

**APPROVED MINUTES
OF THE CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF EAST GRAND FORKS
TUESDAY, APRIL 18, 2023 – 5:00 PM**

CALL TO ORDER:

The Council Meeting of the East Grand Forks City Council for Tuesday, April 18, 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.

Staff Present: Jeff Boushee, Fire Chief; Nancy Ellis, City Planner; Steve Emery, City Engineer; Ron Galstad, City Attorney; Paul Gorte, Economic Development Director; Michael Hedlund, Police Chief, Charlotte Helgeson, Library Director; David Murphy, City Administrator/Clerk-Treasurer; Keith Mykleseth, Water and Light General Manager; Megan Nelson, City Clerk; and Jason Stordahl, Public Works Director.

DETERMINATION OF QUORUM:

The Council President Determined a Quorum was present.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

RECOGNITION OF MR. MURPHY:

Mayor Gander presented Mr. Murphy with a plaque stating the City’s appreciation for his years of service. He added that it had been a pleasure and privilege to serve with him, how many connections he had to staff, with Council, and to others such as Mr. Feland in Grand Forks which made it a good team effort. Mr. Murphy thanked everyone for the plaque, it was appreciated, and he had enjoyed working with everyone. He said he would miss working in East Grand Forks and it was a tough decision to leave.

OPEN FORUM:

President Olstad stated the open form was an opportunity for members of the public to address the City Council on items not on the current agenda and items requiring Council action maybe deferred to staff or Boards and Commissions for research and future Council Agendas if appropriate. He asked if anyone would like to address the City Council, please come up to the podium to do so. No one came forward.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

1. Consider approving the minutes of the “Council Meeting” for the East Grand Forks, Minnesota City Council of April 4, 2023.

2. Consider approving the minutes of the “Work Session” for the East Grand Forks, Minnesota City Council of April 11, 2023.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCIL MEMBER RIOPELLE, SECONDED BY COUNCIL MEMBER VETTER, TO APPROVE ITEMS ONE (1) AND TWO (2).

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

Voting Nay: None.

SCHEDULED BID LETTINGS: NONE

SCHEDULED PUBLIC HEARINGS: NONE

CONSENT AGENDA: NONE

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.

ACKNOWLEDGE RECEIPT OF REPORTS OF OFFICERS, BOARDS, AND COMMISSIONS:

3. Regular meeting minutes of the Water, Light, Power, and Building Commission for March 15, 2023.

COMMUNICATIONS:

4. Situation Update – Staff has and will continue to monitor river levels. Once the river reaches 28 feet the City will declare a local emergency. Updates will be available on the city’s newsflash and on the flood page - www.eastgrandforks.us/320/Flood-Information.

Council President Olstad asked Chief Boushee and Mr. Stordahl to give an update. Chief Boushee stated the river was currently at 31 feet which was considered minor flood stage, the river in Crookston had crested, and Polk County was in good shape with minimal damage. He said the National Weather Service forecast showed the river reaching 42.2 feet which was moderate flooding and he anticipated the crest prediction next week. He added there would be precipitation moving into the area starting Wednesday so that could have an impact and they were receiving daily updates from the National Weather Service.

Chief Boushee said the river had reached 28 feet earlier that morning which was the triggering event to declare a local emergency. He explained that action allowed staff to make emergency purchases or set up contract work if necessary, and helping with requesting aid from the State and County. He said they were in good shape because of the levee system, it was capable of handling the projected river levels, and city crews would continue to address what was needed. Mr. Stordahl stated the north pedestrian bridge was closed and the railings had been removed, 1st Street NE was closed to Hill Street, all gated outlets and lift stations were activated up to 40 feet, they would activate more if the river continued to rise, and the next area to close would be the underpass on River Road which closed around 35 to 36 feet. He added based on the current forecast they were not anticipating the need to put up any flood closures.

Mayor Gander asked if the Point Bridge would have to be closed. Mr. Stordahl said that was now dictated by the closure of the Grand Forks floodwall which was around 45 feet so they did not expect that to be

closed at this time. Chief Boushee reminded everyone there was a page on the City website where additional information could be found.

OLD BUSINESS: NONE

NEW BUSINESS:

5. Consider adopting Resolution No. 23-04-30 supporting and adopting the Polk County All-Hazard Mitigation Plan.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCIL MEMBER HELMS, SECONDED BY COUNCIL MEMBER VETTER, TO ADOPT RESOLUTION NO. 23-04-30 SUPPORTING AND ADOPTING THE POLK COUNTY ALL-HAZARD MITIGATION PLAN.

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

Voting Nay: None.

6. Consider approving the Junior Firefighter Academy Program that will be a working partnership between the City of East Grand Forks and the Northland Community and Technical College.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCIL MEMBER LARSON, SECONDED BY COUNCIL MEMBER RIOPELLE, TO APPROVE THE JUNIOR FIREFIGHTER ACADEMY PROGRAM THAT WILL BE A WORKING PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN THE CITY OF EAST GRAND FORKS AND THE NORTHLAND COMMUNITY AND TECHNICAL COLLEGE.

Chief Boushee asked if there were any questions and said they thought this would benefit the students, the City, and Northland Fire Technology program. He asked for support so they would be able to move forward with this.

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

Voting Nay: None.

7. Consider approving the creation of the Police Recruit program for the East Grand Forks Police Department as detailed in the Request for Council Action.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCIL MEMBER RIOPELLE, SECONDED BY COUNCIL MEMBER HELMS, TO APPROVE THE CREATION OF THE POLICE RECRUIT PROGRAM FOR THE EAST GRAND FORKS POLICE DEPARTMENT AS DETAILED IN THE REQUEST FOR COUNCIL ACTION.

