

**APPROVED MINUTES
OF THE WORK SESSION
CITY OF EAST GRAND FORKS
TUESDAY, JUNE 25, 2024 – 5:00 PM**

CALL TO ORDER:

The Work Session of the East Grand Forks City Council for Tuesday, June 25, 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; 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 A QUORUM:

The Council President Determined a Quorum was present.

1. Request for Resolution Authorizing the Sale of Property – Ron Galstad

Mr. Galstad told the Council a title opinion was requesting a resolution ratifying the sale of city property to Western Gamble and he did not think it was necessary because a resolution had already adopted granting the Economic Development Authority the authority to sell city property. He added this would keep the process moving forward so the current property owner could sell the property. Council member Larson asked for background on the parcels. Mr. Galstad explained they reconstructed 17th Street SE, the City requested an easement, but ended up purchasing the property which was replatted, and the lots were sold to Western Gamble for development. There were no other questions.

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

2. Request to Accept Donation for Playground at Griggs Park Trailhead – Jeremy King

Mr. King stated the request came forward in July 2023 to start a fundraising effort for a playground at Griggs Park Trailhead. He said \$1,007 has been raised at this point, currently there was nothing budgeted for equipment, and the request was to accept the funds and plan for what can be done at this location. There were no questions.

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

3. Consider Update to Site Use Agreement with Lutheran Social Services – Jeremy King

Mr. King said when planning for the 2024 budget the request was made to try and find ways to save funds, so they have worked with Lutheran Social Services (LSS) on reviewing options regarding their use of the Senior Center. He explained they had come to an agreement after negotiations and based on the meals they had served the previous year; they would be paying \$315 per month for using the Senior Center space. He added the agreement would be updated reflecting this change and would include a 60-day cancellation if either party wanted to end the agreement. He added LSS had recently installed a new range in the kitchen and made the recommendation to accept the updated agreement. Council member Helms asked what fund the rent would be going to. Mr. King stated the general fund. Ms. Anderson said it would go in the fund that the other rents for use the Senior Center go to. Council member Pokrzywinski asked if the amount would cover utilities. Mr. King said it should cover the kitchen utilities. Council member Pokrzywinski asked if they made money from the meals. Mr. King said LSS was a non-profit, they did charge for meals, but they did not turn people away that were over 55. There were no other questions.

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

4. Consider Upgrade to HVAC System at Senior Center – Jeremy King

Mr. King stated this item had been brought up in 2022, the building was being heated and cooled by residential units, and one of the units had a bad compressor. He explained there were issues in the kitchen because air is pulled from the building but there was nothing pulling fresh air back into the building. He said \$120,000 had been budgeted, the cost estimate had come in higher than that amount, but if they were able to complete the project this year, they could save money, and recommending moving forward with the upgrade to the system.

Mayor Gander said he would like to make sure this system would work, and it was a cost-effective way to cool the kitchen. Mr. King stated the building used to be a grocery store, it seemed everyone had a solution to the issue, the City currently had a contract with Johnson Controls for service, and this was also based on the Sourcewell contract. He added they would have it properly engineered for the building and it should last 20 to 25 years. Council member Larson asked if there was electric service to support the new system. Mr. King said there was. Council President Olstad asked if there was enough budgeted in 2024 for this project. Mr. King said there were enough funds available to complete the project this year and he would have the updated proposal for the next meeting.

Council member Vetter said they had entertained an offer; they could have \$400,000 to renovate instead of putting the funds into an old building. Discussion followed about how the offer for the building was too low, it was indicated to the potential buyer they needed to give an offer that was high enough to replace the Senior Center, and at this point a counteroffer had not been received. Mayor Gander said they would need a facility ready to replace the Senior Center if the building was sold, most of the members of the Senior Center had been in the community for a long time, they had a reasonable discussion about the facility, and if they were not making a change this should move forward. Mr. King said a change to the system could pay off in the long term. There were no other questions.

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

5. Request to Reclassify the Senior Center Coordinator Position – Jeremy King

Mr. King stated how the Council had requested for staff look for cost savings and during the analysis of non-union positions there was a recommendation from David Drown Associates (DDA) to reclassify the Senior Center Coordinator position from a Grade 15 to a Grade 12 due to a variety of reasons. He added DDA gave guidance on how to address this change which was to freeze the wages of the position until it aligned with the range of the new grade. He informed the Council the guidance was the same as what was in the City’s personnel policy. He said freezing the wages would have a cost savings in 2025 of about \$4,700 and recommended freezing the wages based on the guidance from DDA and the city personnel policy. Discussion followed about how the wage would stay where it was, the person would not receive a decrease in pay, and the wage would remain where it was until the grade plan caught up so there would be savings because there would not be any step increases or cost of living increases until it met the Grade 12 wages. There were no other questions.

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

ADJOURN:

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCIL MEMBER HELMS, SECONDED BY COUNCIL MEMBER LARSON, TO ADJOURN THE JUNE 25, 2024 WORK SESSION OF THE EAST GRAND FORKS, MINNESOTA CITY COUNCIL AT 5:25 P.M.

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

Voting Nay: None.

Megan Nelson, City Clerk