

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

9. Review of Updates to Tobacco Ordinance – Ron Galstad

Mr. Galstad stated how Chief Hedlund requested administrative penalties to the tobacco ordinance, which he based off the liquor license penalty provisions. He added that recently Federal Laws have changed the age of someone who can purchase tobacco or tobacco products from 18 up to 21 and the other item he included was the electronic devices for vaping and solution products. He asked if there were any suggestions or questions. He then said he would be bringing this forward in ordinance form. There were no questions.

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

10. Discussion on Recreation Facility Projects & Potential Local Sales Tax – Reid Huttunen

Mr. Huttunen said they have drafted documents that would be sent to the State Legislature if approved by the Council to put on the ballot for a vote on a local sales tax. He stated he also include literature that explains the projects, economic and regional impacts, a financial summary, and a sample resolution. He commented how Ms. Anderson has been very helpful throughout this process and they have worked with Baker Tilly, Kennedy and Graven, and the League of Minnesota Cities. He said there is also a history of the fixed assets, what they initially cost, and the amount of funds maintaining the facilities. He stated he is asking for direction on do they want to vote on a local sales tax, do they want to include all four projects, and what dollar amount would they like to consider. He commented how he has been asked what his recommendation would be. He stated they should move forward with the four projects so they can continue this process, hold stakeholder meetings, and ask residents for input on the sales tax. He asked for questions.

Council President Olstad stated his opinion was that they move with all four items to the State Legislature and move forward by holding meetings, ask for input, and have residents submit what they think. He said this would then allow the community to decide what should happen. He commented how there have been many residents that have already started reaching out and they want the right to vote on this. He said all projects have to be listed separately on the ballot so everyone will have a say in what they would like to see and this is how he would like to move forward with this.

Council Vice-President Grassel said he agreed, they have put money in some of these facilities because the ice plants could quick tomorrow. He stated they need to let the people decide how they want to move forward with this. He commented how the locker rooms at the Civic are in tough shape and too small, the baseball field have not changed in years except for the addition of a backstop and bleachers, and the old

warming house needs to go. He said they need to go after whoever promised a boat ramp, the DNR is a partner but it has been the City that is putting in the time and money into what is needed to be done, so at some point they need to come back to the City. He continued saying how it the trails and rest of the parks system is being taken care of by three or four people. He asked how they are going to fix the trails collecting \$47,000 per year. He said the people should be allowed to come in and voice their opinions.

Council President Olstad said this had to be voted on next week because there is not another meeting unless a special meeting is called. Mr. Murphy informed the Council that Mr. Huttunen was on the local radio show this morning, he did a fantastic job answering questions, and most questions were good, valid questions and they seemed to have an understanding of the process. He asked to keep Mr. Huttunen in the forefront and continuing to answer questions. He added how he was able to get the point across that most of the updates will not be seen because items like the cooling system is behind closed doors.

Council member Vetter asked what kind of changes can be made to the projects once the resolution was submitted to the State because one email stated they wanted to tear down the VFW Arena and Blue Line Arena and build a new, more usable space on the south end. He said they have come up with master plans before then something is suggested that makes a lot of sense. He asked again if these are submitted down to the State, if they have leeway to change the project substantially because of public input. Mr. Huttunen asked Ms. Anderson to help answer. He said they were told to keep the language generalized enough to make changes, which was suggested by Kennedy and Graven, but include some key words in the resolution. Ms. Anderson said the resolution had been updated by Kennedy and Graven so the projects were not so specific and they will continue working on the documents that would be drafted into the bill.

Council member DeMers asked about the bond schedule and if there was a plan to fill in the gap with donations. Discussion followed about how the State is now requiring cities to include the bond cost information, they are still working on how this should be listed, and at this time, they are estimating what bond costs might be. Ms. Anderson said explained they also have included the time frame of 25 years because they think it could be done in 25 years but in case the sales tax collections drop the City could have up to 30 years to collect so they are trying to work with the different groups to make sure this information is correct. She added the information needs to be down to the State by January 31st even though the session doesn't start until February 11th. Council member DeMers said 25 and 30 years is a long time to predict out, he is in favor of these projects, but he also has some fears. He said he is worried about the costs, what might come up during this time frame, and this will tie up a possible revenue stream so it was something to be aware of. He asked if the State would be asking if there is any local support or local funds available for these projects.

