

**APPROVED MINUTES
OF THE CITY
COUNCIL WORK SESSION
CITY OF EAST GRAND FORKS
TUESDAY, MAY 10, 2022 – 5:00 PM**

CALL TO ORDER:

The Work Session of the East Grand Forks City Council for Tuesday, May 10, 2022 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 Tim Riopelle, Council Members Clarence Vetter, Dale Helms, Tim Johnson, Marc DeMers, and Brian Larson.

Staff Present: Karla Anderson, Finance Director; Nancy Ellis, City Planner; Ron Galstad, City Attorney; Paul Gorte, Economic Development Director; Charlotte Helgeson, Library Director; Reid Huttunen, Parks and Recreation Superintendent; David Murphy, City Administrator/Clerk-Treasurer; Megan Nelson, City Clerk; and Jason Stordahl, Public Works Director.

DETERMINATION OF A QUORUM:

The Council President Determined a Quorum was present.

1. Request to Hire Additional Full Time Firefighter/EMT – Jeff Boushee

Mr. Murphy stated there was a vacancy in this position due to a retirement and one of the firefighters took a position with another agency so there were two openings, so the request was being made to fill both vacancies. Council member Johnson asked how many EMTs there were. Mr. Murphy said nine, with three firefighters, three engineers, and three assistant chiefs.

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

2. Request to Fix Water Drainage Issues at South Entrance at VFW Arena – Reid Huttunen

Mr. Huttunen stated the packet had included pictures of the VFW Arena that were taken after recent rainfalls. He continued saying the frost heave had gotten worse with time and now the water was running into the building instead of draining away. He said there was storm sewer and catch basins in the parking lot on the east side of the building so he asked Mr. Emery what it would take to get better storm water drainage in the area. He added he asked about this for future years because it was not included in the budget but after speaking with Ms. Anderson it could qualify for ARPA dollars and see if this was something they could move forward with this summer. He said approximately \$55,000 of the estimate was for storm water improvements, there was discussion about accessibility requirements, that added sidewalks and concrete, so the whole project would cost approximately \$75,000.

Council member Johnson asked what ARPA was. Mr. Huttunen said it was the American Rescue Plan Act that gave out federal dollars for COVID relief to each city. Council member Vetter said it seemed like a lot of money, it was not that they should not fix it, but if the sales tax was approved how much of this would be a waste. Mr. Huttunen explained based on the presentation he had give a couple weeks prior, if only Phase 1 was completed, there was no funding to connect the two buildings, so potentially it would all stay in place. He added if they reached the fundraising goal and were able to complete Phase 2 that would connect the buildings so all of this work would be torn down which was a concern of his. He said the difficulty was they were facing this issue they need to fix and there was uncertainty on if they were able to fundraise enough to connect the two buildings. Council member Vetter asked if there was enough slope to have this drain out into the parking lot. Mr. Huttunen said Mr. Emery would be better to answer, if they only sloped it with the addition of curb and gutter, the proposed catch basin location was a natural low spot, and water sat there. Council member Vetter said just regrading the area would save a lot of money.

Council Vice-President Riopelle said in perfect world they were probably four to five years from being able to move forward with Phase 2 so it would be there for at least that long. He added they could ask to see if they could re-slope the area as a temporary fix. Mayor Gander said he looked at it, it was flat area, and there was no possibility to mud jack the area because it was already level with the arena floor. He added they could do to dry this up and grade it out but he would be onboard with this solution if that was not possible. He said staff was working to prevent mold so if there were a few years or more of healthier conditions it would be worth it.

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

3. Update on Grand Rides Bike Share & Sponsor Request – Reid Huttunen

Mr. Huttunen explained this was a follow up because staff was asked to look into funding from the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MNDOT), there were no grants available, and if the infrastructure was not going to be owned by the City or be located in the State there would not be funding available for it. He said he discussed this with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR), there was some initial interest, a decision had not been made, the DNR owned its own fleets at other locations that were rented out, but they were still considering this. He commented how the Altru funds were available for this year, he saw it as a good fit, and Altru supported it because they were the title sponsor of the program. He asked for direction.

Council President Olstad asked Mr. Huttunen to speak with the DNR about it again and this year the City could use the Altru dollars for this request. Council member Larson said the new occupants of the Whitey's building would be a destination in the area and having more options like this in the area would be popular, so he was in favor of moving forward with this. Council member Vetter asked if the DDA had applied to MNDOT for funding. Mr. Huttunen said was not sure. Council member Vetter said the only way MNDOT funding was available was if the City was applying and purchasing the bikes on its own so would it be possible for the organization that was running this to apply on behalf of the City since they were running part of the program in the city. Ms. Ellis said she could bring it up to them to see if they would be willing to look into it, MNDOT may not give funds based on if the organization was located in North Dakota, and they could be very particular with what funding could be used on. Council President Olstad said that might be possible in future years and they should move forward with the Altru dollars this year. Council Vice-President Riopelle asked if this would be a yearly ask. Mr. Huttunen said yes.

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

ADJOURN:

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCIL MEMBER JOHNSON, SECONDED BY COUNCIL MEMBER RIOPELLE, TO ADJOURN THE MAY 10, 2022 WORK SESSION OF THE EAST GRAND FORKS, MINNESOTA CITY COUNCIL AT 5:14 P.M.

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

Voting Nay: None.

David Murphy, City Administrator/Clerk-Treasurer