

**APPROVED MINUTES  
OF THE CITY  
COUNCIL WORK SESSION  
CITY OF EAST GRAND FORKS  
TUESDAY, JANUARY 22, 2019 – 5:00 PM**

**CALL TO ORDER:**

*The Work Session of the East Grand Forks City Council for January 22, 2019 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 Chad Grassel, Council Members Clarence Vetter, Dale Helms, Tim Riopelle, Tim Johnson, and Marc DeMers.*

*Karla Anderson, Finance Director; Ron Galstad, City Attorney; Paul Gorte, Economic Development Director; Mike Hedlund, Police Chief; Charlotte Helgeson, Library Director; Reid Huttunen, Parks and Recreation Superintendent; David Murphy, City Administrator/Clerk-Treasurer; Megan Nelson, City Clerk; Jason Stordahl, Public Works Director, and Corey Thompson, IT Manager.*

**DETERMINATION OF A QUORUM:**

*The Council President Determined a Quorum was present.*

**1. Consider Direction on Future PEG Channel – Corey Thompson**

Mr. Thompson stated when the City started streaming meetings it had been mentioned there was a desire to start broadcasting meetings. He reminded the Council the franchise agreement allows the City a public access channel and almost everything is in place for broadcasting to start. He added he had talked with staff from Grand Forks who are currently working on updating their system but they were interested in having a regional channel and the cost to move forward would be similar. Mayor Gander asked if he was looking for direction on if the city should be on its own channel or share a channel with Grand Forks. Mr. Thompson said that was correct. Mayor Gander said if the City shared a channel, they might be better viewership but having a separate channel would allow the City to have its own identity. Discussion followed about pros and cons to each option, if meeting schedules needed to change to make sure meetings were not taking place at the same time, and how IT would provide a feed to Grand Forks for broadcasting meetings.

Council member DeMers said when the City was first getting started with streaming meetings we had reached out to Grand Forks for guidance. He continued saying how staff has done very well and now Grand Forks is asking for help. He stated the City just went through a branding process; they might have to do another if there is a combined channel, and possibly set up a board or committee to decide how the channel will function. Council member DeMers suggested the City have its own channel, to use the new brand, and have a connection to the city, county, and schools. He added this would allow more options for the City. Council President Olstad asked if there were any other questions.

Council member Riopelle stated the City should have its own channel, meetings can be rebroadcasted, and more than likely Grand Forks would get first choice on the schedule if it were a shared channel. Council member Johnson asked if this channel could be used for snow emergency announcements or other kinds of announcements. Mr. Thompson said it could be. Council President Olstad said the City could build on its brand with its own channel, the channel can showcase the community, and that would be the best way to go. Council Vice-President Grassel commented a lot could happen if this was expanded to include all three schools and how other smaller cities have their own channels with lots of local information. Council member DeMers added how games could possibly be broadcast and over time more organizations might want more time. He commented how expensive things were when the City first started looking into this, but costs are much less now. Mr. Murphy said staff has direction have consensus from the Council and will move forward from there.

## **2. Introduction to New Polk County Sheriff – Sheriff Jim Tadman**

Sheriff Tadman introduced himself to the Council so they were able to put a face with the name. He said he is looking forward to continue working with Chief Hedlund. Mayor Gander thanked Sheriff Tadman for coming to the meeting, commented how he has met with the Sheriff several times, how he had gone door to door, and that was appreciated. He added that when he rang the bell for the Salvation Army in December he was asked to remind groups that if there are any efforts for a search or something where there is a large group is needed to reach out to the Salvation Army to help feed and take care of the volunteers. Sheriff Tadman said there is also a Salvation Army group based out of the Crookston area who recently received a donation from the Fertile area for \$45,000.

Council President Olstad asked if there were any questions for Sheriff Tadman. Council member DeMers asked about the transferring from East Grand Forks to the jail in Crookston, how transferring inmates can increase costs for the city, and if there is something that could be done to help reduce those costs. Sheriff Tadman explained there are officers who are transport officers and make a trip from East Grand Forks and Grand Forks on a regular basis. Council member DeMers asked if there are GPS on the vehicles. Sheriff Tadman said there was. Council member DeMers asked if they could receive a report to see how often deputies are in the city. Sheriff Tadman said he could look into that. Chief Hedlund stated that he had worked with Sheriff Tadman the entire time he has spent as chief; they have worked together on many things, and have a good working relationship. With no other questions or comments, Sheriff Tadman thanked the Council for their time.

