

**APPROVED MINUTES
OF THE CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF EAST GRAND FORKS
TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 15, 2020 – 5:00 PM**

CALL TO ORDER:

The Council Meeting of the East Grand Forks City Council for Tuesday, September 15, 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 (5:00pm), 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.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

1. Consider approving the minutes of the “Work Session” for the East Grand Forks, Minnesota City Council from August 25, 2020.
2. Consider approving the minutes of the “Regular Council Meeting” for the East Grand Forks Minnesota City Council from September 1, 2020.
3. Consider approving the minutes of the “Work Session” for the East Grand Forks, Minnesota City Council from September 8, 2020.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCIL MEMBER RIOPELLE, SECONDED BY COUNCIL MEMBER HELMS, TO APPROVE ITEMS ONE (1) THROUGH THREE (3).

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

Voting Nay: None.

SCHEDULED BID LETTINGS: NONE

SCHEDULED PUBLIC HEARINGS: NONE

CONSENT AGENDA:

Items under the “Consent Agenda” will be adopted with one motion; however, council members may request individual items to be pulled from the consent agenda for discussion and action if they choose.

4. Consider adopting Resolution No. 20-09-57 appointing elections judges for the 2020 General Election.
5. Consider approving the Special Event for the Downtown Development Association to host a drive-in movie on Thursday, October 1st and possibly on October 15th in the City Parking Lot contingent upon the City receiving the fully executed special event application and fee for City assistance needed for this event.
6. Consider adopting Resolution No. 20-09-58 authorizing the hiring of Paid on Call staff for the Fire Department and authorizing the Fire Department the ability to maintain 25 Paid on Call staff members.
7. Consider declaring the list of items from Public Works and the Parks and Recreation Department as surplus property and approve these items to be sold at a city auction.
8. Consider declaring the radar units as surplus property and approve the sale of these radar units to Direct Radar for a total of \$1,396.00.
9. Consider declaring shotgun ammunition as surplus property and approve the sale of ammunition to the Park Rapids Police Department for a total of \$550.00 or other law enforcement agency if necessary.
10. Consider declaring the list of vehicles and bicycles from the Police Department as surplus property and approve these items to be sold at a city auction.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCIL MEMBER GRASSEL, SECONDED BY COUNCIL MEMBER DEMERS, TO APPROVE ITEMS FOUR (4) THROUGH TEN (10).

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

Voting Nay: None.

ACKNOWLEDGE RECEIPT OF REPORTS OF OFFICERS, BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS:

11. Regular meeting minutes of the Water, Light, Power, and Building Commission for August 19, 2020.

COMMUNICATIONS:

12. The City of East Grand Forks would like to acknowledge and thank Randy Olson for his 34 plus years of service. Mr. Olson will be retiring from Public Works on September 30th.

Mr. Stordahl thanked Mr. Olson and commented how his has been a huge asset to the Public Works Department. He stated Mr. Olson was a great worker, person, and role model to the younger guys in the department in part because of his outstanding work ethic. He thanked Mr. Olson again, how he has a lot of respect for him, and hopes Mr. Olson enjoys his retirement. Mayor Gander said he would miss Mr. Olson as well, that he always has a smile on his face, and he found the right job because he seemed to really enjoy his job. Council member Helms asked if Mr. Olson would be available so they could thank him. Mr. Stordahl said Mr. Olson was informed this item was on the agenda and was unaware of the protocol due to COVID. Council member Helms stated Mr. Olson has always been a great guy, he was always smiling, and that is hard to find in workers nowadays. He asked that Mr. Stordahl to thank him

for the Council. Council member Johnson said he worked with Mr. Olson for over 20 years and everything that has been said is true. Council member DeMers said most take a vacation to warm place but instead they should tell Mr. Olson they hope it snows a lot which seems to make him happy.

OLD BUSINESS: NONE

NEW BUSINESS:

13. Consider adopting Resolution No. 20-09-59 approving the preliminary 2020 tax levy collectable in 2021 for a total of \$5,714,353 and set the Public Budget Meeting for December 1, 2020 at 6:00pm with a continuance hearing, if necessary, for December 15, 2020.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCIL MEMBER DEMERS, SECONDED BY COUNCIL MEMBER RIOPELLE, TO ADOPT RESOLUTION NO. 20-09-59 APPROVING THE PRELIMINARY 2020 TAX LEVY COLLECTABLE IN 2021 FOR A TOTAL OF \$5,714,353 AND SET THE PUBLIC BUDGET MEETING FOR DECEMBER 1, 2020 AT 6:00PM WITH A CONTINUANCE HEARING, IF NECESSARY, FOR DECEMBER 15, 2020.

