

**APPROVED MINUTES
OF THE WORK SESSION
CITY OF EAST GRAND FORKS
TUESDAY, OCTOBER 10, 2023 – 5:00 PM**

CALL TO ORDER:

The Work Session of the East Grand Forks City Council for Tuesday, October 10, 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, 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, City Administrator; Jeremy King, Parks and Recreation Superintendent; Keith Mykleseth, Water and Light General Manager; 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 Demers Professional Building Fund – Reid Huttunen

Mr. Huttunen stated that fund 681 was an inactive account that had a balance of \$73,034.68, the funds were from the sale of the Demers Professional Building, and suggested transferring the funds to the general fund or use it on a project. Council President Olstad said he would prefer to use this funds on the 2024 budget. Discussion followed about how that was the cash balance and it did earn interest. Council member Vetter suggested putting it in the general fund and they should specify what the funds would be used on in the budget. Council member Helms asked about the accounts and if they were all separate at the bank. Ms. Anderson explained there was only one bank account but the funds or different accounts were set up by the State regarding how they were used. Council member Helms asked about interest. Ms. Anderson said the City did collect interest and how the City also had CD investments. There were no other questions.

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

2. Discussion on 5th Ave NW & 20th Street Partial Reconstruction Plan – Mayor Gander

Mayor Gander said there might be some strong feelings amongst the Council that the next step in this process should come from the neighborhood, but they might not know what to request. He explained they could look at replacing failed curb and gutter, failed storm sewer, failed sanitary sewer, replace any driveway aprons tied to failed curb and gutter, replace sidewalks tied to failed curb and gutter, and street repairs. He stated failed curb and gutter was a part of the storm water system, they could prioritize projects, and complete some of the project using enterprise funds while other parts of the project being

assessed to the property owners. He said they are looking to put information together on project costs and give the information to the residents, so it was being brought forward for discussion and feedback from the Council. He said based on cost constraints this might be the best thing that could be done and there had been a question about a State program for street funding but this area did not qualify for that program.

Council Vice-President Riopelle said most of the area was in his ward, the last proposed project had funds from various areas to help pay for the project, and the residents were told they needed to come forward when they wanted the street done since they did not support the project. He stated how the costs would only increase the longer it took to complete the project. Discussion followed about how the utility infrastructure would also need to be replaced, they were trying to anticipate things within the cost constraints, and information for the proposed project was to be shared with the neighborhood. Council member Vetter said he agreed with Council Vice-President Riopelle, this would set a bad precedent for the city, and they were not doing this in any other area of town so it would need to be initiated by the neighborhood. He added that was not the Council's position. Discussion followed about how many times a street project had been brought up for this neighborhood but was not supported by the neighborhood, the street had not had maintenance for over 30 years, how proposed projects had been turned down, and the proposed project could be used in different areas of the city. Council member Vetter said again it was a bad precedent, that this should not move forward, and if needed it could be voted on next week not to move forward. Mayor Gander said to because it was the only way to move forward.

Council member Peterson asked about the sanitation issue and how that would be handled. Mr. Emery said there was not a lot of sanitary sewer under the street, there was clay tile sewer, and it looked good. He said what was being proposed was a 10-year project, so if it moved forward, he would not recommend replacing the sanitary sewer. He added they were still reviewing the storm sewer, but they would not be addressing everything unless it was a full reconstruction of the street. Mr. Huttunen stated that sanitary and storm sewer repairs would be covered by the enterprise funds with the fee that was collected monthly. He added if the street had to be removed to fix a utility, that section of street would also be covered by the enterprise funds.

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

3. Indigenous Peoples' Day and Columbus Day – Mayor Gander

Mayor Gander explained he had a request to have recognition of Indigenous Peoples' Day and Columbus Day and he was as respectful as possible to all parties concerned. He asked for everyone to listen to everything and not fixate on one part. Mayor Gander reviewed when each day became a recognized holiday, he read about the theories of how people came to be in the Americas, how there was 574 tribes, he listed regional tribes, how there was much to learn from the different tribes, and listed many things that had already been learned or shared from the tribes. He commented how Leif Erickson reached North American around year 1000 and he was followed by Christopher Columbus. He reviewed what he had done prior to sailing west, how his expedition was funded by Spain, and he ended up in the Bahamas but thought he was in Asia. He added how if it was not Columbus, it would have been someone else, and continued reviewing other areas that explorers ventured to. He listed what America represented, how it did not erase past mistakes, but served as a foundation moving forward.

ADJOURN:

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCIL MEMBER VETTER, SECONDED BY COUNCIL MEMBER RIOPELLE, TO ADJOURN THE OCTOBER 10, 2023 WORK SESSION OF THE EAST GRAND FORKS, MINNESOTA CITY COUNCIL AT 5:29 P.M.

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

Voting Nay: None.

Absent: Larson.

Megan Nelson, City Clerk