

**APPROVED MINUTES  
OF THE WORK SESSION  
CITY OF EAST GRAND FORKS  
TUESDAY, MARCH 26, 2024 – 5:00 PM**

**CALL TO ORDER:**

*The Work Session of the East Grand Forks City Council for Tuesday, March 26, 2024 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, 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.*

*Economic Development Authority Board Members Present: Josh Grinde, Ben Horken, Daniel Black, and Penny Stai.*

**DETERMINATION OF A QUORUM:**

*The Council President Determined a Quorum was present.*

Council President Olstad stated Ms. Renee Cardarelle had information to share. Ms. Cardarelle told the Council she was excited to announce they had received a \$25,000 grant from the Laura Jane Musser Fund which strived to bring together rural communities and diverse community groups together. She explained the application had been submitted in October and she collaborated with agencies that included the City, churches, schools, and other community members. She added she had not heard anything, so she did not think they were awarded the grant, but the check arrived last week. She said she wanted to share the good news and set up a meeting to determine how to use the funding to make things happen. Mayor Gander thanked her for all the hard work.

**1. 2024 Economic Development Strategic Plan Update – Paul Gorte & Mark Schill**

Mr. Gorte stated the Council had the final draft of the plan for the Economic Development Authority (EDA). He said this would provide direction for the EDA and it was also flexible so it could adjust due to changing conditions. Mr. Schill stated this was the summation of what had been previously brought forward, they kept it brief to be useful, but it has enough detail to not leave anything out. He explained this listed what the EDA should be focusing on and what could be more of a broader City responsibility. He stated this set a clear structure for the EDA, how there could be additional roles, but set goals for the EDA. He reviewed how the priorities developed based on the input received by the different groups when going through the process and the areas that need to be focused on. He added housing was a key priority

but the City should discontinue lot sales once all of the current city residential lots were sold. He said the last item was about the next director and how communication, coalition building, and sales should all be skills.

Mr. Schill moved on to the core work areas of local business development, new business development, connect, convene, communicate, and land and site development. He stated the next couple pages outlined the four areas, described the general roles, and some outlying actions, initiatives, or strategies specific to the EDA or items that the EDA could support. He reviewed the action items under each category and gave some suggestions of examples of some of the items. He said they were trying to create a structure using the four pillars to help inform actions going forward. Mr. Gorte asked if any changes should be made. Council President Olstad said it was great information and a great exercise that had taken place over the last few months. He stated it gave them action items and they might need to make changes as things move forward. There were no other questions.

Mr. Gorte informed the Council the Northwest Minnesota Foundation was going to have a grant available, it was State funding, and the information would be added online.

Mayor Gander thanked the members of the EDA Board that were present and hoped to have a seamless connection between the City and EDA and hoped for continued support for the change in staff from both groups.

## **2. Discussion on Economic Development Director Job Description and Process for Position Search – Reid Huttunen**

Mr. Huttunen commented the how the board members volunteer their time, so he wanted to also extend a thank you to the board members. He explained at the February EDA meeting the Board President suggested forming a smaller committee to review the EDA Director job description and determine the top attributes they would be looking for in a new director. He stated the previous week the subcommittee met, reviewed the current job description, and how some of the top priorities for this position include building relationships with businesses and community partners, retain and help businesses grow, be the spokesperson of the EDA, and be the salesperson for the community. He said the person would also need the knowledge of programs and available funding opportunities, and the experience or ability writing or support grant writing grant applications which was a city need as well. He said the last thing was to promote and market programing on the city website and social media platforms.

Mr. Huttunen said he had shared the job description with David Drown Associates that grades and points job descriptions. He explained there were changes that did affect the grading of the position, certain items were no longer under this job, and there was a downgrade in what was being requested for experience so that simple change also made change in the grade from a 22 down to 20. He added it would be prudent to discuss the search process; the last time a firm was hired to complete the process, there were 19 applicants, 10 were moved on, and there were four finalists. He said the recommendation was to have staff post the job first for approximately four weeks and after four weeks determine if there were qualified applicants to interview or if they need to hire a firm to help with the process. He reviewed how more time was needed to determine if this position was affected by the civil service rules, if they would conduct the initial interviews, and Mr. Galstad would be looking into that. He added they would also need to determine how the final interviews would be conducted. He asked for questions.

Council President Olstad asked if there were any changes that were suggested at the EDA meeting. Council member Larson said the EDA Board had received the same information during their meeting, the comments were positive, and were on the right track. He added he commented on the updated duties and how the position description meshed with the strategic plan so the two documents worked well together and suggested including the plan when advertising for the position. Council President Olstad asked if there were any other questions. Mayor Gander commented how it was good to have reviewed the job description and tie it to the action plan. Council President Olstad thanked those that had put a lot of work into this, he appreciated the committee for the work they did, and hoped to get good candidates. He asked for questions and there were none.