## **3. Request for Direction on Infill Building – Paul Gorte**

Mr. Gorte stated comments have been made to sell the Infill Building. He said the negotiations have started for the common area agreement in the Infill building; he was looking for direction from Council on how they would like to move forward with this building, and they will need to consider how the tenants will be effected. Council President Olstad said this has been discussed in the past and he doesn't think the City should be a landlord. He commented how the maintenance issues need to be resolved and they could check with the tenants even though the first right of refusal had been removed from their lease contracts. He continued saying an appraisal would need to be ordered, the idea to sell this building came up when the mall was sold, and this building should be owned by the private sector that can reap the benefits from being located in this area.

Council Vice-President Grassel said he was in favor of selling the building, the City has spent a lot on maintenance including what has been spent on the elevator, and they need to get the common area

agreement done. Council member DeMers stated he did not want to get rid of the building but he did not want the City to own the building anymore either. Discussion followed about the current commercial rate for leasing is \$10 per square foot, the appraisal would help determine the sales rate, and how the Council might want to consider condoing the building with the current tenants. Mayor Gander said he was in agreement to sell the building, they could start thinking what the funds from the sale could be used for, how there are options such as lengthening the leases with the current tenants that would be binding to the next owner, and this process needs to be done in an orderly way. Council member Riopelle said he was glad the Mayor agrees the City should not be in the real estate business and divest itself of city owned property. Mayor Gander said all except for parking lots. Discussion followed about the sale of this property will be done based on the policy set by the City when it comes to selling city properties. Council President Olstad said even if the building is condoed the common area agreement needs to be completed. More discussion followed about how staff is working on getting the common area agreement done.

This item will be brought back to a future Work Session.

#### **4. Request to Hire Parks & Recreation Specialist – Reid Huttunen**

Mr. Huttunen reminded the Council that included in the 2019 budget was the salary for the Parks and Recreation Specialist position, the job description had been reviewed and pointed, it was placed on a Grade 10, and the starting wage at that grade is \$19.31 per hour. He stated the job description had been included in the packet for review and that it was going to go before the Civil Service for consideration on Friday. He explained after a discussion it was decided to remove the associate degree from the description because there is no associate degree available for Parks and Recreation in the region so they are looking two years of experience in the Park and Recreation or in the physical education field. He said he was requesting to start the hiring process to fill this position.

Council member DeMers asked if the change in experience would change the pointing. Mr. Huttunen said it would not because that was under preferred and not a requirement. Council member DeMers asked about the CDL requirement and if this person would be a bus driver. Mr. Huttunen said only in emergencies when no other bus drivers are available and he added this in based on his previous experience. Discussion followed about how this was pointed and placed on a Grade 10, how \$61,500 had been budgeted for this position, that there may be a petition to have this position included in the union, and how the amount budgeted included the salary and benefits. Council member Helms asked if this position was also supposed to cover the window in the office. Mr. Huttunen said it was this position that would be working in the office and based on the job description have this person be available to move snow or go drive a bus if needed. Council Vice-President Grassel asked if this position would help with plot sales. Mr. Huttunen said it would give them the ability to do so.

Council member Vetter stated during the budget process this position presented as an administrative position but many things had been added to the job description. He said he didn't think they would get the kind of applicants who are detail oriented based on this job description and it seems this job description was done with someone in mind for this position which he does not like. He added it seems like there is not enough to do with the administrative position so when they are not busy they have able to stay busy with other things. He gave some background, how it was determined this position was not full time position, and this position could be shared by the Public Works assistant, and have her stationed in the Park Department. He said this never happened so he won't be voting for job description. Mr. Huttunen stated he could assure the Council this job description was not written for a specific person, the functions of this position were reviewed by the Parks and Recreation Commission, and the functions of this position

have not changed since it was discussed last year. He said this was an office support position that would have the ability to help in emergencies. Council member Vetter said this would limit the number of applicants for this position due to what is included in the job description.

