

**APPROVED MINUTES
OF THE CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF EAST GRAND FORKS
TUESDAY, JULY 16, 2024 – 5:00 PM**

CALL TO ORDER:

The Council Meeting of the East Grand Forks City Council for Tuesday, July 16, 2024 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, 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 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 “Regular Meeting” for the East Grand Forks, Minnesota City Council of July 2, 2024.
2. Consider approving the minutes of the “Work Session” for the East Grand Forks, Minnesota City Council of July 9, 2024.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCIL MEMBER HELMS, SECONDED BY COUNCIL MEMBER LARSON, TO APPROVE ITEMS ONE (1) AND TWO (2).

*Voting Aye: Larson, Peterson, Vetter, Pokrzywinski, Riopelle, Helms, and Olstad.
Voting Nay: None.*

SCHEDULED BID LETTINGS: NONE.

SCHEDULED PUBLIC HEARINGS: 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.

3. Consider adopting Resolution No. 24-07-54 approving the hiring of Herman Gray as a Police Officer at a salary of \$32.43 per hour.
4. Consider approving the Special Event Permit Application to the Iron Pigs Motorcycle Club for the motorcycle ride on the Kenneth M. Olson Memorial Trail in the greenway system on Saturday, August 3, 2024 between 10am and 10:30am.
5. Consider adopting Resolution No. 24-07-55 approving alternate judges for the Primary and General Elections for the 2024 cycle.
6. Consider adopting Resolution No. 24-07-56 entering into an agreement between the City of East Grand Forks and the State of Minnesota for fixed route transportation in East Grand Forks for 2025.
7. Consider adopting Resolution No. 24-07-57 entering into an agreement between the City of East Grand Forks and the State of Minnesota for paratransit services in East Grand Forks for 2025.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCIL MEMBER POKRZYWINSKI, SECONDED BY COUNCIL MEMBER HELMS, TO APPROVE ITEMS THREE (3) 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 June 18, 2024.

COMMUNICATIONS: NONE

OLD BUSINESS: NONE

NEW BUSINESS:

9. Consider adopting Resolution No. 24-07-58 authorizing a special election on November 5, 2024 to consider the implementation of the local sales tax and approve the two questions that would be included on the ballot.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCIL MEMBER LARSON, SECONDED BY COUNCIL MEMBER POKRZYWINSKI, TO ADOPT RESOLUTION NO. 24-07-58 AUTHORIZING A SPECIAL ELECTION ON NOVEMBER 5, 2024 TO CONSIDER THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE LOCAL SALES TAX AND APPROVE THE TWO QUESTIONS THAT WOULD BE

INCLUDED ON THE BALLOT.

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

Voting Nay: None.

10. Consider approving the Economic Development Authority to hire an executive search firm for up to the amount of \$24,000, contingent upon approval of the EDA Board of Commissioners, should the EDA deem necessary after review of the applicant qualifications and experience collected at the July 23rd meeting of the EDA.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCIL MEMBER HELMS, SECONDED BY COUNCIL MEMBER LARSON, TO APPROVE THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY TO HIRE AN EXECUTIVE SEARCH FIRM FOR UP TO THE AMOUNT OF \$24,000, CONTINGENT UPON APPROVAL OF THE EDA BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS, SHOULD THE EDA DEEM NECESSARY AFTER REVIEW OF THE APPLICANT QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE COLLECTED AT THE JULY 23RD MEETING OF THE EDA.

Mayor Gander stated this would be needed only if no qualified applications were received. Council member Helms said had been discussed by the EDA Board meeting and would not prolong the process if needed. Council member Peterson asked if the agency would be determined at a later date. Mr. Huttunen told the Council that decision would be made by the EDA Board if they moved forward with hiring a search firm. Council member Larson said process had been extended the process to try and avoid hiring a search firm, but this would let them move forward quickly if needed.

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

Voting Nay: Vetter and Olstad.

