

**APPROVED MINUTES
OF THE CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF EAST GRAND FORKS
TUESDAY, MAY 7, 2024 – 5:00 PM**

CALL TO ORDER:

The Council Meeting of the East Grand Forks City Council for Tuesday, May 7, 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, 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; 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.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

OPEN FORUM:

Council President Olstad 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 April 9, 2024.
2. Consider approving the minutes of the “Regular Meeting” for the East Grand Forks, Minnesota City Council of April 16, 2024.
3. Consider approving the minutes of the “Work Session” for the East Grand Forks, Minnesota City Council of April 23, 2024.
4. Consider approving the minutes of the “Special Meeting” for the East Grand Forks, Minnesota City Council of April 23, 2024.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCIL MEMBER HELMS, SECONDED BY COUNCIL MEMBER RIOPELLE, TO APPROVE ITEMS ONE (1) THROUGH FOUR (4).

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

Voting Nay: None.

SCHEDULED BID LETTINGS: NONE.

SCHEDULED PUBLIC HEARINGS:

5. Final Assessment Public Hearing for the 2023 Assessment Job No. 1 for Street and Pedestrian Improvements for 5th Avenue NE.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCIL MEMBER RIOPELLE, SECONDED BY COUNCIL MEMBER LARSON, TO OPEN THE PUBLIC HEARING.

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

Voting Nay: None.

Mr. Emery stated this was the final assessment hearing for work completed on 5th Avenue NE between 15th Street and 20th Street. He explained any objections had to be filed with the Council prior to or at this meeting and after the assessment roll was adopted, they would need to file with the district court within 30 days. He reviewed the project, it was not a full reconstruction, and it included minor sidewalk and driveway improvements. He stated assessments were 30% of the funding for the project with 70% of the funding coming from the Federal subtarget funds and the State Aid Construction funds. He said the total project costs were \$838,573.88, the 30% to be assessed was \$251,572.17, and \$587,001.71 was the 70% that would not be assessed. He reviewed front and end benefits, how they were calculated, and the assessment would be paid over 20 years at 5.7% interest. He added the special assessments could be prepaid or the first payment would be included on the 2025 property tax statement. He asked for questions.

Ms. Teri Hammarback, 809 Central Ave NW, stated she needed to be on the record saying the assessment was not right, nothing would be done, nothing was touched on their side of the road on 5th Avenue, they did not have any sidewalks or driveways, and in October they had just finished paying \$27,000 in assessments for 20th Street NE. She said they were now going to add another \$28,000 and 20th Street will need to be redone in the next few years so they would be charged with more special assessments. She commented they were not going to do anything but again she needed to be on the record saying this was not right. She added she had not seen council members other than Mr. Helms or Mayor Gander take in any of the activities at Heritage Village, it was a first-rate education project, but most of the Council did not participate. She said they just had 170 9th graders and 800 4th graders at Heritage Village, she gave tours all summer long from those visiting from Sweden, Finland, Norway, Canada, Japan, and China. She informed the Council they would be celebrating the 50th anniversary next year, nothing was going to change, and they would continue to be assessed. She commented they were being assessed for something that did not need fixing and 20th Street did need to be fixed.

Mr. Dale Helms, 613 2nd Ave NE, said the reason they were both there was because they were co-presidents of the Heritage Foundation. He said if 5th Avenue was closed it would not affect them one bit because they access the grounds from 20th Street. He explained they just got done paying for the 20th Street assessments, they had a very small budget, and it was run by volunteers so this assessment would

be a big strain on the Heritage Foundation. He added it would be even worse if 20th Street was redone and assessed and it could cause them to have to close Heritage Village because they could not afford it. He stated they did not make money, they were there for educational purposes, and he asked Mr. Emery how they were assessed. Mr. Emery said they charged the end benefit rate on the project. Mr. Helms said they would not be filing with the courts because they did not have the money to fight the assessments, so they were there to make sure everyone understood where they were coming from.

Ms. Hammarback asked who received the interest. Mayor Gander asked what the interest rate on the bond. Mr. Huttunen said it was not being bonded so the City would be receiving the interest. He explained the policy, how they checked the market rate, and included 2% for administrative costs. Mayor Gander commented that a benefit for them being at the meeting was the community was being informed of their need so anyone that could help offset this cost would be greatly appreciated. Ms. Hammarback said they were able to do a lot with memberships and asked the Council how many were members. She reminded them membership was \$30 per year. Mr. Helms said their membership was down, he was glad they did not have to have a complete reconstruction, and it was that way because of the truck traffic. Mr. Emery said the argument could be made for all side streets, but they followed the City policy for assessments and they did do work on their side of the street because all of the centerline panels were replaced. He said they repaired what was needed, it was a maintenance project of the street, and it helped with the longevity of the street.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCIL MEMBER RIOPELLE, SECONDED BY COUNCIL MEMBER HELMS, TO CLOSE THE PUBLIC HEARING.

