

**APPROVED MINUTES
OF THE WORK SESSION
CITY OF EAST GRAND FORKS
TUESDAY, JUNE 27, 2023 – 5:00 PM**

CALL TO ORDER:

The Work Session of the East Grand Forks City Council for Tuesday, June 27, 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; Michael Hedlund, Police Chief, 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. 2050 Street & Highway Element Update – Teri Kouba

Ms. Kouba said they were going to give an update on the street and highway plan and Mr. Jason Carbee was the consultant that was working with them on the project. She explained this was an update to the transportation plan, it was the last element, and these updates were mandated to be updated every five years. Mr. Carbee told the Council there were already a lot of plans and studies that they were taking advantage of to help evaluate the system. He explained they spoke with stakeholders to help develop goals and objectives, the first open house they held was in November of 2022, and the plan was to prioritize safety, efficiency/reliability of the system, and connections. He stated they came up with five goals with objectives that would allow them to measure how well they were achieving the goal.

Mr. Carbee told the Council they reviewed the current system, how things were connected, and how future development would affect the system. Ms. Kouba said they used local information for the traffic demand model, how East Grand Forks has averaged around .4% of growth over the years, and there had been a lot of growth on both south ends of each city. She stated they also used job information, the industrial areas, employment opportunities, and school information in the model to help determine what was happening. Mr. Carbee added they used the existing land use plan, the information they had gathered, and calibrated the proposed growth to see how that could affect traffic and showed a diagram of forecasted traffic levels for 2050. He reviewed areas that would see additional trips per day, the areas that would be congested, and what the levels of service would be. He stated they were in the process of looking at alternatives, the draft of the plan would be completed in October, and be finished by the end of the year. He asked for questions. Ms. Kouba told the Council they held an open house on June 21st and would take public comments through July 14th.

Mayor Gander asked how they would respond if they were asked about using Fargo data to project traffic between Grand Forks and East Grand Forks. Ms. Kouba stated it depended on where the data was coming from, or they could use surveys or national data. Mr. Carbee said they start with local data if it was available, sometimes they started with national data, and figure out how the national data fits in with the local observed data. He added that instead of using national data for trips per each household, they started with Fargo information, and went through a validation and calibration process to make adjustments to fit the communities. He said Fargo was a better starting point than using national data. Mayor Gander said he just wanted to make sure they were ready to address that question because it was likely to come. There were no other questions.

This item will be brought back to a future meeting.

2. Discussion on City Administrator Position Process – Liza Donabauer

Ms. Donabauer stated they were unable to host the interviews, there had been four finalists, two had withdrawn from the process. She said they had decided to take a pause, she had prepared a memo of possible options, and she was open to other options as well. Council President Olstad asked her to review the options. Ms. Donabauer started by reviewing possible timelines for the different options taking up to six additional months. She said they could review the list of the semi-finalists to see if there were anymore they would like to bring forward for an interview and this was the most immediate option. She continued with the next option which would take two to three months, post the job for 30 days, and bring in candidates to interview and invite the two finalists. She stated the final option would take about five to six months, they would advertise in September, and someone could take the position in December.

Ms. Donabauer commented there were risks to each of the options, the markets may not have changed, and there were challenges with waiting later in the year to interview and for moving in the winter months. She asked for questions or if there were any suggestions for other options. Mayor Gander said he did not like option two because the market may not have changed at all, so he was in favor of options one or three. Council member Helms stated he was in favor of option one. Council President Olstad said he was in favor of option one and if there was any applicants out of the 12 they did not see that should be brought forward. Ms. Donabauer said she had reviewed the candidates that were not semi-finalists, she still felt that they either did not meet qualifications or there was something in their history such as a lot of job hopping so the eight that were presented met the minimum qualifications and some of the attributes the Council had talked about. Discussion followed about how one had dropped out so there were seven for semi-finalists. Council member Vetter suggested moving forward with options two or three and start the process over. Council President Olstad said he did not like option three, they could not wait that long, and suggested moving forward with option one. He added they needed to give direction to Ms. Donabauer.

Council member Larson asked if option one did not work, if they moved ahead with option two. Ms. Donabauer said she could provide an update once she had contacted the candidates. Mayor Gander said that would be a good starting point. Council President Olstad said they may need to hold a special meeting on July 5th. Council member Pokrzywinski asked how many votes the other candidates received. Ms. Donabauer stated candidate one received one vote and candidate eight received three votes. Council member Pokrzywinski said he was not in favor of option three. The consensus was to move forward with option one and have a special meeting on July 5th.

This item will be brought forward to a meeting on July 5th.

3. Request for Concrete Replacement by 4th Street NE & 8th Ave NE – Steve Emery

Mr. Emery reminded the Council that Opp Construction was working on improvements to 4th Street NE, they would be starting to pave the following week, and Folson Farms was looking at possible improvements to a dip in the an area that was a vacated road. He stated Opp Construction had prepared an estimate totaling \$38,000 to help improve their access and were asking to see if that amount could be included with the special assessments for the overall project. Council President Olstad asked to have them sign off accepting the additional amount. Council member Helms asked if this would create a change order. Mr. Emery said they had not started with the concrete so there would not be any change orders.