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

Voting Nay: None.

8. Consider approving the Special Event Application from the East Grand Forks High School for the closure of the parking lot by restaurant row starting in the afternoon on May 13, 2023 for the prom contingent upon the area not flooding.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCIL MEMBER HELMS, SECONDED BY COUNCIL MEMBER LARSON, TO APPROVE THE SPECIAL EVENT APPLICATION FROM THE EAST GRAND FORKS HIGH SCHOOL FOR THE CLOSURE OF THE PARKING LOT BY RESTAURANT ROW STARTING IN THE AFTERNOON ON MAY 13, 2023 FOR THE PROM CONTINGENT UPON THE AREA NOT FLOODING.

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

Voting Nay: None.

9. Consider approving the request to start the hiring process for an accounting technician.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCIL MEMBER RIOPELLE, SECONDED BY COUNCIL MEMBER HELMS, TO APPROVE THE REQUEST TO START THE HIRING PROCESS FOR AN ACCOUNTING TECHNICIAN.

Council member Vetter suggested leaving this position open until they were able to finalize the budget because they might need to let people go so, he would be voting no on this item. Ms. Marilynn Ogden, 914 16th Ave SE, said she had been a part of the efficiency work process between the City and the Water and Light Department and she would like to see some study done to see if there were duties that could be shared or shifted before hiring another person so if someone was hired they would be well aware of what their responsibilities would be. Council member Larson thanked Ms. Ogden for her comments and suggested tabling this item so it could be looked into. Council President Olstad asked if anyone had an issue with tabling the item.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCIL MEMBER RIOPELLE, SECONDED BY COUNCIL MEMBER VETTER, TO TABLE THIS ITEM.

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

Voting Nay: None.

10. Consider approving the process to move forward with the City Administrator position search by David Drown Associates.

Mr. Murphy said the consultant was not yet available. Council President Olstad moved on to other agenda items.

11. Mayoral Declaration of Local Emergency

Mayor Gander read the declaration of local emergency due to flooding with the river reaching 28 feet. He reminded everyone things were under control, they were operating according to the plan for activation, and this step allowed for possible reimbursement of costs. He added the flood system was able to handle up to 60 feet, but the river was not going to get close to that level.

12. Consider adopting Resolution No. 23-04-31 extending the mayor declared local emergency for flooding of the Red River of the North and Red Lake River.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCIL MEMBER HELMS, SECONDED BY COUNCIL MEMBER RIOPELLE, TO ADOPT RESOLUTION NO. 23-04-31 EXTENDING THE MAYOR DECLARED LOCAL EMERGENCY FOR FLOODING OF THE RED RIVER OF THE NORTH AND RED LAKE RIVER.

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

Voting Nay: None.

CLAIMS:

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

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCIL MEMBER HELMS, SECONDED BY COUNCIL MEMBER LARSON, TO AUTHORIZE THE CITY ADMINISTRATOR/CLERK-TREASURER TO ISSUE PAYMENT OF RECOMMENDED BILLS AND PAYROLL.

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

Voting Nay: None.

COUNCIL/STAFF REPORTS:

Mayor Gander stated he had a proclamation for Medical Laboratory Professionals Week, he had a son trained in medical lab science, and proper use of lab tests could be pivotal for good patient care allowing for early detection and be less evasive. He said lab technicians were pushed to the limit in scheduling, volume of work, and this happened during COVID so it was a perfect time to recognize medical laboratory professionals. He read the proclamation. He gave a reminder about the upcoming State of the City event on Thursday, the meal was starting at 11:30, the program was starting around noon, and would be done before 1pm.

Council Member Vetter wished Mr. Murphy luck with his future endeavors and thanked him for his service.

Council Member Pokrzywinski seconded those comments and thanked Mr. Murphy.

Council Vice-President Riopelle commented he thought Mr. Murphy would enjoy the area he was moving to and wished him good luck.

Council Member Helms thanked Mr. Murphy and wished him good luck. He commented he always was able to come in and speak with him and hoped the next administrator would be the same. He asked if they were serving the meal at the State of the City. Mayor Gander said no but if they could be nearby, that would be helpful.

Council Member Peterson thanked Mr. Murphy for his service and that he would be greatly missed.

Council Member Larson thanked Mr. Murphy for his service and to stay in touch.

Council President Olstad wished Mr. Murphy and his family good luck, best wishes, and how they now would be closer to his daughter.

Mr. Murphy said he really had enjoyed his time at the City, it had been a real pleasure working with the Council, he had enjoyed working with everyone, they were one of the best councils he had worked with, and he appreciated everything they had done for him.

Mr. Galstad thanked Mr. Murphy for his service.

Mr. Emery commented on how everything had already been said but wished Mr. Murphy and his family good luck.

10. Consider approving the process to move forward with the City Administrator position search by David Drown Associates.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCIL MEMBER LARSON, SECONDED BY COUNCIL MEMBER RIOPELLE, TO APPROVE THE PROCESS TO MOVE FORWARD WITH THE CITY ADMINISTRATOR POSITION SEARCH BY DAVID DROWN ASSOCIATES.

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

Voting Nay: None.

ADJOURN:

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCIL MEMBER HELMS, SECONDED BY COUNCIL MEMBER LARSON, TO ADJOURN THE APRIL 18, 2023 COUNCIL MEETING OF THE EAST GRAND FORKS, MINNESOTA CITY COUNCIL AT 5:24 P.M.

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

Voting Nay: None.

Megan Nelson, City Clerk