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

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.

6. Consider approving the Premises Permit Application for the East Grand Forks Blue Line Club to be able to conduct gambling at the Valley Golf Course located at 2407 River Road NW East Grand Forks, MN 56721.
7. Consider adopting Resolution No. 24-05-36 approving the following Board and Commission appointments and reappointments as presented by the appropriate elected official.
8. Consider approving the Parade Application from KEM Shriners for a parade on Saturday, June 1st starting at 11am and contingent on approval from MNDOT for the bridge closure.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCIL MEMBER HELMS, SECONDED BY COUNCIL MEMBER LARSON, TO APPROVE ITEMS SIX (6) THROUGH EIGHT (8).

Ms. Helgeson said the new library board member would be filling a vacancy on the Library Board because Therese Tiedeman had served three terms of three years each which was the maximum a board member could serve on the board. She informed the Council Ms. Tiedeman had passed away the previous week, she was a great board member, she was a firecracker, and she also served on the Friends of the Library board. She added that Mr. Brendan Stermer would be filling the vacancy and she needed to let the Council

know how important Ms. Tiedeman was to the Library.

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

Voting Nay: None.

ACKNOWLEDGE RECEIPT OF REPORTS OF OFFICERS, BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS:

9. Regular meeting minutes of the Water, Light, Power, and Building Commission for April 3, 2024 and April 17, 2024.

COMMUNICATIONS: NONE

OLD BUSINESS: NONE

NEW BUSINESS:

10. Consider adopting Resolution No. 24-05-37 adopting Assessment Roll 344 for the 2023 Assessment Job No. 1 for Street and Pedestrian Improvements for a total assessment of \$251,572.17.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCIL MEMBER RIOPELLE, SECONDED BY COUNCIL MEMBER VETTER, TO ADOPT RESOLUTION NO. 24-05-37 ADOPTING ASSESSMENT ROLL 344 FOR THE 2023 ASSESSMENT JOB NO. 1 FOR STREET AND PEDESTRIAN IMPROVEMENTS FOR A TOTAL ASSESSMENT OF \$251,572.17.

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

Voting Nay: None.

Abstain: Helms.

11. Consider adopting Resolution No. 24-05-38 accepting and awarding the 2023 City Project No. 5 for Sidewalk and Multi-Use Trail Extension to Q3 Contracting for a total of \$126,435.35.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCIL MEMBER LARSON, SECONDED BY COUNCIL MEMBER VETTER, TO ADOPT RESOLUTION NO. 24-05-38 ACCEPTING AND AWARDING THE 2023 CITY PROJECT NO. 5 FOR SIDEWALK AND MULTI-USE TRAIL EXTENSION TO Q3 CONTRACTING FOR A TOTAL OF \$126,435.35.

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

Voting Nay: None.

12. Consider adopting Resolution No. 24-05-39 approving Agreement No. 1056265 between the City of East Grand Forks and the Minnesota Department of Transportation appointing the Department as the agent for the City to accept the Carbon Reduction Grant funds.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCIL MEMBER RIOPELLE, SECONDED BY COUNCIL MEMBER LARSON, TO ADOPT RESOLUTION NO. 24-05-39 APPROVING AGREEMENT NO. 1056265 BETWEEN THE CITY OF EAST GRAND FORKS AND THE MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION APPOINTING THE DEPARTMENT AS THE AGENT FOR THE CITY TO ACCEPT THE CARBON REDUCTION GRANT FUNDS.

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

Voting Nay: None.

13. Consider adopting Resolution No. 24-05-40 ordering the improvement and preparation of plans and specifications for the SCADA system and approve the programming work to be completed by IPS contingent upon a bid being awarded.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCIL MEMBER HELMS, SECONDED BY COUNCIL MEMBER LARSON, TO ADOPT RESOLUTION NO. 24-05-40 ORDERING THE IMPROVEMENT AND PREPARATION OF PLANS AND SPECIFICATIONS FOR THE SCADA SYSTEM AND APPROVE THE PROGRAMMING WORK TO BE COMPLETED BY IPS CONTINGENT UPON A BID BEING AWARDED.

Ms. Peterson said for transparency purposes she stated she did have a brother-in-law that worked for this company, she would not be receiving any financial gain from this, and after speaking with Mr. Galstad about this she did not need to abstain from voting.

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

Voting Nay: None.

