

**PROCEEDINGS OF THE
FINANCE COMMITTEE OF THE
GRAND FORKS/EAST GRAND FORKS
METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION
Friday, February 5th, 2010 – 12:00 Noon
Grand Forks City Hall Planning Conference Room**

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman, Gary Malm called the February 5th, 2010 Finance Committee meeting to order at 12:00 Noon.

CALL OF ROLL

On a Call of Roll the following members were present: Gary Malm, Warren Strandell, and Dick Grassel.

Staff present were: Earl Haugen, GF/EGF MPO Executive Director and Peggy McNelis, GF/EGF MPO Executive Assistant.

DETERMINATION OF A QUORUM

Malm declared a quorum was present.

APPROVAL OF THE SEPTEMBER 25TH, 2010, MINUTES OF THE MPO FINANCE COMMITTEE

A MOTION WAS MADE BY STRANDELL, SECONDED BY GRASSEL, TO APPROVE THE SEPTEMBER 25TH, 2010, MINUTES OF THE MPO FINANCE COMMITTEE, AS SUBMITTED.

Voting Aye: Malm, Grassel, and Strandell.

Voting Nay: None.

MATTER OF RECLASSIFICATION OF EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT TO OFFICE MANAGER

Haugen reported that the reason for the reclassification request is due to the shifting of responsibilities from the City of Grand Forks back to the MPO. He explained that for many years the Grand Forks City Human Resource Department personnel managed the MPO's benefit packages, however, when the city shifted over to NDPERS they were no longer able to include the MPO on their plan, therefore the pension, as well as the other benefits were shifted back to the MPO to manage on their own, thus creating additional responsibilities for the MPO Executive Assistant.

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Haugen stated, then, that because the Executive Assistant is now doing different work than what was included in her present job description, we worked with the Grand Forks Human Resource Department to determine how to best to acknowledge these additional duties, with the result being to create an Office Manager job title, and ultimately an Office Manager job description.

Haugen distributed copies of a memorandum from the Grand Forks City Human Resource Department indicating that they did work with the MPO, and did determine that they do not have a position that is all inclusive of the duties the Executive Assistant is currently performing, so they created a new Office Manager Position and job description, and then reviewed other positions in order to come up with a salary range to fit the new job description.

Haugen commented that, today, we are asking the Finance Committee to approve forwarding a recommendation to the MPO Executive Policy Board that they approve the reclassification of the Executive Assistant to Office Manager, the new Office Manager job description, a pay grade increase from 32 to 35, as described in the memorandum from the Grand Forks Human Resource Department, and a pay increase to be retroactive to January 1, 2010. He added that the result of the increase would be an additional \$2,300.00, which is easily absorbed in the 2010 budget.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY STRANDELL, SECONDED BY GRASSEL, TO APPROVE FORWARDING A RECOMMENDATION TO THE MPO EXECUTIVE POLICY BOARD THE THEY APPROVE THE RECLASSIFICATION OF THE EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT TO OFFICE MANAGER, THE AMENDED JOB DESCRIPTION, AND THE CORRESPONDING STEP INCREASE RETROACTIVE TO JANUARY 1, 2010.

Voting Aye: Malm, Grassel, and Strandell.

Voting Nay: None.

OTHER BUSINESS

1. **Final 2009 Budget Report**

Haugen distributed copies of the final 2009 budget report. He referred to the report, and reminded everyone that at the last MPO Executive Policy Board meeting we talked about end of the year adjustments. He said that we actually had the auditors in earlier this week, and there is one more adjustment they want us to do. He referred to the final report, and pointed out that by adding this adjustment it has once again put us in the negative, just under \$11,000. He explained that the adjustment they want us to do is the result of our having contracts with two firms that bridge 2009 into 2010, and as part of our payment reimbursement to those consultants we retain 10% of each of their invoices so that there is an incentive for them to do a good job at the end in order for them to receive the full 10% withheld. He stated that in prior years the auditors have never made this an issue, but they have this year, so even though we haven't paid these retainages, because the contract obligation occurred in 2009 they want us to include them in our December 2009 billing.

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Haugen reported that he has asked the NDDOT how they want us to deal with this since the payments haven't actually occurred, and there is always the very slim chance that they may not occur at all should the project not be finished satisfactorily, so do they just want us to show it as a paper loss at this time, or do they want us to do a budget adjustment to cover the negative numbers shown. He stated that he just wanted to keep the committee informed that there is a possibility that an additional budget adjustment could be needed if the NDDOT feels one is necessary. He added that, ultimately, it was a clean audit, and we should have no issues with it.

