

**APPROVED MINUTES  
OF THE WORK SESSION  
CITY OF EAST GRAND FORKS  
TUESDAY, MARCH 14, 2023 – 5:00 PM**

**CALL TO ORDER:**

*The Work Session of the East Grand Forks City Council for Tuesday, March 14, 2023 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, Ben Pokrzywinski, Dale Helms, Brian Larson, and Karen Peterson.*

*Dale Helms will be participating by interactive technology for the meeting because he is currently in Arizona.*

*Staff Present: Karla Anderson, Finance Director; Jeff Boushee, Fire Chief; Nancy Ellis, City Planner; Ron Galstad, City Attorney; Paul Gorte, Economic Development Director; Michael Hedlund, Police Chief, 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 Consider Creation of a New Position in Police Department – Michael Hedlund**

Chief Hedlund reminded the Council of the previous discussion to hire recruits to help fill staffing vacancies as long as they pass all of the requirements needed to become a police officer. He stated that based on feedback from the previous discussion and talking with police staff he came up with the proposal to hire a recruit at \$20 per hour for 20 hours per week, they could not be hired as a police officer, but it would be a way to have them commit to working with department as long as they pass all of the necessary requirements.

Council member Peterson asked how close the schools were and what the class sizes were. Chief Hedlund said the schools were in Thief River Falls, Crookston, Grand Forks, the Fargo/Moorhead area, and Alexandria, the class sizes varied depending on location, class sizes had dipped in previous years, and the class sizes were starting to increase again. Council member Peterson asked what the work force shortage was in law enforcement. Discussion followed about how there were not enough people in the graduating classes to full the vacancies at the State level which did not include any city or county vacancies, what a long term fix might be, if the City should try to find local candidates, and at this time no one else in the area had a recruit program. Council member Peterson said in her field there were programs to entice younger people to take a position but eventually they have life changes which results in them leaving the position. Chief Hedlund told the Council a majority of the Police Department staff was from the area, they did recruit from the area, but any potential hires needed to be POST licensed eligible.

Mr. Galstad stated he would need more information to help put something together. Council member Larson asked if they should consider a scholarship and if they were to recruit from the area they may be more likely to stay. Discussion followed about having something put together so they could start recruiting students until the vacancies were filled, how there would be a stipulation of paying the funds back if the recruit did not fulfill their commitment, they were already recruiting people from the POST program, it would be looked into to see if grant funding was available for internships, and what the difference was on a two year degree compared to a four year degree. Council member Pokrzywinski asked which program produced a better candidate. Chief Hedlund said it depended on the person but usually the skill ability was very similar. More discussion followed about when a recruit would start getting paid, it depended on what program they were in, what the short and long term solutions would be, and how the City was able to offer more because there was an ability to work with the special teams in Grand Forks. Council President Olstad requested to have Chief Hedlund work with Mr. Galstad and bring something back for the Council to consider.

This item will be brought back to a future work session.

## **2. Emergency Management Update – Jeff Boushee**

Chief Boushee explained he along with others were going to be working on updating the City's Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) and resource manual, this was the document that guided the City's response in emergency situations, once it was updated it would be brought before the Council for review, and it would take some time to update because the document was over 200 pages. He reminded the Council staff was training to run the Emergency Operations Center (EOC), a two-day class was held in 2022, and they have been building on that training, organizing, and setting things up. He stated that Mr. Corey Thompson had put a sharepoint together so all of the information could be found in one location, two staff members were going to be attending a training for the Public Information Officer position which was used in the EOC but also could be used at any time, and both he and Assistant Chief Hansen were working on their emergency management certification and hoped to be completed with it next year. Ms. Anderson informed the Council that they had been reimbursed from the last flood event, there were some issues related to the damage on the golf course, changes were being made to the lease agreement, and she would be appealing the decision related to the denial of funds for the golf course damage. Chief Boushee told the Council they were moving forward with emergency management, it was a time-consuming process, so they were trying to train as they were able.

