

**APPROVED MINUTES  
OF THE WORK SESSION  
CITY OF EAST GRAND FORKS  
TUESDAY, MARCH 28, 2023 – 5:00 PM**

**CALL TO ORDER:**

*The Work Session of the East Grand Forks City Council for Tuesday, March 28, 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, Brian Larson, and Karen Peterson.*

*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, 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. Review of Valley Golf Lease Agreement Addendum – Karla Anderson**

Ms. Anderson told the Council FEMA had denied the claim for the repair costs for the cart path, insurance had covered part of the costs, and the reason for the denial was because it stated in the lease agreement that the Lessee was responsible for any and all improvements and maintenance without any costs coming from the Lessor. She explained staff discussed the situation and had an addendum drafted to add to the lease and would show the City would be responsible for any damages caused by the City during a flood event. She asked for questions. Mr. Galstad said they needed to contact Valley Golf about the addendum and he did not believe the reason for FEMA denying the claim was valid. He agreed if the addendum would help it should be done and said he would help in the appeals process if needed. Ms. Anderson told the Council she and Chief Boushee had discussed things, reviewed items with an insurance agent, and came to the conclusion that it was not worth continuing to appeal this issue to FEMA. Chief Boushee said nothing changed in the appeals process so instead of wasting more time, they decided to end the appeals process.

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

**2. Discussion on Interim City Administrator Position – David Murphy**

Mr. Murphy stated it was suggested to see if there were internal candidates, the request was made to staff to let him know by March 21<sup>st</sup>, and Reid Huttunen, Megan Nelson, and Karla Anderson all submitted their names. He explained there were some ramifications for the placement regarding placement of each and

he would answer any questions. Council President said he had talked with Ms. Knudson about what the out of rank would be. Mr. Murphy said two of the people were in a union, their contract was silent on working out of rank, so it would follow what was included in the personnel policy. He read through the section of the personnel policy explaining when an employee would receive out of rank pay and how that pay was determined. Council President Olstad said the question came up about if a department head could serve as an interim city administrator and the guidance said no. Mr. Galstad explained he was asked if a union member could serve as the interim and the PELRA and the National Labors Relations Act indicated that the city administrator position was not allowed in unions with one of the reasons being the confidential information that positions holds. He said it was not illegal, but it was not advisable to have a union department head be named as interim.

Mayor Gander suggested having some of the functions of the full-time administrator be handled by others and not all duties be done by interim. Council member Larson stated taking into account the information from Mr. Galstad that Ms. Nelson could make this a smooth transition and would be in favor of her for the position. Discussion followed about who have served previously as interim, the question was asked to keep the position internal instead of hiring someone from a distance, and the question came up after the suggestion was made to see if there was an internal candidate. Mayor Gander said this was a step by step process, the interim would need to continue their job duties, and that was why some of the duties may need to be picked up by others. Council Vice-President Riopelle said other communities he had talked to said they would not allow a union member to take over the city administrator position without first resigning from the union but otherwise the answer was no.

Council member Vetter said they would need to define the roles they would want the interim administrator would do, a lot of duties will sit on the wayside, and very few duties would be done instead the interim would be more addressing issues as they came up. Mayor Gander suggested saying the position would not complete job evaluations, keep things moving, and bring the new administrator up to speed. Ms. Anderson commented that both her and Mr. Huttunen would also be qualified to fill the position and was surprised about the union issue.

#### **ADJOURN:**

**A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCIL MEMBER RIOPELLE, SECONDED BY COUNCIL MEMBER LARSON, TO ADJOURN THE MARCH 28, 2023 WORK SESSION OF THE EAST GRAND FORKS, MINNESOTA CITY COUNCIL AT 5:22 P.M.**

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

*Voting Nay: None.*

*Absent: Helms.*

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David Murphy, City Administrator/Clerk-Treasurer