

**APPROVED MINUTES
OF THE CITY
COUNCIL WORK SESSION
CITY OF EAST GRAND FORKS
TUESDAY, APRIL 28, 2020 – 5:00 PM**

CALL TO ORDER:

The Work Session of the East Grand Forks City Council for Tuesday, April 28, 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.

DETERMINATION OF A QUORUM:

The Council President Determined a Quorum was present.

1. Request to Approve Scope of Work for 2050 Land Use Plan – Teri Kouba

Ms. Kouba explained this information was presented to the Planning Commission, it is supposed to be updated every five years, and the last time this plan was adopted was in 2016. She reviewed the six tasks for this project that include looking at what is happening today, what will be needed in the future, they will be reviewing goals, the implementation tools, and putting the final documentation together. She added how there will be public input collected throughout this process by public hearings and steering committees and how there will be a member of the planning commission on the selection committee. She reviewed the preliminary timeline with proposals being received in June and the final plan would be sent to the Council for adoption in December of 2021. She asked for questions or if there was anything the Council would like to see added to the document.

Mayor Gander commented on how the land use plan is important, it helps decide how the land is used, and public input is important to help guide zoning and future use of the land. Ms. Ellis stated they were going to be looking at commercial and industrial property, how COVID is affecting things, utilizing the report being completed by the Chamber regarding businesses, and working with the schools. She said they have struggled before to get public participation so they will be looking at different ways to engage the public. She added in the last plan the goals and objectives were overreaching and cumbersome so they will be focusing on this being more user friendly. Council member DeMers asked if they would be using population estimates or numbers from the 2020 census. He also asked about the possible bridge locations. Ms. Kouba explained the location for a south end bridge was at 32nd Avenue in the last report but there are reports being completed on possible locations. She added they were planning to use the 2020 census numbers, which is why the deadline for completion was moved from June to December in 2021.

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

2. Request to Purchase Loader – Jason Stordahl

Mr. Stordahl stated \$300,000 was budgeted for a new loader; Public Works staff reviewed different options, and used the Minnesota State contracting. He explained they have selected a new loader with a push plow and wing for a total of \$297,813. He also asked to declare a loader and 14 foot push plow as surplus to trade in on this purchase and since they are not using all of the funds that were budgeted to also request to purchase another 12 foot push plow for \$24,750 because the one that is being traded is not going to last much longer. He asked if there were any questions.

Council member DeMers asked why they would they be purchasing a smaller 12 foot plow. Mr. Stordahl explained it would fit better with the wing and allow for a 22 foot swath. Council member Johnson asked how many hours were on the loader they were trading in and if they should keep it instead. Mr. Stordahl said it was an older loader with many hours on it; they trade them off while they still have some value, and so they are not always working on the machine. He added how there is a lot of wear and tear on these loaders in the wintertime and this loader was not in very good shape.

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

3. Request to Purchase Pickups for Public Works – Jason Stordahl

Mr. Stordahl informed the Council \$35,000 had been budgeted from the wastewater fund and \$35,000 had been budgeted from the insect fund for pickups. He explained they found two pickups at good prices from Karl Chevrolet, how they originally were going to trade in the other pickups, but would like to keep them for summer to help staff with social distancing. He said they would either trade them in later or add them to a city auction. He asked if there were any questions. Council member Johnson commented on the good prices for these trucks. Mr. Stordahl said they had tried local vendors but were not able to find two trucks that were similar, and the dealer was holding these for the City. Mayor Gander asked what the age of the older trucks were. Mr. Stordahl said he would have to check and would get that information to the Council.

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

4. Update on Crisis Loans from Economic Development Authority – Paul Gorte

Mr. Gorte stated the Economic Development Authority Board (EDA Board) had discussed possible loan programs during a meeting. He explained the biggest concerns was running out of funding so the board capped the loans at \$20,000 for operating expenses and they would be focusing on businesses that were closed by the Governor's executive orders and were not able to collect any revenue. He said he had sent out a copy of the press release announcing this program to businesses and the Council and he had been reaching out to businesses. He added there was a simple application, most businesses he had contacted said they would be ready to open, most businesses have utilized other programs or had reserves, and are happy the City is willing to work with them.

Council member DeMers asked what the total pool of funds were for this. Mr. Gorte said there was around \$400,000 in the IRP fund and around 1 million to 1.1 million available in the MIF fund. Discussion followed about the hard cap being \$20,000 for operating expenses, what the city policies for issuing loans, and personal guarantees would be required for the \$20,000 loans but would not have the requirement of a mortgage.