Council Vice-President Grassel said the Council would need to support this and get it going on this so they might be able to start getting those donations. Council member Vetter asked if the sales tax rate is flexible, 1% keeps the city close with Grand Forks, but the 2% puts the city significantly higher. Ms. Anderson said they could start with 2% and later have the community vote on a smaller percentage if there was a large amount of donations that had come in. She added they could not go up from what is sent to the State, the 2% will cover the costs of the projects, and it is like the levy where the percentage could be decreased. Council member Vetter said because of an inflation adjustment, they might be able to pay this off sooner. Ms. Anderson said the City won't be able to get the bond unless it's at 2% because that will cover the costs of the projects, a 1% sales tax would not. Discussion followed about regional impacts from hosting events should increase the collected sales tax that would also help pay these projects off faster.

Mayor Gander said they are talking about 1% and 2%, which does not sound like much, at 2% it comes close to \$2 million dollars annually, which is close to 40% of the general tax levy per year. He commented it would all be dedicated to recreation, he loves the proposed projects, but there is responsibility to the residents and they need to bring forward a recommendation. He said he would like to challenge them to think beyond this because of how long this tax would be for recreation. He asked to set things in place for naming rights and other ways donations can be collected to help reduce the burden on the taxpayers. He added if they do a sales tax, half of it will be coming to the residents and the other half will be taken on by others in the region and whatever they approve will be the top limit.

Council member Helms said the problem he has is they will be spending \$32 million on these projects and then 20 years down the road they will need to spend money on these facilities to maintain them. He stated how they may need to hire new employees to run everything and asked where the money was coming from to pay for that. He said if this all goes through the Council would have to raise property taxes to pay for everything else that goes with this. He commented that recreation is great but he is not sure about spending this kind of money because there are other things they can do to beautify the community. He said they need to look at this really hard this and when the information is drafted to send to the State, he did not want it to say that the citizens are all in favor of these projects because they do not know that yet.

Council Vice-President Grassel said if they do not do these things they aren't going to have kids in recreation and then more will have to be added to the tax base because people won't be coming to the community. He stated they have to be careful on what they do and to think outside the box to move forward. He commented this is the biggest project that has come before the Council since the flood that will be very important to the community.

Council member Riopelle reminded the Council if they do nothing they will still be tapping the taxpayers for the repairs at the VFW Arena and Civic Center, which will just be the basics. He stated he had no doubt one of the systems will fail and the taxpayers will be a lot less happy if it comes from their property taxes. Ms. Anderson said there is the \$250,000 from Water and Light has been great to use on the buildings to keep them up. She commented things are being down now because they were not done in the past. She did ask Baker Tilly how much the City could bond for if the sales tax fails or if they decide not to move forward with it and was told the City was restricted to \$15 million over a 20-year period. She gave the example of a home valued at \$250,000 and the yearly tax for paying this bond would be \$335. Mr. Murphy said the letter sent to the State would include how the Council voted and nothing about community support it because the vote hasn't happened yet so there is no documentation showing that.

Council member DeMers said 25 to 30 years is a long time, it's hard to determine what might come up, but they can figure out 5 years. He stated they are facing either major costs or discontinuing programs, he doesn't think there is anyone that wants to discontinue programs, and this is why these discussions started. He added how it may not be as cheap to do some of these projects as it is now and these projects will only enhance the City and could attract people to the community. Council member Helms said they could do the sales tax and fix what they have, he added there are 14 parks that have been updated but they are not ADA compliant, and there are a lot of things they have never done. He asked why they do not discuss how to bring businesses into the community that could help pay for some of these things. He said events will bring families in but they won't all be staying and spending their money in East Grand Forks. Mayor Gander said some have said to make these facilities nice, that is the sentiment, and asked what would it might look like and to keep their mind open. Council President Olstad asked those in the audience to come up and make comments.

Marla Wolfe, 2132 11th Ave NW, stated she has been a resident of East Grand Forks her entire life, was a senior in high school when the arena was built, was a hockey cheerleader, and was a part of the first graduating class to go through that building. She said she feels like it is her job to give back to this community so it continues for generations to come because someone did it for them. She added she remembered when the dads and service groups worked on the VFW Arena. She commented they do need to keep up, she looks at what could be for her family and events she would attend, and she does not want to move forward with a band-aid approach. She said they need to do it right and invest in the future.

Lisa Brown, 2225 9th St SE, said she also lived in East Grand Forks her whole life. She told the Council they need to make a decision tonight because they need to get the information to the Legislators, going with the 1% doesn't collect enough money, and that would be the band-aid approach. She said they need to go with the 2%, hopefully they come under the 2%, but they need to ask for enough or they will end up increasing property taxes when there is a failure at one of the arenas and the taxpayers didn't get a chance to vote. She said the City will lose residents if the property taxes continue to rise and the residents can't afford property taxes to continue to climb. She said the sales tax would be spread out to others, she would like to see more businesses in East Grand Forks, that needs to be worked on, but that is a separate issue. She said decisions need to be made to make the town great and fix things before the City is in a bind.