11. Consider adopting Resolution 24-07-59 authorizing a \$20,000 matching contribution pledge to support the City of Grand Forks application to the USDOT Small Community Air Service Program.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCIL MEMBER VETTER, SECONDED BY COUNCIL MEMBER LARSON, TO ADOPT RESOLUTION 24-07-59 AUTHORIZING A \$20,000 MATCHING CONTRIBUTION PLEDGE TO SUPPORT THE CITY OF GRAND FORKS APPLICATION TO THE USDOT SMALL COMMUNITY AIR SERVICE PROGRAM.

Council member Helms asked what the City gained from this. Mr. Huttunen said Mr. Wilfahrt was at the meeting to answer questions and give background information. Mr. Wilfahrt stated a federal grant application was completed requesting \$1 million, the City of Grand Forks approved up to \$300,000 for a local match, and another \$200,000 would be needed from the local communities. He explained the intent was to have Sky West to have flights from Grand Forks to Denver as a daily service and the goal was to expand airplane service to Grand Forks. He added this would be a pledge and at this point they had \$130,000 raised including from some businesses in East Grand Forks. He told the Council the local match would make this application more appealing and benefit the communities, this was Mayor Bochenski's big initiative for the year, and the Grand Forks EDC and the Chamber was tasked with helping raise additional funds for the grant. He informed the Council they had a letter from Sky West to go with the application saying they were willing to provide service, or the application would not be considered. He added it was a fast-moving process and it was a good opportunity they would be able to see service going to Denver.

Council member Helms asked what the guarantee was that service would continue. Mr. Wilfahrt said they would need to use it, or it would be lost, and it connected to a United hub so it was a separate carrier. Council member Helms asked what the \$1 million would be used for. Mr. Wilfahrt said if the service was profitable, they would not use the local funds, but it was a revenue guarantee. He commented hopefully people would be using the service and Fargo had completed four of the grants which had been successful for them. He said if the funds were needed it would not be until 2025, they would have to negotiate with the airline, and a consulting firm had been hired to help with the process. Council member Helms asked how the \$20,000 was determined. Discussion followed about how the amount of pledges have varied from \$1,000 up to \$20,000, applications that did not have a minimum of 40% local match did not get funded, it was the region's air service, Grand Forks was putting up at least \$200,000, and the City participating would help significantly in the grant process.

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

Voting Nay: Helms.

CLAIMS:

12. 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: Larson, Peterson, Vetter, Pokrzywinski, Riopelle, Helms, and Olstad.

Voting Nay: None.

COUNCIL/STAFF REPORTS:

Mayor Gander said he had been asked about what was being put in at the railroad crossing and how safety structures were being installed for the quiet zone. He commended the work being done, the improvements to the traffic lights have helped improve traffic flow, and the work progressed quickly to get things done in a timely fashion.

Council Member Helms asked Mayor Gander and Council member Larson if they would be judges for the hotdish contest during Heritage Days and reminded everyone Heritage Weekend was August 9th and 10th this year. Both agreed to be judges.

Council Member Larson said he was proud to be a hotdish judge.

Mr. Emery informed the Council the sidewalk and multi-use trail project had started the previous week, the concrete work should be completed this week, and the project should be completed by the end of July. He stated the quiet zone project was progressing, by the end of July Central Avenue should be back open to traffic, and by the first of August 3rd Street would be closed. He added they were hoping to have the project completed by August 31st so it was done before school started. Council member Helms asked if they had replaced the traffic lights at 2nd Avenue. Mr. Emery said they did not and that was scheduled for next spring.

ADJOURN:

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCIL MEMBER HELMS, SECONDED BY COUNCIL MEMBER VETTER, TO ADJOURN THE JULY 16, 2024 COUNCIL MEETING OF THE EAST GRAND FORKS, MINNESOTA CITY COUNCIL AT 5:21 P.M.

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

Voting Nay: None.

Megan Nelson, City Clerk