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

Voting Nay: None.

14. Consider approving the Special Event Application for Sacred Heart Church allowing a section of 3rd St NW to be closed on Sunday, September 27th from 4:30pm until 9:00pm for a drive-in movie.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCIL MEMBER JOHNSON, SECONDED BY COUNCIL MEMBER DEMERS, TO APPROVE THE SPECIAL EVENT APPLICATION FOR SACRED HEART CHURCH ALLOWING A SECTION OF 3RD ST NW TO BE CLOSED ON SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 27TH FROM 4:30PM UNTIL 9:00PM FOR A DRIVE-IN MOVIE.

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

Voting Nay: None.

15. Consider approving the Bon-Fire Application for Sacred Heart School allowing a bon-fire in LaFave Park on Saturday, October 3rd from 8:30pm to 10:30pm.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCIL MEMBER JOHNSON, SECONDED BY COUNCIL MEMBER DEMERS, TO APPROVE THE BON-FIRE APPLICATION FOR SACRED HEART SCHOOL ALLOWING A BON-FIRE IN LAFAVE PARK ON SATURDAY, OCTOBER 3RD FROM 8:30PM TO 10:30PM.

Council member Helms asked if social distancing and requirements will be followed during this event. Ms. Nelson stated there was only going to be approximately 100 students that would be participating in this event.

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

Voting Nay: None.

16. Consider authorizing city staff to execute a quick claim deed for the property located at 221 Central Ave NW transferring the city owned property to the estate of Loran D. Mitchell.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCIL MEMBER DEMERS, SECONDED BY COUNCIL MEMBER HELMS, TO AUTHORIZE CITY STAFF TO EXECUTE A QUICK CLAIM DEED FOR THE PROPERTY LOCATED AT 221 CENTRAL AVE NW TRANSFERRING THE CITY OWNED PROPERTY TO THE ESTATE OF LORAN D. MITCHELL.

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

Voting Nay: None.

17. Consider adopting Resolution No. 20-09-60 accepting the \$250,000 from Polk County to distribute to East Grand Forks businesses, accepting the \$125,000 from Polk County to distribute to rural businesses, and establishing a grant relief fund to distribute the funds to businesses.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCIL MEMBER HELMS, SECONDED BY COUNCIL MEMBER RIOPELLE, TO ADOPT RESOLUTION NO. 20-09-60 ACCEPTING THE \$250,000 FROM POLK COUNTY TO DISTRIBUTE TO EAST GRAND FORKS BUSINESSES, ACCEPTING THE \$125,000 FROM POLK COUNTY TO DISTRIBUTE TO RURAL BUSINESSES, AND ESTABLISHING A GRANT RELIEF FUND TO DISTRIBUTE THE FUNDS TO BUSINESSES.

Council member DeMers asked if the \$125,000 was the total amount for the rural businesses or just for certain townships close to East Grand Forks. Mr. Gorte said the City was sharing this responsibility with the City of Fosston and East Grand Forks would be working with businesses on the west side of the County. Council member DeMers asked how the costs would be tabulated. Discussion followed about how everything would be put together on one master list, there were questions if there was more funds available than the \$125,000 for the rural businesses, and how there could be perception issues. Mr. Gorte explained the County asked East Grand Forks, Fosston, and possibly Crookston to help with the rural businesses because the County does not have an Economic Development department. Mayor Gander said he believed \$125,000 was the amount to be shared among rural businesses. Council member Riopelle commented how all of the applications will be reviewed. Council member DeMers asked how it would be decided on what could be included and what costs would be thrown out. Mr. Gorte said the idea was to pro-rate things if the funds were not enough to cover the need. Council member DeMers said he does see a potential that this could put the City in a bad spot.

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

Voting Nay: None.

CLAIMS:

18. Consider authorizing the City Administrator/Clerk-Treasurer to issue payment of recommended bills and payroll.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCIL MEMBER DEMERS, SECONDED BY COUNCIL MEMBER HELMS, TO AUTHORIZE THE CITY ADMINISTRATOR/CLERK-TREASURER

TO ISSUE PAYMENT OF RECOMMENDED BILLS AND PAYROLL.

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

Voting Nay: None.