Mayor Gander said the Council raised some of the participation fees to help offset the cost for this position so residents can be served better. He added he was convinced this is going to happen but the Council will also be holding Parks accountable to make sure this is what happens. Council member Vetter told the Council he is starting to kick back on fees. Council member DeMers said it was his understanding the fees were too low to begin so this was supposed to help to reset the subsidy so this fee adjustment was overdue and he doesn't consider this an offset. Discussion followed about how this position would be under both the superintendent and recreation coordinator position depending on activities, this position may direct work to part time seasonal positions, and there would only be minor supervising that this position would be doing.

Mayor Gander stated Mr. Huttunen is looking for direction on this job description and how sometimes there are things are not completed as timely as staff would like them completed. He said he understood asking for a CDL and asked if they really wanted this person to be able to run the machines for snow removal and mowing especially when they won't be doing it very often. Mr. Huttunen said he is open to the direction from the Council on what they would like to see. He explained what had happened during the windstorm last summer and how this position could help out when they is no one else is available. He continued saying that if the Council would like those items taken out and have it covered by other duties as assigned he was good with that because this was first an office administrative position. Discussion followed about how there were 12 parks, including trails there was about 20 miles of trails and sidewalks cleared by parks employees, and in the wintertime there is one full time and one seasonal person that handles the snow removal on the sidewalks and trails.

Council member DeMers said the job description should include what it is wanted in the position, this might push someone away, but he thinks those items should be included in the description so the person hired knows what is expected of them. Council member Helms said this position seems they need another full time person working out in the community instead of doing office work and he likes the job description because if it is listed the person hired will know what to expect. He added that other related duties may cover most of this but the license requirement should be included so they have that if needed. Council Vice-President Grassel said they seem to continue to cut Park and Rec employees and programs. He stated how when they talk about the City the items that usually come up first are the parks, facilities, and other amenities but they don't want to support them. He commented how Mr. Tweten would talk about how important parks are and how they are trying to get more people involved with the parks and recreation. He added this position will take a person who has drive and who wants to make a difference.

Council member Vetter said he agreed with Council Vice-President Grassel but the person who writes grants and works on programming has a different set of skills compared to someone who is moving snow and mowing grass. He added how a grant writer and a programmer is what the Parks Department needs and they need to keep that separate from the park maintenance position. He added again how they should look at combining city positions and again how they won't find someone with the expertise to accomplish both sets of skills. Mr. Huttunen said he agreed with Council member Vetter, how there might be too much focus being put on the other duties in the description, and how there would be very few times this position would be called out to do some of these activities. Council member Vetter said since it is included in the description a person may not apply because of the other duties listed.

Council member DeMers said he would rather not have someone in the office and have someone out in the field. Mayor Gander said the wording could be changed and state it would be done in emergencies. Council member Johnson said it was covered under essential functions under the line to perform other related duties to ensure the success of the Parks and Recreation Department. Mayor Gander said that did not give a good idea of what might be required. Council President Olstad stated that whoever is hired will be a team player, that is what is wanted for this department, and changing the description to include different language will be best. Ms. Anderson said staff are team players, we all help when needed, she had shoveled before, and when it is an emergency staff steps up to get it done. Ms. Helgeson said library staff do many things outside of a normal job description because at the library they all shovel, garden, clean bathrooms, or whatever else is needed even though it is not included on the job description. She added they also ask during interviews if they are able to do things such as shovel.

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

#### **5. Request to Rent Blue Line Arena for AC Expos Gun Show – Reid Huttunen**

Mr. Huttunen said last summer a gun show was hosted at the Blue Line Arena. He explained the event went well, there were no issues, and the vendors and attendees seemed happy with how the event went. He stated they are requesting to rent the Blue Line Arena the first weekend in June with the same terms as the previous year that included a \$300 deposit and \$500 a day rent. There were no questions.

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

#### **6. Discussion on ATV Ordinance – Megan Nelson**

Ms. Nelson stated nothing needed to be decided at this time but that staff is looking for direction from the Council. She explained it is becoming more common that people are driving or wanting to drive ATVs or side by sides around town and how some of these machines are considered street legal because of the extra items they have on them. She stated the current city ordinance only allows for ATVs that are used for commercial purposes, they have to apply each year, and there is only one business that licenses ATVs. She stated there have been questions that have come up regarding the use of these vehicles and how the Council will need to decide if they want to make any changes. She said if changes are made, they will need to determine to what extent. She explained how Thief River Falls allows ATVs on the right side of the roadway, Crookston is much more restrictive on use, and the Grand Forks ordinance that does allow for UTVs to be driven around the city. She added that cities can be more restrictive so even if these vehicles are street legal if the city prohibits them they are not allowed on city streets.

