

**APPROVED MINUTES
OF THE WORK SESSION
CITY OF EAST GRAND FORKS
TUESDAY, OCTOBER 22, 2024 – 5:00 PM**

CALL TO ORDER:

The Work Session of the East Grand Forks City Council for Tuesday, October 22, 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; Maggie Brockling, Economic Development Director; 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.

DETERMINATION OF A QUORUM:

The Council President Determined a Quorum was present.

1. Request to Name New Outdoor Rink & Add Sponsorship Signage – Jeremy King

Mr. King told the Council the Blue Line Club was requesting approval to name the new outdoor rink the Jim Bradshaw rink because of his sponsorship towards the construction of the new rink. He stated Mr. Bradshaw was the owner of Strata Construction and was the largest sponsor of the project. He explained how there was not a current naming policy in place but previously things had been named to recognize the largest donor to a project. He added the Blue Line Club would also like to add sponsorship signage on the outside of the Blue Line Club Arena and there would not be any cost to the City. He stated the recommendation would be approving the naming and the sponsorship signage. There were no questions.

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

2. Consider Improvements to the Greensite – Jason Stordahl

Mr. Stordahl stated the greensite location was running out of space, there were more people using it, and it would be beneficial to add additional concrete. He explained they were ordering roll offs so residents could dump leaves and branches in them instead of on the ground and the added concrete would help to have the water flow away from the property. He commented on how they had looked at different sites around the city, different layouts within the greensite, and how they might be dumping snow behind the greensite due to the improvements in LaFave Park. He said they would like to request to have plans and specifications for an expansion area at the greensite. He said they would not be able to pay for it at this time based on the current refuse fund balance, but staff had been reviewing greensite fees, how there are

issues with the snow, trying to keep the gate functioning, and not having people get stuck inside the fenced in area.

Mr. Stordahl said they had looked at other gate configurations but not having a gate was better than what they currently have and there were cameras set up that they check if there was a violation. He said the cameras were good but there would need to be a reason to look at them. He stated the idea was to have no gate and charge all of the residents that would be included in the refuse fee. He said if nothing changed, they would be losing money each year so they would be coming back with a new rate structure and refuse rates needed to be raised as well. He reviewed how many people were using the space but for now they were asking for approval for the preparation of plans and specifications for the greensite. He asked for questions.

Council member Larson asked if they would be able to make it one way in and one way out to help with the congestion of the dumping area. Mr. Stordahl said that had been discussed and that would not be needed if they used roll offs because people would be backing in between the dumpsters but that would be the goal. Discussion followed about what the layout would be if roll offs were added, how the roll offs were low enough so they might be able to get off the ramps, and how there currently was no storm drain in place so that would need to be added. Council member Vetter said he was in favor of paving and cleaning things up, he was not sure that the roll offs would be used because of current practices, and he would like to see this become a true recycling center where people knew they could utilize the materials from this space. He asked to have the wood chipped instead of hauling it away so residents could pick them up. Mr. Stordahl said they had talked with other cities about their process, it would require monitoring of a staff member, chipping was labor intensive, so it was considered, and they would be able to catch people that just dumped branches and items on the ground. He said if the Council wanted to continue allowing people to dump on the ground, they would consider it. Discussion followed about the costs for cleaning out the greensite compared to having a person there, a chipper would require two people to be onsite, Public Works would not be able to be down a person every day, and it was a good idea but they were not sure how to make it work.

Council member Helms asked if they should get a vacuum like Grand Forks, which could help. Mr. Stordahl said they had looked into a similar system, it would be a good service for residents, and a lot of funds were spent on spring and fall clean-up so reducing it to only one clean-up would help. He added it was something he was going to propose to the Council along with the rate increases. Council President Olstad said he had been asking Mr. Stordahl about this for some time to make things better. Council member Pokrzywinski said he had concerns about the roll off dumpsters, on weekends there was a line of vehicles waiting to dump things off in the greensite, and it would take more time to shovel things into the roll offs. He added he did see a value of having them but was not sure about the usability of them. There were no further questions.

This item will be brought back to a future meeting.