This item will be brought back at a future meeting.

### **3. Request to File Assessment Roll for the 2023 Assessment Job No. 1 for Street and Pedestrian Improvements – Steve Emery**

Mr. Emery said he was requesting to file the assessment roll from the subtarget project. He stated they had been holding the final hearing prior to awarding the project but due to timelines they did proceed with the project before holding the final assessment hearing. He said the final costs were known and the assessment roll was prepared. He reviewed the costs, 30% of the project was going to be assessed, and there were both front and end benefits for this project. He added they would need to file the assessment roll and set the hearing date. He asked for questions. There were none.

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

### **4. Review of Annual Sewer Cleaning Quotes for 2024 – Jason Stordahl**

Mr. Stordahl stated this was the annual sewer cleaning that had been done since 2011, this year there was not as much televising that was needed, they requested proposals from four companies, three were received, and he recommended moving forward with Johnson Jet Line because they had the lowest quote. There were no questions.

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

### **5. Announcement of Change to Spring Clean-up Dates – Jason Stordahl**

Mr. Stordahl told the Council in the last few years clean-up week had to be moved due to flooding so Grand Forks moved their clean-up week back a week so the City would also be doing the same. He stated clean-up week would be May 13<sup>th</sup> through the 17<sup>th</sup> which was the second week in May and the hazardous waste and electronic drop off would stay on May 11<sup>th</sup> from 9am to 3pm at the Public Works building. He added the change would be publicized because it was incorrect on the sanitation calendar. There were no questions.

### **6. Review of Bids for City Hall Roof Replacement Project – Nancy Ellis**

Ms. Ellis informed the Council the schematic would be included with the information for the next meeting. She reminded the Council all city facility roofs were previously inspected and the City Hall roof was scheduled to be replaced in 2024. She explained they would be removing the gravel, re-rubber all three wings, and included in an addendum to replace all the metal flashing around each wing and dome. She

said the dome was a concern because they were not sure if it was needed, the work was very specific, and it was included as a deduct in case that work did not need to be done. She said bids were received, one was noticeably lower, they met with their estimators to make sure they followed everything that needed to be done, the company only worked on government buildings, they would be completing the roof project on the Polk County building in April and then could start on the City Hall building in May if the bid was awarded. She stated the bid did include the replacement of the metal flashing and a gutter system to help shed the water away from the building. She added it was recommended not to include the dome work so that would be deducted out. She stated based on references and how they were listed as a responsible bidder through Dunn and Broadstreet, the recommendation was to award the project to Equity Builders. She asked for questions and reminded the Council the project was estimated at \$750,000 but came in under than. There were no questions.

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

### **7. Request to Hire Parks & Recreation Specialist – Jeremy King**

Mr. King informed the Council the Park and Recreation Department had received a resignation from the full-time Parks and Recreation Specialist, the position was important to the department, and listed the job duties that the position handled. He said the position was listed at a Grade 10 and had been budgeted at a Grade 10 Step 5 for 2024. He reminded the Council the position was created in 2019, all of the fees were increased to help cover the position, and it was expected to have an above average workload with the current and upcoming projects. He commented that the accounting technician position was still open, how there might be a thought to combine the two positions, but the two positions had opposite skill sets. He said if it was approved to fill, they were hoping to have it filled before the pool opened so his recommendation was to move forward with filling the position.

Council member Vetter stated they hadn't started the budget process, the previous year the accounting position was not filled to help balance the budget, and there had been a lot of discussion on possible changes in the parks department which could still be in the planning stages. He said the park position along with the EDA Director position should stay open until they had completed the budgeting process. Mayor Gander said they should move on filling it because the budget process could take until the end of the year. He asked if they fully funded the accounting technician position. Mr. Huttunen said it was budgeted starting for July 1<sup>st</sup>. Mayor Gander suggested they should fill that position as well because what was happening was not sustainable. He added it was a quality-of-life issue when it came to the Parks Department, and they should run it the way people were accustomed to. Council President Olstad stated he agreed with the Mayor and that they should also fill the EDA Director position and accounting technician position. He added it would take a while to get through the budget process, there were many things going on for the Parks Department, and asked for other comments. There were none.

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

### **ADJOURN:**

**A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCIL MEMBER LARSON, SECONDED BY COUNCIL MEMBER PETERSON, TO ADJOURN THE MARCH 26, 2024 WORK SESSION OF THE EAST GRAND FORKS, MINNESOTA CITY COUNCIL AT 5:38 P.M.**

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

*Voting Nay: None.*  
*Absent: Helms.*

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Megan Nelson, City Clerk