COUNCIL/STAFF REPORTS:

Mayor Gander said staff was close to finalizing the COVID Business Redevelopment Grant Program, the application is going through final reviews, and he thanked those that were working on this. He continued talking about the 20th Street NW and 5th Ave NW rehab project, suggestions were made, the street has broken down beyond its usable life, and a total street replacement at this time was cost prohibitive. He stated Mr. Emery still recommended a total replacement, there could be issues with projects that were not a full replacement, but he has come up with a scope of work that would be a limited street repair. He asked the Council to consider this, another meeting with the neighborhood might need to take place, and a petition would need to come from the neighborhood if this project would move forward. He thanked Mr. Emery for putting this information together.

Mayor Gander stated there was some concern about the disparity in closing times between Grand Forks and East Grand Forks because Mayor Bochenski issued an emergency order closing businesses that held liquor licenses to close at 11pm due to a rise in COVID cases. He said there was some traffic coming over into East Grand Forks when those businesses closed but now that emergency order was being rescinded as of Wednesday. Council President Mark Olstad said there was no disparity for East Grand Forks and any time the City had a disparity Grand Forks did not make any changes.

Council Vice-President Grassel reminded the Council that something needed to be done the intersection of 13th Street and Bygland Road. He said someone might be lost, he had been informed a child was almost lost in the morning because a vehicle almost hit them, and at this time he is not sure what can be done. He informed the person that called him he would bring this up at the council meeting and he knows the police department staff is strapped but having a presence there may help slow people down. Mr. Galstad asked about having a crossing guard during certain times. Council Vice-President Grassel said the issue was this intersection was not close to the building, he will be asking for volunteers to be crossing guards, and the flashing lights do not seem to be slowing people down.

Council member Riopelle asked if Sheriff Tadman to come and help like Sheriff Rost had in Grand Forks. Mayor Gander said Mr. Lou Tasa from the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MNDOT) suggested a 20 miles per hour school zone for this section of Bygland Road, they can try to move forward with this, and Ms. Tasa mentioned there may be funding available through MNDOT for a road that could potential connect the two schools. Discussion followed about how this road could be used for bussing and cars, there is an idea to add stoplights at this intersection, there was talk about if a light would add a measure of safety at this intersection, and how they can try simple things first.

Mr. Emery said he had reached out MNDOT about the 20 mile per hour school zone and would follow up with them. He added preliminary sketches had been done about the road connecting the schools and how the school does not have any additional funds to help with this project. Mayor Gander said there was a funding source was different than what the City had used before and how the proposed project was estimated at \$1 million dollars. Council member DeMers commented the proposed road would not be a public road. He stated regular traffic at the intersection at 13th Street and Bygland Road is dangerous, it

was hard to see pedestrians, and a change would need to be made to help with visibility. He said they may want to think outside the box and move the pedestrian crossing farther away from the intersection. Ms. Ellis reminded the Council the HAWK System was going to be placed farther to the north but what they found was people were not going to go north to cross. Discussion followed about not allowing a left hand turn if there was another access to the school and to try to add in simple measures in first to see if they can help. Council member Helms said he met with Chief Hedlund about this issue at Riverside School, how many things have been implemented, but this area still has cars driving too fast. He suggested getting citizens to come out and help as crossing guards and asked to see if anyone was willing to help. He added he was willing but could not be there every day. Council Vice-President Grassel said that was going to be his next step.

Mr. Murphy reminded everyone absentee voting was going to be starting soon, how there was going to be the question about the amended city charter included on the ballot, and if anyone had questions they could call City Hall.

Ms. Ellis reminded everyone that all Census information needed to be completed by the end of September, it was important for people to fill out, and how this helps bring funding to the City.

Chief Hedlund said he and his staff were at busy locations on the first day of school, they have tried to continue to have a presence in these areas, but currently some staff were out of town. He added he would reach out to Council Vice-President Chad Grassel to find ways to have extra enforcement at the different schools because of the different complaints they have received.

Mr. Gorte told the Council the grant application was being reviewed one more time and the applications would be sent out soon to the businesses.

Council member Helms said he wanted to assure the City Council and citizens that the Economic Development Authority was not what it used to be years ago, there are good people on the board just like there was good people on the city council, and he wanted to make sure people knew the grant money would be distributed properly and fairly.

ADJOURN:

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCIL MEMBER DEMERS, SECONDED BY COUNCIL MEMBER GRASSEL, TO ADJOURN THE SEPTEMBER 15, 2020 COUNCIL MEETING OF THE EAST GRAND FORKS, MINNESOTA CITY COUNCIL AT 5:31 P.M.

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

Voting Nay: None.

David Murphy, City Administrator/Clerk-Treasurer