

**APPROVED MINUTES
OF THE CITY
COUNCIL WORK SESSION
CITY OF EAST GRAND FORKS
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 11, 2020 – 5:00 PM**

CALL TO ORDER:

The Work Session of the East Grand Forks City Council for February 11, 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: Council President Mark Olstad, Council Vice-President Chad Grassel, Council Members Clarence Vetter, Tim Riopelle, Tim Johnson, and Marc DeMers.

Karla Anderson, Finance Director; Jeff Boushee, Interim Fire Chief, 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; and Jason Stordahl, Public Works Director.

DETERMINATION OF A QUORUM:

The Council President Determined a Quorum was present.

1. MNDOT Demers Ave Traffic Light Replacement & ADA Work – Steve Emery

Mr. Emery explained the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MNDOT) is planning traffic light replacement and ADA improvements at the intersections of Demers Avenue and 2nd Street NW and Demers Avenue and 4th Street NW. He said the ADA improvements would be completely covered by MNDOT but the City would have a share in the traffic light replacement. He stated the cost for the signal replacement at both intersections is being estimated at \$600,000 so the City's share would be 50% or \$300,000. He added the City could utilize State Aid funds to pay for the City's portion or it could be budgeted. He added the currently balance of the State Aid construction fund was \$699,000, the City annually received around \$460,000 in that account, and he was not sure what was available in the State Aid maintenance account. He told the Council this project will not be moving forward for three or four years so there is time to determine how to pay for the City's share. He asked for questions.

Council member DeMers asked what other projects might be coming up. Mr. Emery reminded the Council of the federal project coming up in 2022. Council member DeMers asked for a five-year plan to be prepared of what projects are coming up and what other needs there may be. Council member Vetter asked what ADA improvements they were doing. Mr. Emery said he was not sure but since they are replacing the lights, the foundation work will need to be redone. Council member Vetter asked that MNDOT consider snow removal when determining where things are placed. Council Vice-President Grassel asked what had been done a couple years ago. Mr. Emery said they added the push buttons. Council President Olstad said they would need to be mindful of what other projects might be coming up.

This item will be brought back to a Work Session.

2. MNDOT Highway 220 & 17th Street Pedestrian Improvements – Steve Emery

Mr. Emery informed the Council that the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MNDOT) is planning to make pedestrian improvements at the intersection of Highway 220 and 17th Street during the summer of 2022. He stated the improvements included curb and gutter bump outs and extending out the median between the driving lanes. He said MNDOT wanted to know if the City would like to enhance safety at this intersection with a new beacon system that would be similar to the system that had been installed on Bygland Road. He added that MNDOT would pay for half of the system and once installed the City would then have ownership of the system.

Council President Olstad asked what the maintenance costs might be and what the maintenance costs had been for the system out on Bygland Road. Mr. Emery reviewed what would have warranty and how these systems have low maintenance costs. Discussion followed about the placement of the poles, how they may need to be moved so they do not cause issues for snow removal, MNDOT has taken into account agriculture equipment so there is enough space for that to make it through, and there will need to be enough space to clear snow from the sidewalks in this area.

Council member DeMers asked if this system could be removed once installed. Discussion followed regarding it would be difficult to know what the State rules will be in 10 years. Mr. Stordahl said if this system was not required to be there and it is no longer a benefit to the City, they should have the ability to take it down. More discussion followed on the placement of the poles and what placements should be suggested to MNDOT. Council member Johnson asked if they were going to be placing a round-a-bout at this location. Mr. Emery stated the round-a-bouts would be located at two other intersections and that proposed project was not going to be done for another 15 to 20 years.

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

3. Request to Purchase Niche Columbarium for Resurrection Cemetery – Reid Huttunen

Mr. Huttunen stated \$40,000 had been budgeted for the purchase and installation of a niche columbarium for the cemetery. He explained this had the same design as the other columbariums and it would hold 120 urns. He told the Council one of the columbariums is full and 65% of the other columbarium is already sold. He added around 64% of burials are now cremations and they would like to install this new one so people continue to have an option. Mr. Huttunen informed the Council that he only has the one price because of the specific style and because of the cost would need to obtain another quote because of the requirements of the purchasing policy. He said he would need to look and see if he can find something similar so this item may not come before the Council next week.

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

4. Discussion on Community Forums Regarding Recreation Facility Improvements – Reid Huttunen

Mr. Huttunen told the Council the tax committees did receive the information before the deadline and at this time, no questions have been asked of the City. He continued saying the first public informational meeting has been set for Thursday, February 20th starting at 5:30pm at the Civic Center, and staff will be on site for this meeting. He asked the Council about the next tentative meetings in the coming months. He stated he had handed out a list of organizations that had interest in these projects, how this is a working

document so more can be added, and how he sees all of the residents as stakeholders.

Council President commented how the first meeting was going to be on February 20th before a hockey game so many of those involved with hockey would see but they will also need to hold meetings at times and locations to benefit all of the groups. He added that a month in between meetings is too long. Council Vice-President Grassel said he had heard a lot of this being thrown together and wanted to make clear this has been talked about for years, it was brought up during strategic planning sessions, a lot of these updates have been needed for a long time, and the newest item being included was the improvements to the LaFave Park.

Council member Vetter asked to have an update at the work session following the meeting on the 20th and after all of the public input meetings. He added the interested groups should be notified when these meetings are going to be held. Discussion followed about setting up a meeting to talk with the business community, how the Chamber may be able to assist with that meeting, and how the local radio station might be able to help notify the public about these meetings.

Mr. Huttunen stated he had met with Mayor Gander about fundraising, he asked how they would like to proceed with fundraising, and what the goal would be for fundraising. Council President Olstad said they could take the community approach or hire a consultant and asked what it would cost to hire a consultant. Mr. Huttunen said he was not sure and he had not looked into any of that at this point. Council member DeMers said they would need to determine a goal and could divide it up among the different groups to raise or it could be left up to the Council. He added this effort would need to be organized and they will need to come up with what they think they can raise.

This item will be brought back to a future Work Session.

5. Update on Quiet Zone Survey – David Murphy

Mr. Murphy said it had been about a month since he had mailed out the survey about a potential quiet zone, all property owners were sent letters that are within a 1000 feet, and he had received 17 responses. He explained one person was a strong no to the closure of 3rd Street crossing, a couple were not sure, and the rest of the responses were yes with a couple asking for some conditions. He said one of the conditions was a way for schoolchildren to be able to cross in a safe manner but he did not think it was a complete deal breaker if that was not possible. He said since most wanted to close the crossing at 3rd Street it he is looking for direction to start drafting an agreement with the railroad.

Council member DeMers asked if they were just in favor of the closure and not the quiet zone. Mr. Murphy explained it was explained in the letter the quiet zone could be contingent upon the closure of the 3rd Street crossing. Council President Olstad asked to have all of the information brought back to the next work session for the Council to review and to start the process with the railroad. Mr. Emery stated this closure would result in a loss of connection for a State Aid street, which is something they may have to deal with later. Mr. Murphy said the State does not like State Aid streets to be a dead end.

This item will be brought back to a future Work Session.

ADJOURN:

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCIL MEMBER VETTER, SECONDED BY COUNCIL

MEMBER RIOPELLE, TO ADJOURN THE FEBRUARY 11, 2020 WORK SESSION OF THE EAST GRAND FORKS, MINNESOTA CITY COUNCIL AT 5:44 P.M.

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

Voting Nay: None.

Absent: Helms.

David Murphy, City Administrator/Clerk-Treasurer