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

4. Consider Authorizing Plans & Specifications for City Project No. 5 Sidewalk & Multi-use Trail Extensions – Steve Emery

Mr. Emery said they had been looking at ADA projects and were looking into the multi-use trail connection and sidewalk projects that were previously brought forward but did not proceed. He stated Ms. Ellis had applied for funding for carbon reduction, the City was awarded the grant of \$35,000 and the remainder could be covered by State Aid Maintenance funds but he recently found out about another possible funding source to cover the remainder of the project cost but the project could not be let in order to use the funds. He asked to prepare the plans and specifications, they would have to be approved by the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MNDOT), and they could bid the project out in December or January. Discussion followed about this was a good project, it provided connections, and to possibly consider applying for funding to add a sidewalk along 10th Street SE especially along the coulee area.

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

5. Consider Approving the Hiring of a Police Officer – Mike Hedlund

Chief Hedlund stated the background had been completed for Ms. Richter, he reviewed her years of experience and how she led trainings, and due to her experience, he was requesting to place her on a Step 5 on Grade 15. There were no questions.

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

6. Request for Roof Repairs to Police Department – Mike Hedlund

Chief Hedlund reminded the Council how all the city facility roofs had been inspected, he had Tecta Roofing come in and review the inspection report along with completing their own inspection, and their quote was for \$10,926 for repairs to the Police Department roof. He said there were funds available for this in the building maintenance fund and requested approval to move forward. There were no questions.

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

7. Request to Approve Repairs to VFW Memorial Arena Lobby – Reid Huttunen

Mr. Huttunen said the wood decking had failed at the VFW Arena lobby area due to late, heavy snows, they had not experienced any leaking, but they needed to repair the area. He informed the Council the

League of Minnesota Cities had reviewed and accepted the quote for the repair work which would start in a couple weeks and anything outside of that scope would not be covered by the insurance claim. He said since they were already working in the lobby area it was suggested to also replace the lighting to LED lighting and he had received a verbal quote that it would not be more than \$5,000 which could be covered by building maintenance funds. Mr. Galstad asked about energy credits from the Water and Light Department. Mr. Huttunen said they would complete that process but typically it was only a few hundred dollars that was received back. There were no other questions.

These items will be referred to a City Council Meeting for action.

8. Discussion on Electric Scooter Licensing & Regulations for Rental Scooters – Ron Galstad

Mr. Galstad explained an ordinance was needed to regulate the licensing and operation of the scooters and he needed more information to help draft the ordinance. He stated he had the Grand Forks ordinance and the model ordinance from Bird Rides and he needed direction from the Council. Council member Helms asked if the scooters would be allowed in the greenway system. Mr. Galstad stated they would follow the greenway rules so they could not be used but it didn't mean that people would not try to use them there. Mayor Gander commented how there were electric bikes in the greenway system and the scooters would have the same feel. Mr. Galstad stated again any restrictions were up to the Council. Mr. Huttunen informed the Council that the scooters were allowed by Grand Forks to be in the greenway system because they stayed under the speed limit and the restriction was for gas powered engines. Council member Pokrzywinski said he did not have a problem with the scooters being in the greenway but did not want them allowed on sidewalks. Discussion followed the scooters were equipped with GPS, they could be shut down if they enter a restricted area, it was asked violations could be tracked, and it needed to be made very clear these scooters were not allowed on sidewalks.

Council member Larson said he had ridden a scooter at UND, it sensed a congested area, the scooter automatically slowed down, and they would react to geofenced areas. More discussion followed about how the scooters should not be left behind on the greenway system, it would take some time to relocate scooters, if a fine could be assessed on a user, and how hard it would be to control or stop bad operators. Mr. Galstad reminded the Council the agreement would need to be renewed annually. Ms. Nelson said Bird Rides had been very responsive and she could either email them or join a meeting to answer questions.

This item will be brought back to a future meeting.

9. Consider Making Billboard by Highway 2 Conforming – Megan Nelson

Ms. Nelson stated the billboard located by the city swimming pool was built in 1998 without MNDOT approval, they had been in contact with staff over the last few years, and a permit was filed for the billboard. She explained because of the location MNDOT considered it nonconforming so no maintenance work could be done with it but if a resolution was passed stating it had legal status, MNDOT would change it to conforming so maintenance would be completed. She added that if that was not going to happen then MNDOT was requesting it be taken down and she asked for direction from the Council.

Mayor Gander told the Council that Cabela's was still interested in being a part of the billboard and the Council would need to decide what would all be included. Council member Peterson asked what kind of revenue it generated. Mayor Gander said none for the city. Discussion followed about looking into the

agreement the City had with Cabela's regarding the billboard, how the Council may want to allow businesses to be on the billboard throughout the year, how it could generate revenue, and at one point a business was interested in putting in a digital billboard but that ended once it was determined it was not allowed. Mayor Gander said it needed to be cleaned up. Council President Olstad asked to bring it forward the next week for a vote.

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

ADJOURN:

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCIL MEMBER LARSON, SECONDED BY COUNCIL MEMBER RIOPELLE, TO ADJOURN THE JUNE 27, 2023 WORK SESSION OF THE EAST GRAND FORKS, MINNESOTA CITY COUNCIL AT 6:06 P.M.

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

Voting Nay: None.

Megan Nelson, City Clerk