

**APPROVED MINUTES
OF THE WORK SESSION
CITY OF EAST GRAND FORKS
TUESDAY, APRIL 25, 2023 – 5:00 PM**

CALL TO ORDER:

The Work Session of the East Grand Forks City Council for Tuesday, April 25, 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: Karla Anderson, Finance Director; Jeff Boushee, Fire Chief; Nancy Ellis, City Planner; Steve Emery, City Engineer; Ron Galstad, City Attorney; Paul Gorte, Economic Development Director; Charlotte Helgeson, Library Director; Reid Huttunen, Parks and Recreation Superintendent; Megan Nelson, City Clerk; and Jason Stordahl, Public Works Director.

DETERMINATION OF A QUORUM:

The Council President Determined a Quorum was present.

1. Discussion on Outdoor Rink Project – Reid Huttunen

Mr. Huttunen told the Council the Blue Line Club had met and discussed the outdoor rink project and the motion made included if the City would commit \$100,000 to the project, the club would fund the project to completion with a concrete base up to \$350,000. He stated the estimates did not include all the costs for the project and the project estimate was currently at \$268,000. Mr. Mike Kolstoe stated the group voted unanimously to move forward with the project with help from the City and it would be a great amenity for the youth of the community. Discussion followed about how the Club did not want to exceed the \$350,000 total for the project, they would be looking for in-kind donations, and would be soliciting donations for the project. Mr. Kolstoe said they were not flush but did have some cash available.

Council member Helms stated the Club had done a lot of good in the community, he asked how many rinks were needed on the south end of town, and he was concerned about the closure of the Stauss Park outdoor rink. He added not everyone wanted another rink. Mr. Judd Stauss reminded everyone this would be a rink, not an additional arena, based on the information most of the people using the rink at Stauss Park were already driving. Discussion followed about how the rink was being built because of the boards that were donated and how currently there were no practices that were planned on this rink.

Council member Peterson asked what the process was to prioritize projects and what they would do if another group came in asking for \$100,000. She added they might need to look at what was wanted versus what was needed. She asked how this would impact the proposed arena project. Mr. Huttunen said he did not have all the answers at this time, he had similar questions, how there were existing needs, they try to budget and plan for the future, but every year there seemed to be a public interest project which have

been developed quickly and were pushed forward based on public interest. He commented that most of the projects had gone through a similar process and this rink would fit with the proposed arena project because there was nothing currently proposed in the area where the rink would be located. Mr. Stauss said the proposed project included \$50,000 to \$60,000 for improvements inside the Blue Line Club Arena which was needed because the arena was used more often than expected.

Mayor Gander asked about the funding scenarios. Mr. Huttunen said it was mentioned that \$50,000 could come from the building maintenance fund, there was a 5 year plan for that funding, so the projects would need to be reviewed. Mayor Gander said he would like to see the plan. He added that he would like to see this project move forward because it was driven by a group so it would be used. Council President Olstad commented they could also just use Altru funds, how there used to be a rink at Folsom Park, and he understood the concern about closing the rink at Stauss Park. Discussion followed how the City was trying to cut costs, how there would be ongoing maintenance, no additional staff would need to be hired if the rink at Stauss Park closed, and ongoing maintenance would be the same by closing a rink. Ms. Nicole Pape told the Council maintenance was discussed at the club meeting and they would be stepping up to help with maintenance of the rink. Council member Pokrzywinski asked about utility costs. Mr. Huttunen reviewed what was used at Stauss Park to flood the rink, there would be a difference flooding the concrete space compared to grass, and how they would not need an additional warming house attendant because there was already staff at the Blue Line Club Arena. Discussion followed about how maintenance could be determined after the first year and how parents and the Blue Line Club would help. More discussion followed about how the warming house area was used by people waiting to take a driver's test, donations were being raised by the Blue Line Club for this project, and the request was made to see the City's proposed funding sources.

This item will be brought forward to a future meeting.

2. Consider Filing Plans and Specifications and Set Bid Date for 2023 City Project No. 2 for LaFave Park Improvements – Steve Emery

Mr. Emery stated they had recently reviewed the project and he would be asking to file the plans and specifications and start advertising at the next council meeting. He said the bid date would be May 31st with bids being opened at 10am. Council member Helms asked when the project would start. Mr. Emery said it was going to be a two-year project, they would try to work around activities, and be completed next year.

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

3. Consider Request Use of Local Channel – Megan Nelson

Ms. Nelson informed the Council that Council member Helms had received a request asking if church services could be included on the local channel. She stated there currently was not a policy in place listing what was allowed and staff would need direction from the Council if it should remain the way it was with government and school or if it should be more of a community page. Discussion followed about how the City set the rules for the channel, how there could be many requests if the channel changed, and how most places currently were streaming services. Council Vice-President Riopelle suggested keeping the channel as it was with government and school. Council President Olstad asked staff to draft a policy for the Council to consider. More discussion followed about allowing government meetings, school board meetings, and school sanctioned activities.

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

OTHER:

Council member Helms stated a business owner had hit manhole on Garden Court and was badly injured. He asked if that could be taken care of. Mr. Emery stated that in some area's streets did rise so they now put in floating manholes, but they would take a look. Council member Vetter commented that this would have been addressed had the street project been approved in that area. Mayor Gander stated if it was a failed storm sewer there were separate funds for repair projects.

ADJOURN:

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCIL MEMBER LARSON, SECONDED BY COUNCIL MEMBER HELMS, TO ADJOURN THE APRIL 25, 2023 WORK SESSION OF THE EAST GRAND FORKS, MINNESOTA CITY COUNCIL AT 5:55 P.M.

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

Voting Nay: None.

Megan Nelson, City Clerk