

**APPROVED MINUTES
OF THE WORK SESSION
CITY OF EAST GRAND FORKS
TUESDAY, JANUARY 14, 2024 – 5:00 PM**

CALL TO ORDER:

The Work Session of the East Grand Forks City Council for Tuesday, January 14, 2025 was called to order by Council President Larson 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 Mark Olstad, Council President Brian Larson, Council Vice-President Tim Riopelle, Council members Tami Schumacher, Ben Pokrzywinski, Dale Helms, Donald Casmey, and Karen Peterson.

Staff Present: Jeff Boushee, Fire Chief; Maggie Brockling, Economic Development Director; Nancy Ellis, City Planner; Ron Galstad, City Attorney; 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.

1. Consider Metropolitan Planning Organization Lease Agreement – Nancy Ellis

Ms. Ellis explained how she was trying to maximize the use of space within city hall by leasing out office space and the additional revenue helped with building costs. She stated the Community Development and Economic Development office was a large office with open space, the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) was looking for additional office space, so in 2024 a remodeling project was started expanding the office space for the MPO, and create different office space for the Economic Development Director. She added with this change there would need to be an update to the lease agreement to account for the additional office space and the removal of the storage space that was no longer needed because of the additional space.

Ms. Ellis told the Council the rent was based on a price per square foot, the price for 2025 was listed for \$13.50, the yearly amount for 2025 would be \$13,216, the lease agreement was being proposed for two years, it would increase by a dollar per square foot for 2026, and the proposed increases would help cover the remodel costs and utilities. She added if agreement was approved by the Council it would also need to be approved by the MPO Board. She informed the Council they usually used the federal rate for rent, but that information was not available so she checked in the area, and most office spaces were being rented from \$13.00 up to \$15.00 per square foot so the rent was similar to others. She said they would be reviewing the lease agreement for the probation office space for 2026. Council member Helms asked if the wall was installed. Ms. Ellis said it had been, and they were waiting for the door. There were no other questions

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

2. Consider Approving Update to the East Grand Forks Fire Relief Association Bylaws – Andrew Robertson

Mr. Robertson told the Council they were asking to amend the bylaws and change the benefit amount from \$4500 up to \$4900. There were no questions.

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

3. Discussion on Coalition of Greater MN Cities Legislative Day at State Capitol & City Priorities – Reid Huttunen

Mr. Huttunen told the Council the date for the Legislative Day was going to be February 12th this year, he asked who would like to attend, and staff would be working on setting meetings with legislators. He reviewed the priorities that the City had last year and reminded the Council there was no bonding bill approved last year and this year was supposed to be a budget year but there could be a possibility of a bonding bill being considered. He stated how they could continue to focus on improvements to the industrial park, local government aid and formula fixes, and continued need for a south end bridge.

Mayor Olstad said legislative day was important to attend and get in front of the legislators with priorities with backing from the residents. He added how that day moved fast with all the meetings, this year would be different because of the construction on the office building that was taking place, and most of these meetings were with people that served on the committees that dealt with the priorities. He commented on how it could be hard to get away from work but if they could, to let staff know so accommodations could be made.

Council member Helms asked to keep the improvements to the Industrial Park on the priority list. Council President Larson said he agreed and asked to have a flyer put together with information about the Industrial Park. Mayor Olstad stated they also needed to keep local government aid on the list. Mr. Mykleseth said he would be going to the State Capitol at the end of January to make a bonding request for improvements for one of the water towers and could ask if bonding would be moving forward. Council President Larson asked Mayor Olstad to give an overview of local government aid. Mayor Olstad stated that not every city received local government aid, the formula used to be based on housing from the 1940s and 1970s, due to the city not having a large inventory of that housing because of the flood, the city was losing money every year, a fix has been done so the city did stop losing money, but there were still discussions on a formula fix. There were no further questions.

4. Discussion of Possible Visioning Session – Reid Huttunen

Mr. Huttunen stated he would like to propose holding the visioning session following the council meeting on February 4th. He said they would review the top goals and set priorities for 2025 which would help with legislative day and added how they have accomplished things, or items were still ongoing from 2024 so it would be good to refocus. He asked if that would work, what format they would like to use, and what topics should be covered. Mayor Olstad said that day would be better than a Saturday and this would allow them to be ready for the upcoming meetings at the State as well as for the intergovernmental retreat. Mr. Huttunen said the date was finally set for the intergovernmental retreat which was February 20th and was going to be held at the Spud Jr. He added more information would be sent out soon about it. Council member Helms said he should be able to attend that meeting this year. There were no further questions.

ADJOURN:

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCIL MEMBER HELMS, SECONDED BY COUNCIL MEMBER RIOPELLE, TO ADJOURN THE JANUARY 14, 2025 WORK SESSION OF THE EAST GRAND FORKS, MINNESOTA CITY COUNCIL AT 5:19 P.M.

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

Voting Nay: None.

Megan Nelson, City Clerk