3. Request to Prepare Plans & Specifications for 17th Ave SE Sidewalk Extension – Steve Emery & Reid Huttunen

Mr. Emery stated a request was received for a sidewalk connection from 17th Avenue SE to the Bygland Road sidewalk. He explained because of the location a culvert would be needed and listed possible funding sources to cover the costs of the project. He said it was being brought forward for discussion and to get direction from the Council. Council Vice-President Riopelle asked who would keep this sidewalk

cleaned. Mr. Huttunen said since it would be located in the right-of-way and staff already cleaned the sidewalks to the middle school on this section of Bygland Road, so it would be done by staff. Council member Larson said it would be expensive but helpful for residents as well as pull pedestrians away from the busy intersection of Bygland Road and 13th Street. Council member Vetter said this was a good idea and asked if there was an easement. Discussion followed about having to check on the easement, this used to be a road, but it could have been vacated, how the property owner was in favor of the project, and the area should be chosen to have the shortest sidewalk needed. Council member Pokrzywinski commented the sidewalk should be kept short because people would leave the sidewalk to cut through a different area. Council member Helms asked if pedestrians would be cutting across the cul-de-sac. Mr. Emery said that was the idea because of the minimal traffic that utilized the cul-de-sac. Council member Helms asked why they needed a 6-inch concrete sidewalk. Mr. Emery stated sometimes the ends of sidewalks were driven on, it would not be the case in this area, so they could go with four inch for the entire sidewalk.

This item will be brought back to a future meeting.

4. 2025 Raise Application for South End Bridge Planning Study – Reid Huttunen

Mr. Huttunen reminded the Council they had applied for the RAISE grant, the City did not get awarded the grant, and had a chance to review the criteria on how to improve the application to be considered as a highly recommended project or project of merit. He said the application needed to have scored high in at least six of the categories, the application scored high in five of the categories, and all future applications could help lock the project in as a project of merit going forward in future grant cycles if not awarded this cycle. He stated the group that included the City, the City of Grand Forks, Grand Forks County, and Polk County, would like to resubmit another application once the grant process reopens. He explained they would have 90 days to apply once the process opened, the last grant request was for \$7.5 million for planning funds, he expected to apply for the same amount of funding, and asked to apply for the funding.

Mr. Huttunen told the Council SRF and their subcontractor would put the application together, they were requesting an amended contract for the scope of work, there was still \$53,000 that was unbilled from the original contract, so it would be a change in scope while using the committed funds to complete the work. He said the grant process would cost \$35,753.41 for the grant planning and writing along with an additional \$8,610 that was authorized for any additional costs that was approved by staff otherwise it would not be used. He stated those funds could be used in areas that might need additional work for the application but would still be under the total amount of the remaining funds. Council President Olstad asked if all parties had to approve the change in scope. Mr. Huttunen said yes and all of the other bodies would have acted on this by the time the Council would be meeting on November 6th. Discussion followed about how there many conversations with the other entities on moving forward and it seems to be favorable at staff level. Council member Larson asked about strategies on how to improve the areas where the application did not score high on. Mr. Huttunen said the effort was to review all eight criteria to ensure they were able to score high in all categories. There were no further questions.

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

5. 2025 Budget Update & Request for 2025 Law Enforcement Retention/Recruitment Bonuses – Reid Huttunen

Mr. Huttunen said he had some general updates for the budget, the 2025 rates had not been received for

health insurance, he was expecting to see the results during the week, and get organized to share the information with staff so a final decision could be made to either stay with the current provider or make a change to ICHRA. He said that decision would make a large impact on the 2025 budget. He added he spoke with the Law Enforcement group about the retention and recruitment programs. He said if these programs were extended in 2025, the recruitment program costs were already accounted for in the 2025 budget, but the retention bonuses were not included in the budget so the request was being made to extend the MOU.

Council President Olstad said it was something that should be looked at and considered. He added hopefully the answers would come regarding health insurance. Chief Hedlund said they did appreciate the Council considering extending the retention program because he did think it was working. He stated they were still struggling to hire and they did lose a person to emergency management which was what he background was in. There were no other questions or comments.

ADJOURN:

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCIL MEMBER VETTER, SECONDED BY COUNCIL MEMBER LARSON, TO ADJOURN THE OCTOBER 22, 2024 WORK SESSION OF THE EAST GRAND FORKS, MINNESOTA CITY COUNCIL AT 5:46 P.M.

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

Voting Nay: None.

Megan Nelson, City Clerk