2. Bacon Road Closure Study

Grassel asked if any public hearings on the Bacon Road Closure Study had been held yet. Haugen responded that they haven't. He stated that the input meetings are scheduled to occur on February 23rd. He added that he has received a lot of calls on it.

Haugen reported that he has initiated talks with the NDDOT about the fact that the Mill is talking about bringing in 110 car units in, and Gateway Drive already has problems handling the 25 to 30 car units they currently bring in, so if they increase them to 110 car units, there will be even more problems, so he has the NDDOT's Rail Division looking at how we can handle this issue should it occur. He stated that the short-term solution might be to close Bacon Road, but a longer-term solution might be needed as well.

Grassel commented that at times there is quite a mess there on Gateway even with a few cars, so if they increase that he could see some real issues. Malm suggested that they should look at putting in some more tracks, they have the room to do it. Haugen agreed that, while they may not have a lot of room up in the Mill area itself, they do in the neighborhood areas.

3. Stimulus Money In Minnesota

Grassel stated that he has heard that there might be some stimulus monies available that they could use for the quiet zone, to maybe do that other crossing. Haugen responded that it doesn't look too good. He explained that the Minnesota ATP meet yesterday, and the rail division submitted what they thought were the next rail crossings for consideration of funding, and that crossing didn't show up on their list of about twelve crossings, so you would have to lobby really hard to get it moved up in their minds. He stated that he and Nancy Ellis discussed this issue on the way back from the meeting, and they wondered if it might be a possibility that the reason this crossing was not included might be a tactic of the rail division to try to get East Grand Forks to reconsider closing Central Avenue, as that is everyone's preferred option, so he doesn't know if it is a negotiating ploy, or what it is, but the table they submitted did not include that crossing. He added, however, that it is an eligible project; as is 23rd Street, which has actually been submitted; and as is the Mallory Bridge project, which will be submitted as well.

Grassel asked what the Mallory Bridge project entailed. Strandell responded that it involves an overlay. Haugen added that it involves some fairly simple things, and won't even cost a \$1,000,000 to do. Malm commented that it is amazing how people talk today, that it won't even cost a \$1,000,000, when a \$1,000,000 used to be a lot of money. Haugen pointed out that a

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traffic light costs over \$500,000 now. Grassel added that it wasn't that long about that on a bridge it was a \$1,000,000 a lane, now we are talking more like \$10,000,000 a lane.

Haugen reported that the MPO Executive Policy Board will be looking at approving a T.I.P. amendment for the Sorlie Bridge Replacement project to add an additional \$3.1 million dollars just to start trying to figure out what to do with it, and then possibly another \$3.1 million dollars or more just to come to some kind of conclusion on what to do with it. Grassel asked why the high cost. Haugen responded that they are worried about environmental issues, historical issues, how it will tie into the flood protection system, local demands for enhancements, and finally the fact that there are two states and two federal regions involved so there will be a huge coordination effort required as well. He stated that ultimately they feel it will end up being over \$6,000,000 before they even decide if there will be a total replacement or a major rehab.

Grassel commented that when he went to St. Paul a number of years ago to discuss the possibility of them allowing them to repair the northern side of the bridge, they argued over the historical issues concerning the bridge, and they wouldn't let them do anything at that time, therefore he doesn't feel that it will ever be replaced. Strandell added there is also the concern with elevation, because if you raise it up you will have all kinds of problems. Malm suggested that they may have to consider going with what was originally there, a floating bridge, which they just let loose in the winter to float up on one side of the river.

4. Thompson Bridge Progress

Strandell reported that there has been a website created on which you can see the progress on the Thompson Bridge construction project. He stated that there is a link to it on the Polk County Website.

5. MPO Executive Policy Board Meeting Date

Haugen reported that the next MPO Executive Policy Board meeting has been rescheduled for Friday, February 19th instead of Wednesday, February 17th.

ADJOURNMENT

A MOTION WAS MADE BY GRASSEL, SECONDED BY STRANDELL, TO ADJOURN THE FEBRUARY 5TH, 2010, MEETING OF THE MPO FINANCE COMMITTEE AT 12:26 P.M.

Voting Aye: Malm, Grassel, and Strandell.

Voting Nay: None.

Respectfully submitted by,

Peggy McNelis, Executive Assistant