14. Consider approving the Assignment and Assumption Agreement between the City of East Grand Forks and Cabela's for the City assuming all right, title, or interest in the billboard structure in Sherlock Park.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCIL MEMBER RIOPELLE, SECONDED BY COUNCIL MEMBER HELMS, TO APPROVE THE ASSIGNMENT AND ASSUMPTION AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE CITY OF EAST GRAND FORKS AND CABELA'S FOR THE CITY ASSUMING ALL RIGHT, TITLE, OR INTEREST IN THE BILLBOARD STRUCTURE IN SHERLOCK PARK.

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

Voting Nay: None.

15. Consider approving the Location Lease Agreement between the City of East Grand Forks and Newman Signs for the placement of a new digital billboard in Sherlock Park.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCIL MEMBER RIOPELLE, SECONDED BY COUNCIL MEMBER HELMS, TO APPROVE THE LOCATION LEASE AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE CITY OF EAST GRAND FORKS AND NEWMAN SIGNS FOR THE PLACEMENT OF A NEW DIGITAL BILLBOARD IN SHERLOCK PARK.

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

Voting Nay: None.

16. Consider approving the renewal of the \$100,000 Builder Incentive Program utilizing the funds available in the 280 and 633 funds.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCIL MEMBER HELMS, SECONDED BY COUNCIL MEMBER LARSON, TO APPROVE THE RENEWAL OF THE \$100,000 BUILDER INCENTIVE PROGRAM UTILIZING THE FUNDS AVAILABLE IN THE 280 AND 633 FUNDS.

Council member Vetter asked Ms. Anderson about the future costs of property tax rebates. Ms. Anderson said Mr. Huttunen was working with the Economic Development office on that. Mr. Huttunen stated information would be brought forward at the next work session about the programs and loans. Discussion followed about how the fund would cover the abatements for the next year and how the three loans would be coming from the 280 and 633 funds which totaled approximately \$380,000.

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

Voting Nay: Riopelle and Vetter.

17. Consider adopting Resolution No. 24-05-41 approving the sale of city lots to the North Star Neighbors Community Land Trust contingent upon the agreement to the proposed guidelines and grant funding being awarded from Minnesota Housing.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCIL MEMBER HELMS, SECONDED BY COUNCIL MEMBER LARSON, TO ADOPT RESOLUTION NO. 24-05-41 APPROVING THE SALE OF CITY LOTS TO THE NORTH STAR NEIGHBORS COMMUNITY LAND TRUST CONTINGENT UPON THE AGREEMENT TO THE PROPOSED GUIDELINES AND GRANT FUNDING BEING AWARDED FROM MINNESOTA HOUSING.

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

Voting Nay: None.

18. Consider adopting Resolution No. 24-05-42 approving the purchase of a Class 400 Low Floor bus for the purpose of public transportation services.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCIL MEMBER VETTER, SECONDED BY COUNCIL MEMBER LARSON, TO ADOPT RESOLUTION NO. 24-05-42 APPROVING THE PURCHASE OF A CLASS 400 LOW FLOOR BUS FOR THE PURPOSE OF PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION SERVICES.

Ms. Ellis told the Council there were many plans when it came to transit, the City had four buses they tried to rotate out, the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MNDOT) reviewed the plans, and this year they were able to give funding for a new bus. She said costs were up significantly since COVID, this time there was a 90/10 local match for the bus purchase, but in the future it more than likely will go back to a 80/20 local match. She added they would get the bus ordered and budget for the local match in the 2025 budget because it was a long lead time before the bus would be delivered. Council member Helms asked if they just got a new bus. Ms. Ellis said they did and it was the bus that had been ordered in 2022. Council member Helms asked if the City received any revenue from fares. Ms. Ellis said they did and it reduced operating expenses.

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

Voting Nay: None.

CLAIMS:

19. 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 VETTER, TO AUTHORIZE THE CITY ADMINISTRATOR/CLERK-TREASURER TO ISSUE PAYMENT OF RECOMMENDED BILLS AND PAYROLL.

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

Voting Nay: None.

COUNCIL/STAFF REPORTS:

Mayor Gander said this was the first meeting since the State of the City event, he thanked staff for all of their work putting the event together, and thanked those that participated in the event. He also thanked the Chamber and Livewire for being a part of the event. He added this helped keep the Council accountable for the plans made for the year.

Council Member Helms said Ms. Tiedeman would be missed, the current library board was a good group of people, and suggested that people take a look at the website to see all of the activities that were going on at the library. He also thanked the Council for listening about the Heritage Village and let them voice their frustration.

ADJOURN:

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCIL MEMBER HELMS, SECONDED BY COUNCIL MEMBER VETTER, TO ADJOURN THE MAY 7, 2024 COUNCIL MEETING OF THE EAST GRAND FORKS, MINNESOTA CITY COUNCIL AT 5:37 P.M.

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

Voting Nay: None.

Megan Nelson, City Clerk