Mr. Galstad said it needs to be made know that this is not a property tax, clarification needs to be given, and it could end with a different result when people understand this is not going on their property taxes. He said he is not arguing for or against this but this needs to be clarified because not everyone is getting the information.

Brandon Boespflug, 1508 Park Drive SE, stated he is a citizen and also the President of the ISD 595 School Board. He said he was in support of at least going to the Legislature with the 2% and then working through the process. He explained the problem they could run into with the abatement bond for \$15 million over 20 years, there would be no businesses coming, potential business could see how high their property taxes would be, and it would make it difficult to get people to come to the City. He said the tax base or what funds the school district are the people that live here. He stated if they use a band-aid method, things will stack up, and at some point the Council will have to raise property taxes to take care of issues and people would move out of the community, which could affect the quality of life of all of the citizens in the community. He asked the Council to really look at this for the 2%, get the work groups together, and the Council will have to take the first action to get people onboard. He asked they use the verbiage for 2%, figure it out from there, and let the citizens voice their opinion. He added this is no different from setting a budget, it starts high, and is brought back down. He asked the Council to look at this closely and the only other thing would be to either increase taxes or cut services, which could have some negative effects on the community.

Council member Helms said he doesn't have a problem with the 2% but it is for a new building and there are still things that need to be fixed. He said they would still have to increase taxes to pay to cover other costs. Council member DeMers said they have started addressing issues and in the last 10 years they have made progress. He said this would take care of the two biggest facilities, there is always work to be done, but they are not falling a part. Council member Helms said if this is approved for 2%, some residents think they are not going to have a chance to vote on this, and they need to make sure it is not saying this is a done deal. Council President Olstad said they reviewed what the process was going to be, how it was completely different from the last time because the State changed the law, and it would be better to have the vote done first to show the support but again that is not the current process. He stated this needs to be moved on to next week and go from there. Mayor Gander said the higher a city sets its sales tax the higher

there is a disincentive to local businesses in the community, some businesses in town told him it is harder to do business with a higher sales tax, and secondly the citizens will realize they will be paying for city priorities which should be their priorities. He added the residents at the meeting are letting the Council know what their priorities are and there is a sentiment to do things at a high level of quality.

Council member DeMers said he doesn't think the purpose of the sales tax is to confuse anyone rather a different strategy to get these projects done and the reasoning why the State Legislature set it up this way. He commented how these are regionally significant facilities and allowed to be paid for this way. He said he does think this is a value people want. He added there are different ways to bring businesses in, pay them cash, or cut their taxes, but that usually doesn't work so in the long run the best way to bring businesses in is to have a vital community that is growing. He commented how this area is expanding, going into both cities, spending money in both cities, so this is not just an East Grand Forks issue, this area will become more vital, and attract more people to live and visit which will attract businesses. He said they need to fight to keep the community vital. He asked if they have been in contact with Representative Kiel and Senator Johnson so they are aware of this. Ms. Anderson said they have been in touch with them and staff will be contacting them once the Council has decided what they would like to do. Mr. Murphy stated he had talked with both of them and they are willing to do whatever the Council wants to do on this issue. Mr. Huttunen said they comment they made was these projects move forward it meets the criteria of regional impact and the citizens should get a chance to vote on these.

Ms. Anderson said they do have a plan to making all facilities ADA compliant, which some updates had been included in the budgets for 2020. Council President Olstad asked if there was going to be a resolution at the next council meeting for them to vote on. Ms. Anderson said yes. Terry Fore, 715 8th St SE, said she had lived here all her life. She said she will not be here in 30 years and others in the room may not be here in 30 years but their children and grandchildren will be. She said this is the only way they will be able to keep them. She said she has 13 grandchildren living in East Grand Forks and this is one of the reasons they may want to stay in East Grand Forks and live in a community that wants to the best that they can give.

ADJOURN:

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCIL MEMBER GRASSEL, SECONDED BY COUNCIL MEMBER JOHNSON, TO ADJOURN THE JANUARY 14, 2020 WORK SESSION OF THE EAST GRAND FORKS, MINNESOTA CITY COUNCIL AT 7:09 P.M.

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

Voting Nay: None.

David Murphy, City Administrator/Clerk-Treasurer