Ms. Nelson said the other part of this item is trying to keep ATVs from being used in the greenway. She explained the greenway rules were adopted on March 15, 2005 that makes this area a non-motorized area. She said some areas should be allowed to be so such as by the boat landings but to add signage not allowing motorized traffic past a certain point. She also asked to have these rules put in ordinance form, which then would have the penalties already in place when people are found driving in the greenway. She asked for direction from the Council, how she could call in some people to be a part of this discussion because they are interested in how this progresses, and how this can be brought back to a work session for further discussion.

Chief Hedlund said this is something that has come up annually, he has looked at different ordinances and State Statutes, and nothing is clear-cut. He said some of the ordinances talk about engine size, not all

officers will know the difference, personal he does not have an issue with it, but there should be some restrictions. Council member DeMers said he had been contacted by some residents who were questioning things. He stated how there are many different places to find information, depending on where they look or who they talk to they can get a different answer, and the Council's goal should be to come up with something that is easy to enforce for the police department. He said he doesn't think they should open up the greenway to motorized vehicles. He continued saying how some of these vehicles are street legal and if the Council can come up with a reasonable criteria allowing the vehicles that are street legal he wouldn't have a problem with allowing those on the streets. He added he would have an issue allowing the vehicles that didn't have the same features because they are less safe. He stated they could consider some type of register with the City and require a sticker so by looking at the vehicle the police officers would know if it had been approved to be on the roads. He asked to look into setting a limit for noise.

Council member Helms said he thought the side by sides that are street legal get a plate from the Department of Motor Vehicles. He commented the only thing the City would need to do is make sure they abide by the same rules they do in the car. He added he wouldn't have a problem with these being on the streets but just the side by sides, nothing else, and that these shouldn't be allowed on the greenway. Mayor Gander said the distinction between what is legal and not legal needs to be very clear. He added that education is very important part of this as well, so people know what is allowed and what is not. Council member Johnson said he should get a test of the people in his ward and the residents of the City need to be told this is happening so they can give input on what they would like to see. Council President Olstad asked if they should hold a public hearing. Council member Johnson said yes. Mayor Gander said it is important to hear from the people that have these.

Mr. Galstad said the easiest thing for enforcement is not to allow them at all. He stated it was up to the Council on how they would like to move forward. He continued saying how some of these vehicles may be street legal but they are not allowed on the street unless an ordinance allows them. He stated Thief River Falls allows them but they also have Arctic Cat located in the city. He said the confusion comes in when it comes to what is being driven, there are not definitive answers, and the League of Minnesota Cities provides pictures of everything. He added if they were going to allow some of this to follow what Crookston has been doing and keep it more restrictive. Ms. Nelson said all she was asking about was ATVs, there was a separate ordinance for snowmobiles, and a separate ordinance for special use vehicles. She said she could bring forward the snowmobile and special use vehicle for discussion at the next work session so all of these can be reviewed at the same time. She added that Ordinance 75 lists the streets that the commercial ATVs can use and suggested this ordinance be repealed because most of the streets listed were located in what is now the greenway. Mr. Galstad commented that adding the greenway rules as city ordinance is a good idea so it is on the books rather than just having a policy.

Council President Olstad said it would be a good idea to bring all of these items back for review. Council member DeMers asked if it was possible to get insurance on a golf cart. Council member Johnson said it was. Discussion followed about if insurance companies would cover these items for street liability or a collision. Mr. Galstad said this could create a difficult enforcement issues. Council member DeMers said they could make insurance companies decide, if a \$300,000 insurance policy is required, the insurance companies may not cover this. Council President Olstad asked staff to reach out to the city's insurance agent about some of these questions.

This item will be brought back to a future work session.

**ADJOURN:**

**A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCIL MEMBER RIOPELLE, SECONDED BY COUNCIL MEMBER VETTER, TO ADJOURN THE JANUARY 22, 2019 COUNCIL WORK SESSION OF THE EAST GRAND FORKS, MINNESOTA CITY COUNCIL AT 6:29 P.M.**

*Voting Aye: Riopelle, Johnson, Olstad, Grassel, DeMers, Vetter, and Helms.*

*Voting Nay: None.*

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David Murphy, City Administrator/Clerk-Treasurer