

**APPROVED MINUTES  
OF THE COUNCIL MEETING  
CITY OF EAST GRAND FORKS  
TUESDAY, DECEMBER 19, 2023 – 5:00 PM**

**CALL TO ORDER:**

*The Council Meeting of the East Grand Forks City Council for Tuesday, December 19, 2023 was called to order by Council Vice-President Riopelle 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 (joined via Interactive Technology), 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, City Administrator; Jeremy King, Parks and Recreation Superintendent; Megan Nelson, City Clerk; and Jason Stordahl, Public Works Director.*

**DETERMINATION OF QUORUM:**

*The Council Vice-President Determined a Quorum was present.*

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:**

**OPEN FORUM:**

Council Vice-President Riopelle 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 “Work Session” for the East Grand Forks, Minnesota City Council of November 28, 2023.
2. Consider approving the minutes of the “Special Meeting” for the East Grand Forks, Minnesota City Council of December 5, 2023.
3. Consider approving the minutes of the “Council Meeting” for the East Grand Forks, Minnesota City Council of December 5, 2023.

**A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCIL MEMBER HELMS, SECONDED BY COUNCIL MEMBER VETTER, TO APPROVE ITEMS ONE (1) THROUGH THREE (3).**

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

*Voting Nay: None.*

**SCHEDULED BID LETTINGS: NONE**

**SCHEDULED PUBLIC HEARINGS:**

4. Public Hearing on the proposed policy for the usage of the Unmanned Aviation Vehicles operated by the Regional Special Operations Group's Unmanned Aircraft System team.

**A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCIL MEMBER HELMS, SECONDED BY COUNCIL MEMBER OLSTAD, TO OPEN THE PUBLIC HEARING.**

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

*Voting Nay: None.*

Chief Hedlund explained the City was a part of the regional special operations group, the group had acquired enough drones for all members to have access to one while on shift, and Minnesota Statute required a policy regarding usage of the drones. There were no questions.

**A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCIL MEMBER VETTER, SECONDED BY COUNCIL MEMBER OLSTAD, TO CLOSE THE PUBLIC HEARING.**

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

*Voting Nay: None.*

**CONSENT AGENDA:**

*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.*

5. Consider approving the Exempt Gambling Permit Application for the Red River Valley Pheasants Foreve to hold a raffle on April 20, 2024 at the Eagles Club located at 227 10<sup>th</sup> St NW East Grand Forks, MN 56721 and waive the 30-day waiting period.
6. Consider approving the Exempt Gambling Permit Application for the Whitetails Unlimited Red River Valley Deer Camp to hold a raffle on January 20, 2024 at the American Legion 157 located at 1009 Central Ave NW East Grand Forks, MN 56721 and waive the 30-day waiting period.
7. Consider adopting Resolution No. 23-12-80 designating the polling place locations for 2024.

**A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCIL MEMBER LARSON, SECONDED BY COUNCIL MEMBER VETTER, TO APPROVE ITEMS FIVE (5) THROUGH SEVEN (7).**

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

*Voting Nay: None.*

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

8. Regular meeting minutes of the Water, Light, Power, and Building Commission for November 15, 2023.
9. City Financial Statements as of October 31, 2023.

**COMMUNICATIONS: NONE**

**OLD BUSINESS: NONE**

**NEW BUSINESS:**

10. Consider adopting Policy Directive 46.2.1 providing the guidelines for the use of the Unmanned Aircraft Systems for the East Grand Forks Police Department.

**A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCIL MEMBER HELMS, SECONDED BY COUNCIL MEMBER OLSTAD, TO ADOPT POLICY DIRECTIVE 46.2.1 PROVIDING THE GUIDELINES FOR THE USE OF THE UNMANNED AIRCRAFT SYSTEMS FOR THE EAST GRAND FORKS POLICE DEPARTMENT.**

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

*Voting Nay: None.*

11. Consider adopting Resolution No. 23-12-81 approving and adopting the 2050 Plan Update to the Metropolitan Transportation Plan and Street and Highway Element of the Comprehensive Plan.

**A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCIL MEMBER VETTER, SECONDED BY COUNCIL MEMBER LARSON, TO ADOPT RESOLUTION NO. 23-12-81 APPROVING AND ADOPTING THE 2050 PLAN UPDATE TO THE METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION PLAN AND STREET AND HIGHWAY ELEMENT OF THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN.**

Ms. Ellis stated the public hearing was held at the Planning Commission, the information included the transportation plan and levels of services. She said the commission recommended approving the plan as it was which included keeping the intercity bridge in the plan and listed in the illustrative projects. She added many things had been discussed at the Technical Advisory Committee, but the committee moved the plan forward as it was. Ms. Halford informed the Council the plan had been presented at the Grand Forks council meeting; they had originally wanted to remove everything for an intercity bridge, but ended up removing the intercity bridge from the illustrative project list. She added if the City approved the plan as it was, the Metropolitan Planning Organization Executive Board would make the final decision. Council member Vetter asked if what they were voting on included the intercity bridge on the illustrative list. Ms. Halford said it did.