5. Request for Road Closure – Megan Nelson

Ms. Nelson stated the Administration Office had been contacted by Sacred Heart requesting road closures allowing them to conduct a graduation ceremony. She explained she had department heads review the information and Chief Hedlund's comments were included on the RCA for this item. She said the school wanted the block off streets, have the students in their cars to follow social distancing guidelines, and have a procession where the students would drive their cars up to a stage, walk across the stage, get their diploma, and return to their parking space. She said she wanted to get this in front of the Council to address any questions before this would be placed on the agenda for the next meeting.

Council member Johnson said he was for it. Council member DeMers asked if there was a block party road closure policy. Ms. Nelson said this was different from a block party because they were asking for more than one area to be blocked off. Mayor Gander said if there was a way to help create good memories for the seniors of either school he would support it. He commented how the year he graduated there had been a flood, many things were going on, so he would be in support if there was something the City could help in some way.

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

6. Request for Direction from Council on Liquor License Renewal Fees – Megan Nelson

Ms. Nelson said she had been asked questions about licenses, how much is collected, and where the money goes. She explained she had included information on the RCA on what liquor licenses there were and how much was collected for each license. She added it was mentioned about the possibility to reduce liquor license fees for the year because of everything that had happened with the pandemic and she needed to send out the renewals with the new information if there was a change to the fee. She asked if the Council was interested in making a change and if so what would it be. Discussion followed about a possible 50% reduction for on-sale fees, a possible reduction of 25% might be considered more appropriate based looking at the months they were closed down, and that would result in a reduction of \$14,000 in fees collected for on-sale licenses.

Council Vice-President Grassel asked if there were other businesses with a city license other than a liquor license. Ms. Nelson listed some of the city licenses, the fees associated with the licenses, and how all city licenses other than liquor licenses are valid from January through December. Council President Olstad stated they would consider a 25% reduction next week. Council member DeMers suggested a 25% reduction to any businesses that have been shut down. Discussion followed about how staff will determine the best way to send a refund or give a credit for the next license. Council member Helms suggested sending the renewal information to all businesses because there is one that may be reopening.

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

7. Municipal State Aid Revisions – Steve Emery

Mr. Emery told the Council the City is required to provide certified mileage of the State Aid system along with the local street mileage to the State each year. He explained the City is allowed 20% of the city mileage to be on the State Aid system and currently the City is .42 over in State Aid mileage. He said they talked with MNDOT about this and this needs to be corrected going forward. He stated they are considering removing 14th Street NE and the frontage road from Highway 220 to 5th Avenue NE and

removing 3rd Street NW and 3rd Street NE. He suggested adding 5th Avenue NW from 17th Street NW to 20th Street NW and 20th Street from 5th Avenue NW to 3rd Avenue NW.

Mr. Emery stated the maximum of State Aid mileage the City could have was 10.26 miles, the City was currently at 10.78, and removing and adding in the different segments would be a difference of -.49 miles and would put the City into compliance. He informed the Council the reason for removing 3rd Street was the potential for the implementation of the quiet zone so it was no longer a through street. He continued saying by eliminating 14th Street would allow for the addition of 5th Avenue NW and 20th Street NW and bring in additional funds for street replacement. He said any changes would need to be approved by resolution and asked if there were any questions.

Council member Johnson stated he did not understand how they can make the change from 14th Street to 20th Street because 20th Street was more of a residential area and asked if that change could be made. Mr. Emery said he had reviewed the information with the State and they have approved the potential changes. Council member Johnson said the area of 20th Street and 5th Avenue has been 30 year ordeal. Mr. Emery said it had been asked about where possible funding could come from and this was a possibility. Council member Johnson said he is just trying to make sure they are being transparent about these changes.

Mayor Gander said this could affect the reconstruction of 20th Street and he is wondering how the project would be affected by only having a portion of the properties on the State Aid system. He asked what the reasoning for 5th Avenue NW and why it did not extend down 20th Street to 8th Avenue NW. Mr. Emery said the State Aid streets has to loop back to a State Aid street or end at a trunk highway system and it cannot end on a local street like 8th Avenue NW. He commented this was an opportunity to bring in additional funding for construction in that area. Council President Olstad stated some residents had reached out to him and were in favor of these changes because the funds would help that area. He asked how the rest of 20th Street NW would be affected and how the charges would be applied. Mr. Emery said they might need to get creative when determining assessments or come up with different ideas to help the whole area.

