

**APPROVED MINUTES
OF THE WORK SESSION
CITY OF EAST GRAND FORKS
TUESDAY, JUNE 11, 2024 – 5:00 PM**

CALL TO ORDER:

The Work Session of the East Grand Forks City Council for Tuesday, June 11, 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; Paul Gorte, Economic Development Director; Michael Hedlund, Police Chief, Reid Huttunen, City Administrator; Jeremy King, 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. Update on Mural at the Riverwalk Center – Nancy Ellis

Ms. Jill Proctor stated there was an update on the mural process, the renderings had been included in the packet, and they were changing the idea to be more of a greeting from East Grand Forks. She explained the muralists were from Crookston, they were going to include items such as an N for Northland and the High School mascot, and one of the muralist was a biologist so there would be a lot of detail on the fish. She added they made the site accessible, the mural would be started on Monday, and would be completed in 7 to 10 days depending on weather. Council President Olstad asked for questions and there were none.

2. Request for Temporary Pickleball Court in Downtown Parking Lot – Reid Huttunen

Ms. Proctor told the Council foot traffic seemed a bit slower in July, there were many things regarding pickles, so the idea was to spend time downtown and get pickled. She said the plan was to put up a temporary pickleball court behind the movie theater and they would work with the Grand Cities Pickleball group on using the space. Mayor Gander asked if they would be in the area by the veteran memorial. Ms. Proctor said they would. Council President Olstad asked for questions and there were none.

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

3. Consider Contract Extension with Countrywide Sanitation – Jason Stordahl

Mr. Stordahl informed the Council the current contract with Countrywide Sanitation was going to expire at the end of June, they had submitted a proposal for a 5-year extension to the contract, and included the proposed pricing. He explained the refuse charges had a small increase but there were greater increases for recycling. He added how they checked around on pricing with other communities, but no one had the same service schedule as the city. He asked for questions. Council member Pokrzywinski asked if they would be required to request bids for this process or if they were able to just extend the contract. Mr. Stordahl said they requested bids 10 years ago, they had already extended the contract once, and requesting bids was not required. Council member Pokrzywinski said he was not suggesting requesting bids but wanted to know what the process was.

Ms. Rachel Gornowicz, Countrywide Sanitation, told the Council they had hauled for the City for the last 10 years and they like hauling for the City. She stated she felt the proposed rates were inline based on the cost of business, East Grand Forks did a lot of recycling, and it cost more to recycle. She said they were changing out trucks, the most recent quote for a truck was \$440,000, and trucks used to be \$250,000 to \$275,000. She added she appreciated the business and hoped they would be able to extend the contract. Council member Larson asked about the increase for recycling. Ms. Gornowicz stated they used to be paid for recycling and now they have to pay to have it processed. She explained they paid \$130 per ton for recycling, the amount did not include processing, but even with the changes they had continued with the contract. Council member Larson asked if separating the items would help. Ms. Gornowicz said that used to be done but there were issues with that process so currently they are sending bails of recycling up to Canada. There were no other questions.

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

4. Building Official Update & Proposed Contract – Reid Huttunen & Nancy Ellis

Mr. Huttunen stated it had been a month since this was last discussed, staff still wanted to consider a full-time position, but that could take 12 to 18 months, and for the immediate need they were requesting to contract services. He explained they had met with different companies and were recommending entering into an agreement with True Check LLC. He added this person had 10 years of experience working as a building inspector, he would also be working with other cities that had contracts with Widseth, and they were able to negotiate the rates. Ms. Ellis commented on how the other company wanted to take over the permit process and there would have been significant changes for residents so the company that was being recommended would be a good fit for the community. She added staff would do as much as they could and set inspections for the days the inspector was available.

Council member Pokrzywinski said if there was a 2-year contract, it would take 12 to 18 months to get someone trained, what the long-term plan would be. Ms. Ellis said staff was working on the job description for the Council to consider. Council member Pokrzywinski asked what would happen if they were able to hire a building inspector in six months. Ms. Ellis said there was a 60-day cancellation period included in the proposed contract. There were no other questions.

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

5. Quiet Zone Construction & Maintenance Agreement for Central Ave – Reid Huttunen

Mr. Huttunen told the Council the easement information for the Central Ave crossing for the quiet zone project had to be reviewed, that process was finally completed, and the language in this agreement was the same as it was for the 2nd Ave NE crossing agreement. He added this was needed to keep the project on schedule. There were no questions.

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

ADJOURN:

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCIL MEMBER RIOPELLE, SECONDED BY COUNCIL MEMBER HELMS, TO ADJOURN THE JUNE 11, 2024 WORK SESSION OF THE EAST GRAND FORKS, MINNESOTA CITY COUNCIL AT 5:21 P.M.

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

Voting Nay: None.

Megan Nelson, City Clerk