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

*Voting Nay: None.*

12. Consider adopting Resolution No. 23-12-82 approving the plans and specifications and ordering advertisement for bids for the 2023 City Project No. 2 LaFave Park Improvements.

**A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCIL MEMBER VETTER, SECONDED BY COUNCIL MEMBER OLSTAD, TO ADOPT RESOLUTION NO. 23-12-82 APPROVING THE PLANS AND SPECIFICATIONS AND ORDERING ADVERTISEMENT FOR BIDS FOR THE 2023 CITY PROJECT NO. 2 LAFAVE PARK IMPROVEMENTS.**

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

*Voting Nay: None.*

13. Consider approving the Special Use Permit for the installation of a second concrete ready mixed plant at the Strata site for temporary use in the summer of 2024 with the requirement they meet any additional conditions requested by the Planning Commission or Council regarding noise, time of operation, length of operation, traffic congestion, or requested truck route.

**A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCIL MEMBER VETTER, SECONDED BY COUNCIL MEMBER LARSON, TO APPROVE THE SPECIAL USE PERMIT FOR THE INSTALLATION OF A SECOND CONCRETE READY MIXED PLANT AT THE STRATA SITE FOR TEMPORARY USE IN THE SUMMER OF 2024 WITH THE REQUIREMENT THEY MEET ANY ADDITIONAL CONDITIONS REQUESTED BY THE PLANNING COMMISSION OR COUNCIL REGARDING NOISE, TIME OF OPERATION, LENGTH OF OPERATION, TRAFFIC CONGESTION, OR REQUESTED TRUCK ROUTE.**

Ms. Ellis explained the request was for a special use permit, the site had been grandfathered in which had a permanent concrete plant but a temporary one was needed for a project in 2024, the route used would be Business Highway 2, 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE, and then over to Highway 220. She stated they were expecting 200 to 300 trucks per day, the roads used were collector or arterial roads which could handle the traffic, there were no suggested hours of operation because the work was being done out of town, and there were no hours set for traffic. She added they might be requesting a temporary plant as needed and would come back with a separate application if there was interest. She said there were representatives at the meeting to answer any questions. Mayor Gander stated the site was looking very good, he was glad they were in the City, it was a good site to grow on, and he would support reasonable growth at that site. Ms. Ellis told the Council she had not received any calls or informed of any concerns about the permit and they were located in the general industrial zone.

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

*Voting Nay: None.*

14. Consider granting preliminary approval of the Green Acres Resubdivision Plat and PUD Amendment with the requirement of adding easements requested from the utility group, submission a mutual encroachment agreement, and submission of a digital file of the plat.

**A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCIL MEMBER VETTER, SECONDED BY COUNCIL MEMBER HELMS, TO GRANT PRELIMINARY APPROVAL OF THE GREEN ACRES RESUBDIVISION PLAT AND PUD AMENDMENT WITH THE REQUIREMENT OF ADDING EASEMENTS REQUESTED FROM THE UTILITY GROUP, SUBMISSION A MUTUAL ENCROACHMENT AGREEMENT, AND SUBMISSION OF A DIGITAL FILE OF THE PLAT.**

Ms. Ellis explained some property lines were going to be moved because they were looking at splitting things up and selling some of the property. She added they were making sure easements were in place and having an encroachment agreement in place would allow for repairs to be done. She said the City would be removed from liability and the additional information would be recorded with the plat so the request for final approval would be brought forward in January.

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

*Voting Nay: None.*

15. Consider declaring tempered glass as surplus and authorize the sale of the glass to Northwood Hockey Boosters for \$2,500.

**A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCIL MEMBER HELMS, SECONDED BY COUNCIL MEMBER VETTER, TO DECLARE TEMPERED GLASS AS SURPLUS AND AUTHORIZE THE SALE OF THE GLASS TO NORTHWOOD HOCKEY BOOSTERS FOR \$2,500.**

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

*Voting Nay: None.*

16. Consider adopting Resolution No. 23-12-84 approving a 5% increase to the 2023 tax levy, collectable in 2024.

**A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCIL MEMBER OLSTAD, SECONDED BY COUNCIL MEMBER LARSON, TO ADOPT RESOLUTION NO. 23-12-84 APPROVING A 5% INCREASE TO THE 2023 TAX LEVY, COLLECTABLE IN 2024.**

Ms. Anderson asked if there were any questions and informed the Council this included spending \$174,000 from the fund balance and it was estimated the fund balance would be at 49% for 2024 based on the savings expected from 2023. Mayor Gander thanked everyone that worked through this process. Ms. Anderson also thanked everyone, reminded everyone how the work started in February with the finance committee, and thanked Council members Vetter and Peterson for their work serving on the finance committee.

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

*Voting Nay: None.*

17. Consider adopting Resolution No. 23-12-85 approving the 2024 budget and to authorize specific financial related activities.