Chief Boushee said the National Weather Service released a flood outlook with a 50% chance the river levels would reach 42.6 feet, there were still many variables that could change things, and there was a limited opening of the EOC to review the situation which gave staff a chance to train. He added people were appointed to positions which were listed in the organizational chart, staff gave updates in the different areas, and preparations that were being made for the flood event. Council member Pokrzywinski asked if the outlook included the recent snow event. Chief Boushee said yes. Mayor Gander stated during the last flood event he witnessed how quickly things could change and how quickly staff was able to react to the situation. Ms. Nelson informed the Council that it was also discussed to include communications on the agendas and to give reports to keep the community informed so when there was a declaration of emergency, it was not cause for alarm, but to have things in place allowing the City to be eligible for reimbursement.

### **3. Grand Rides Bike Share Update and Sponsor Request – Reid Huttunen**

Mr. Huttunen told the Council he had met with the Mr. Weber with the Downtown Development Association, they saw the previous year as a success, there was an increase in the number of rentals, but he did not have the information from the GPS units about the bike rides from 2022 because it was still being prepared and should be available in May or June. He explained they were maintaining 60 bikes, they were looking to add to the number of bikes, and the sponsorship request was for \$10,000. He stated this had not been included in the budget and suggested using the Altru funds for 2023. Council Vice-President Riopelle asked when they started the analytics. Mr. Huttunen said there were new units on the bikes in 2022 and he was not sure when they were starting to put the information together. Council Vice-President Riopelle said he would like to see that information before moving forward. Council member Larson said this was a great program and would like to move forward with the Altru funds because of the new amenities and new businesses in East Grand Forks and people could use the bikes to check them out.

### **4. Request to Order GMC 2500 from North Country GM of Hibbing – Reid Huttunen**

Mr. Huttunen told the Council funding was included in the budget to replace a Parks pickup and it may be hard to get. He explained prices had gone up dramatically, GM was the only one that was giving out prices for fleet vehicles, Ford was not releasing prices for fleet trucks, and even if they place the order it may not get filled, so he asked to place the order and see if they get a truck. There were no questions.

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

### **5. Review of Memorandum of Understanding with Bird Rides Inc – David Murphy**

Mr. Murphy reminded the Council how they had met with the representative from Bird Rides, they were provided a memorandum of understanding, it was reviewed by Mr. Galstad, and he was suggesting some changes, three of them were more procedural, and the other was changes to the indemnification language because of potential liability issues. Mr. Galstad stated he highlighted a few things; one was that it was an automatic renewals which he wanted to bring to their attention. He continued saying City Code already dealt with bikes, there was a State Statute that already addressed electric scooters, so even if there is not a city ordinance about electric scooters it was not an issue. He said it made sense to permit them, determine what the permitting process included such as how many companies would be allowed, and any rules the companies would need to comply with.

Mr. Galstad told the Council he would not recommend they sign the document with the current indemnification and hold harmless because Bird Rides state they were not responsible for any special, indirect, consequential, or punitive damages. He said in a wrongful death suit it was those damages that were sued for and if the City was named, there was a possibility the City might end up having to pay those damages so he suggested eliminating that portion of the contract. He reminded the Council they would be able to limit the hours of operation in the agreement otherwise they could be used 24 hours a day. He commented he was not adverse to of having scooters in the city but would not recommend signing the proposed agreement. He asked for questions. There were none. Mr. Murphy said he would send the recommendations to Bird Rides Inc and hopefully get an agreement to bring back for approval.

This item will be brought back to a future work session.

**6. Discussion on Interim Position – David Murphy**

Mr. Murphy reminded the Council there were a couple options for interim, he had asked some people about it, distance was the main issue, and there was some discussion about internal candidates. He asked for feedback from the Council. Council President Olstad said if there was internal or external candidates, he would like them to talk with Mr. Murphy and HR, and bring this back to the next work session. Discussion followed about the timeline to move forward and the item would need to be brought forward as an actionable item.

This item will be brought back to a future work session.

**ADJOURN:**

**A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCIL MEMBER LARSON, SECONDED BY COUNCIL MEMBER VETTER, TO ADJOURN THE MARCH 14, 2023 WORK SESSION OF THE EAST GRAND FORKS, MINNESOTA CITY COUNCIL AT 5:58 P.M.**

*Voting Aye: Riopelle, Helms, Olstad, Larson, Peterson, Vetter, and Pokrzywinski.*

*Voting Nay: None.*

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David Murphy, City Administrator/Clerk-Treasurer