

**APPROVED MINUTES
OF THE WORK SESSION
CITY OF EAST GRAND FORKS
TUESDAY, JANUARY 24, 2023 – 5:00 PM**

CALL TO ORDER:

The Work Session of the East Grand Forks City Council for Tuesday, January 24, 2023 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: Council Vice-President Tim Riopelle, Council Members Clarence Vetter, Dale Helms, 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; Megan Nelson, City Clerk; and Jason Stordahl, Public Works Director.

DETERMINATION OF A QUORUM:

The Council Vice-President Determined a Quorum was present.

Council Vice-President Riopelle explained that Mayor Gander, Council President Olstad, Council members Larson and Pokrzywinski, along with Mr. Murphy and Mr. Huttunen were not present because they were in St. Paul for Legislative Day. He stated they were going to be meeting with legislators about city issues.

1. Review of Quote Results for 2023 City Project No. 3 ADA Improvements – Steve Emery

Mr. Emery informed the Council quotes were received for the ADA improvement project and reminded them proposal one was for sidewalk work on 3rd Street by the Spud Jr and proposal two was for a new sidewalk along Sherlock Parkway. He stated he had sent the information to four contractors, received four quotes back, and the apparent lowest bidder was Tony Anderson Construction on both proposals. He added they had worked with Tony Anderson Construction before, the funding for the project would be from the State Aid Maintenance fund and the Sunshine Terrace fund, and recommended awarding the project to Tony Anderson Construction. He asked for questions and there were none.

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

2. Consider Request to Allow Chickens in City Limits – Clarence Vetter

Council member Vetter said they had all received a request from a citizen to allow chickens, she was not able to attend the meeting, and asked if there was any interest to move this on. He stated he was not totally against it if they set limits on the number allowed, not allowing roosters, and asked again if there was any interest to move it forward. Council Vice-President Riopelle said he was personally against it because of an experience of a neighbor having a chicken coop across the street from him which caused a ruckus in

the neighborhood. Ms. Ellis told the Council it would require a change to the ordinances because the ordinance only currently allowed limited livestock raising in an urban expansion reserve zoning district and they would need a minimum of two acres. She said it usually was property that was on the edge of city limits that was annexed in but not developed. Mr. Galstad stated they would also need to modify other parts of the ordinances because any type of fowl was not allowed.

Council member Peterson asked who would be responsible for monitoring this if it were to move forward. Council member Vetter said he thought it be monitored on a complaint basis. Council member Peterson asked if that included safety because there could be concerns with organisms that they harbor and there could be foodborne pathogens that chickens carry which can make both people and pets sick. Council member Vetter asked if something could be included in the ordinance to address and protect people from those issues. Discussion followed about if there was a lab that could be used for testing or if there was a vet that could conduct the testing, how there wasn't currently an employee at the city or county level that could monitor the situation, and how there were cities that currently allowed chickens but no one had reviewed those ordinances to see what was included.

Council member Helms said he was against this request, how the council needed to stand their ground on some issues, and this was one of those issues because of what the next request might be. He suggested keeping the ordinance as it was. Council Vice-President Riopelle asked if there were any other questions, there were none, and he commented they would discuss it at a later time.

3. Request to Declare Equipment as Surplus – Jeff Boushee

Chief Boushee told the Council they had four respirators they had received from a grant back in 2008, they were no longer used, the manufacturer no longer supported them, and the air cylinders had expired. He explained they were going to surplus the equipment, he asked a vendor if there was a market for them, found out the Alvarado Fire Department was interested, and at the most the equipment was worth \$200. He stated he was going to bring the request forward to donate these items to the Alvarado Fire Department and he received a \$1000 offer from the Alvarado Fire Department for the equipment. He said based on the current value he recommended donating these items to Alvarado. Council member Helms said he liked the recommendation. Council Vice-President commented he did not see a problem with that recommendation.

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

4. Update on Energy Costs at City Hall – Nancy Ellis

Ms. Ellis reminded the Council before COVID they had purchased new rooftop units partly to help with energy efficiency at city hall. She explained they were not seeing the efficiencies, many different things were tried, they reviewed building plans because the building did not heat or perform the way it was originally planned because they have never been able to use the floor heat in the rotunda. She stated they recalibrated the system but did not see a difference so they reviewed the occupied and unoccupied times of the building, they made some changes, and those changes had been effective by reducing usage from 25% up to 50% depending upon the outside temperature. She added they would be reviewing usage in the summer months as well and any way they can see a reduction in usage was a good thing. She asked for questions.

Council member Helms commented about how the floor heat had not worked since it was installed and asked why something was not done when it was covered under warranty. Ms. Ellis said she was told the building settled and a number of the lines cracked or broke, they were not able to televise the lines because of the cracked lines, and the terrazzo floor would have to be removed in order to repair the lines which Mayor Stauss was not in favor of at the time and she was not either. She explained they would be testing the system, determine if any lines were working, and if some lines could be used they would cut off the broken lines. She added they would be working on checking the pipes sometime in the spring. Council member Helms asked if anyone went back after the company that installed the system. Ms. Ellis said she did not know, city hall was built on an old road bed so there was a lot of settling which caused problems with the masonry work. She added she was hired full time in 2013 so she did not know what they did. Council Vice-President Riopelle said to let them know what happens.

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

5. Request to Purchase Police SUV – Michael Hedlund

Chief Hedlund said the plan was to purchase one 2023 Police SUV, the bid came in \$10,000 higher than what was budgeted for, and the overall total cost was approximately \$7,000 more than what was budgeted. He explained they would remove the 150 pickup from the rotation, convert the pickup for use by the school resource officer, and it would still be available if needed by the department. He informed the Council the additional funds needed to cover the costs could be provided by the auction proceeds which were supposed to be supplemental to their regular budget.

Council Vice-President asked when the bid was received. Chief Hedlund said he had not received the quote for the vehicle until December after the budget had been finalized. Council Vice-President Riopelle said the cost of vehicles had been going down so maybe they should rebid it. Chief Hedlund said he could check, reminded the Council how difficult it was to get the vehicles, and this was one of the last vehicles they had available.

Council member Helms asked about the Dodge Charger. Chief Hedlund stated it was a tax forfeited vehicle that was seized by the Pine to Prairie Drug Task Force and it was owned by the drug task force. Discussion followed about the mileage of the vehicle, how the utility of the vehicle was limited, and for long term use the pickup would serve their needs better. Council member Helms said he thought it made a difference when the kids would see the Charger compared to the pickup in his opinion and asked if the resource officer needed a pickup for that job. Chief Hedlund said not necessarily but a pickup was needed as a part of the fleet.

OTHER:

Council member Helms told the Council that he would be leaving to Arizona soon, but he would be participating in the meetings while he was out of state.

ADJOURN:

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCIL MEMBER HELMS, SECONDED BY COUNCIL MEMBER VETTER, TO ADJOURN THE JANUARY 24, 2023 WORK SESSION OF THE EAST GRAND FORKS, MINNESOTA CITY COUNCIL AT 5:20 P.M.

Voting Aye: Helms, Peterson, Vetter, and Riopelle.

Voting Nay: None.

Absent: Olstad, Larson, and Pokrzywinski.

David Murphy, City Administrator/Clerk-Treasurer