**A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCIL MEMBER OLSTAD, SECONDED BY COUNCIL MEMBER LARSON, TO ADOPT RESOLUTION NO. 23-12-85 APPROVING THE 2024 BUDGET AND TO AUTHORIZE SPECIFIC FINANCIAL RELATED ACTIVITIES.**

Ms. Anderson stated the budget showed what was being planned to spend from the general fund, capital outlay, special revenue, and enterprise funds.

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

*Voting Nay: None.*

18. Consider adopting Resolution No. 23-12-83 authorizing the implementation of the updated compensation plan for 2024 and 2025 and cost of living increases for all non-union employees.

**A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCIL MEMBER VETTER, SECONDED BY COUNCIL MEMBER OLSTAD, TO ADOPT RESOLUTION NO. 23-12-83 AUTHORIZING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE UPDATED COMPENSATION PLAN FOR 2024 AND 2025 AND COST OF LIVING INCREASES FOR ALL NON-UNION EMPLOYEES.**

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

*Voting Nay: None.*

19. Consider approving the internal hiring process for a Public Works Supervisor.

**A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCIL MEMBER VETTER, SECONDED BY COUNCIL MEMBER LARSON, TO APPROVE THE INTERNAL HIRING PROCESS FOR A PUBLIC WORKS SUPERVISOR.**

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

*Voting Nay: None.*

20. Consider approving the internal hiring process for a Public Works Foreman.

**A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCIL MEMBER HELMS, SECONDED BY COUNCIL MEMBER VETTER, TO APPROVE THE INTERNAL HIRING PROCESS FOR A PUBLIC WORKS FOREMAN.**

Mayor Gander commented how changes in a department could have a ripple effect and thanked Mr. Stordahl for having to handle more items because of the changes within the Public Works Department.

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

*Voting Nay: None.*

21. Consider approving the Labor Agreement and Memorandum of Understanding for 2024-2025 between the City of East Grand Forks and the International Association of Fire Fighters Local No. 3423.

**A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCIL MEMBER VETTER, SECONDED BY COUNCIL MEMBER OLSTAD, TO APPROVE THE LABOR AGREEMENT AND MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING FOR 2024-2025 BETWEEN THE CITY OF EAST GRAND FORKS AND THE INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF FIRE FIGHTERS LOCAL NO. 3423.**

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

*Voting Nay: None.*

22. Consider approving the Labor Agreement and Memorandum of Understanding for 2024-2025 between the City of East Grand Forks and the ASFCME Council 65.

**A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCIL MEMBER OLSTAD, SECONDED BY COUNCIL MEMBER VETTER, TO APPROVE THE LABOR AGREEMENT AND MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING FOR 2024-2025 BETWEEN THE CITY OF EAST GRAND FORKS AND THE ASFCME COUNCIL 65.**

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

*Voting Nay: None.*

**CLAIMS:**

23. 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 POKRZYWINSKI, TO AUTHORIZE THE CITY ADMINISTRATOR/CLERK-TREASURER TO ISSUE PAYMENT OF RECOMMENDED BILLS AND PAYROLL.**

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

*Voting Nay: None.*

**COUNCIL/STAFF REPORTS:**

Mayor Gander reminded everyone about the discussion regarding economic development, there was discussions about how there was room to do better, Mr. Gary Shields had been a part of that discussion and other discussions about having a group outside of the Chamber, but at this time he had starting talking to the Chamber. He added that there was momentum building, Mr. Shields was a part of the Eagles Club, it was a nice venue, and they were wanting to grow. He added there was discussion about what could be done in the Highway 2 and Highway 220 corridors moving forward. He reminded everyone that the results of the study would be available soon.

Council Member Vetter stated the budget was passed for 2024, they should not lose traction, they will need to continue to look at staffing levels, and asked department heads to keep bringing ideas forward.

Council Member Pokrzywinski wished everyone a Merry Christmas.

Council Member Riopelle wished staff a Merry Christmas and safe travels.

Council Member Helms said Mr. Shields was very vocal about the community and he was glad to hear that the corridors were included in the discussions.

Council Member Larson thanked everyone for their efforts on the budget and wished everyone a Merry Christmas.

Council President Olstad wished everyone a Merry Christmas, thanked staff and department heads for the work done on the budget, and safe travels to those traveling.

Mr. Huttunen also thanked everyone for the work on the budget and stated there were a few in the audience that might have questions about the Senior Center so he clarified the services and staffing had been included in the 2024 budget, they will be looking at ways to bring in additional revenues, and there would be a slow, long approach to determine how to move forward. He reminded everyone there was no meeting the following week so the next meeting would be on January 2<sup>nd</sup>.

Mr. Emery wished everyone a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

**ADJOURN:**

**A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCIL MEMBER HELMS, SECONDED BY COUNCIL MEMBER LARSON, TO ADJOURN THE DECEMBER 19, 2023 COUNCIL MEETING OF THE EAST GRAND FORKS, MINNESOTA CITY COUNCIL AT 5:30 P.M.**

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

*Voting Nay: None.*

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Megan Nelson, City Clerk