Council President Olstad asked when this needed to be turned in. Mr. Emery said they needed to make the correction to the mileage sometime this year. Council President Olstad said if change is made, they would need to determine how the rest of 20th Street will be affected. He suggested to keep looking for possible funding and discussing at what could be done. Mayor Gander asked to have community input on this because they want to make sure they are aware of any concerns where the State Aid was being removed or possibly added. Mr. Galstad reminded the Council 3rd Street would have to be removed if the quiet zone was implemented.

Council member Vetter said he understanding of municipal State Aid roads is that they are not just neighborhood roads but they are used by a majority of the community so when they need maintenance the property owners are assisted with that maintenance. He said he does not have a problem with the removal of 3rd Street because it would have to be removed when a quiet zone is implemented. He continued saying 14th Street is used by the whole community, it is not just a commuter road, and it is used by the community so he was against that being removed. He said the addition of 5th Avenue and 20th Street seems to come from the good ole boys society unless the Council is willing to add the next road that needs to be reconstructed on the State Aid system otherwise he was not in support of this addition.

Mayor Gander said a traffic count was asked for during the neighborhood meeting for 17th Street NW, 20th Street NW, and 23rd Street NW to see how much 20th Street acted like a collector and wanted to see

the comparison. Council member Vetter asked what 20th Street was currently designated as. Mayor Gander commented a traffic count would help show if it acts like a collector and then could be considered to include on the State Aid system. Council member Vetter said he understood, all streets had already been designated, and it would need to be more than just a neighborhood collector. Council Vice-President Grassel commented how half of the road is so bad traffic is avoiding using it so there would not be much of a traffic count on it right now. Council member Vetter said this could also send a message to let the road get as bad as it can and then the City would be stepping in to help instead of taking the initiative to step up and improve the road when it needs to be done.

Mr. Emery told the Council that 20th Street is currently classified as a local street and 8th Avenue NW is classified as a minor collector. Council member DeMers asked how the City ended up over in mileage with the City has added mileage to the system with some new developments. Mr. Emery said they did not have enough checks and balances, there has been turnover in the office, and they trusted what had been previously done. Council member DeMers asked if they count the campground mileage. Mr. Emery said they do not count the campground mileage anymore. Council member DeMers asked to have the street classifications added to the GIS system. He continued saying they won't have a choice to remove 3rd Street if they move forward with the quiet zone, he does question the removal of 14th Street, and how the Council should look and consider other roads to add to get the best bang for their buck. He added they should also consider roads that the City will have a large burden on such as frontage roads and 10th Street NE. He said he understands the possible inclusion of 20th Street and 5th Avenue but they need to look at the whole system and do what makes sense for the long term.

Council member Johnson suggested not using acronyms anymore because he does not understand what they all are. Mr. Emery thanked everyone for their comments, there were valid points, there will be a lot more discussion on this, and he recommended revoking 3rd Street NW/NE, which would get the City within the allowable mileage. He said they would leave 14th Street on there and not do anything with 5th Avenue and 20th Street at this time. Council President Olstad stated this was not ready to move forward to the next meeting, he suggested they keep working at this. Mayor Gander said he thinks there needs to be more discussion and public input before moving this on.

OTHER:

Council member Helms asked about the sidewalk work that was being done by Highway 220 and if it was being covered by warranty. Mr. Murphy said a warranty claim had been submitted, there was a counter argument, he had worked with Mr. Strommen who was the Kennedy and Graven construction attorney, and based on the information the contractor will be paying for 75% of the repair and the City was paying 25% of the change order. Council member Helms asked what the issue was. Mr. Murphy said it was cracked, both sides had an argument, and if the City was to claim 100%, it was going to end up in court. Discussion followed about how all the testing results came back good, how this could happen every year, if the City should ask the State for help because of the amount of snow they plow onto the sidewalk, how other sections were done by other subcontractors, and there have not been issues in any other sections of sidewalk. Mr. Murphy said in years where there is heavier snow it is a struggle to keep these sidewalks clear and at some point, they may not be able to keep them clear. Council member Helms said very few people use them in the winter and there may be more damage with the new loader.

Mayor Gander said Mr. Stordahl has sent him a message that the two pickups Public Works will be selling or trading in are years 1997 and 1994.

ADJOURN:

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCIL MEMBER GRASSEL, SECONDED BY COUNCIL MEMBER JOHNSON, TO ADJOURN THE APRIL 28, 2020 WORK SESSION OF THE EAST GRAND FORKS, MINNESOTA CITY COUNCIL AT 6:14 P.M.

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

Voting Nay: None.

David Murphy, City Administrator/Clerk-Treasurer