

The Committee of the Whole met on Monday, March 9, 2026, at 5:30 p.m. President Sande called the meeting to order. Present at roll call were Berg, Weigel, Osowski, Lunski, Fridolfs, & Sande; absent: Vein

## **DISCUSSION ITEMS**

### **City Engineer Appointment**

City staff presented to committee members the recommendation to approve the agreement for employment at will for Christian Danielson for the City Engineer position that was attached to the staff report and is subject to final review and approval of the City Attorney. The City of Grand Forks (City) City Engineer is responsible for the oversight and management of city-owned infrastructure within public right-of-way, including streets, traffic systems, stormwater systems, utility coordination, and electrical operations. Following the announced retirement of the current director, the City initiated a comprehensive recruitment process for the City Engineer position. The position was advertised locally, regionally, and nationally across multiple platforms to attract a highly qualified and diverse pool of candidates. A total of four (4) applicants were received. Utilizing a structured screening matrix that evaluated candidates based on education, experience, and overall qualifications, the applicant pool was narrowed to three candidates. Preliminary interviews were held via Microsoft Teams on March 27, 2026. On April 13th, two finalists advanced to participate in a panel interview and presentation. Candidates were asked to address the following topic as part of the presentation:

“As City Engineer, you are responsible for significant infrastructure capital improvement planning and budgeting. Based upon all the wants, needs, and budget constraints, what process will you use to come to a reasonable and responsible outcome on behalf of the citizens of Grand Forks” Both finalists attended the Committee of the Whole meeting that evening, where they introduced themselves to the department head and members of the City Council. The process was facilitated by the Assistant HR Director. The panel had a great discussion and was fortunate to have a strong candidate for this critical leadership position. The top candidate, Christian Danielson, is currently an Assistant City Engineer for the City of Grand Forks. Mr. Danielson has demonstrated effective leadership and management capabilities, strong technical expertise, and sound strategic thinking and decision-making skills. Mayor Bochenski and city administration recommend filling the City Engineer position as a contracted department head position. The position was offered to Christian Danielson as a contracted position, and he has verbally accepted.

Motion by Osowski, second by Berg, to move the recommendation to City Council with a recommendation to approve. Motion passed unanimously.

### **Review 2027 CDBG Process, Budget, and Draft Schedule**

City staff presented to committee members the recommendation to authorize staff to proceed with the 2027 CDBG allocation process as described below, including any necessary budget transfers. The allocation of federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding is typically handled through a competitive application process. As the city has made efforts to swiftly deploy federal funds, HUD staff have recommended that the City begin its allocation process earlier to allow more time for project planning. The 2027 CDBG funding is available for brick-and-mortar projects.

Motion by Berg, second by Weigel, to move the recommendation to City Council with a recommendation to approve. Motion passed unanimously.

### **Bid Award for Project No. 8796 - Shared Use Path on Columbia Rd (Knight Dr - 17th Ave S.)**

City staff presented to committee members the recommendation to award the contract to the low bidder, Tony Anderson Construction, Inc., in the amount of \$79,254.00 for Project NO. 8796 – Shared Use Path on South Columbia Road (Knight Drive to 17<sup>th</sup> Avenue South). Bids for this project were received on April 23, 2026. Four (4) bids were received, and all bids were opened. The low bid of \$79,254.00 was submitted by Tony Anderson Construction, Inc. and was approximately 21% under the Engineer’s Estimate of \$100,230.50. This project is proposed to be 100% City funded by Street/Infrastructure Fund 4815, where \$100,000 has been budgeted for bike path development. This project consists of installing a 10-foot-wide shared-use path that is approximately 400 feet

long, where there is an existing sidewalk on South Columbia Road. There is an existing 10-foot-wide shared-use path at the southern limit that this project will tie into. This project is consistent with the 2050 Bike/Ped Plan. This project was considered at a previous Council meeting on April 6, 2026, where City Council approved plans and specifications and directed the engineering department to advertise for construction bids.

Motion by Osowski, second by Berg, to move the recommendation to City Council with a recommendation to approve. Motion passed unanimously.

**Bid Award for Project No. 9064 - Paving 27th Ave N.  
(N Washington - N 36th St)**

City staff presented to committee members the recommendation to award the contract to the low bidder, Strata Corporation, in the amount of \$2,628,236.64, and approve any necessary budget amendments for City Project No 9064, District No. 800 – Paving 27<sup>th</sup> Ave N (N 36<sup>th</sup> St to N Washington St). Bids for this project were received on April 23, 2026. Five bids were opened for the project. The low bid was submitted by Strat Corporation in the amount of \$2,628,236.64, which is approximately 23% under the Engineer’s Estimate of \$3,410,182.00. The work of this project consists of installing paving and street lights on 27<sup>th</sup> Ave N from N 36<sup>th</sup> Street to N Washington Street. The road currently exists as a rural gravel section with ditches. The proposed section will be 10” doweled pavement with curb and gutter. Swales are proposed for the project to facilitate drainage in the area. This project is part of the continued development of the Highway 81 area. It is expected to be phase 1 of 2. Phase 2 will install pavement from N 39<sup>th</sup> St to N 36<sup>th</sup> St and is expected to be constructed in 2027 or 2028.

Motion by Weigel, second by Berg, to move the recommendation to City Council with a recommendation to approve. Motion passed unanimously.

**Bid Award for Project Nos. 9079 (District No. 625) - Sanitary Sewer; 9080 (District No. 368) –  
Watermain; 9081 (District No. 626) - Storm Sewer; and 9082 (District No. 627) Stormwater Pond for  
Birkholz 8th Addition**

City staff presented to committee members the recommendation to award the contract to R.J. Zavoral and Sons, Inc., in the amount of \$1,668,140.45 for City Project Nos. 9079 (District No. 625) – Sanitary Sewer, 9080 (District No. 368) – Watermain, 9081 (District No. 626) – Storm Sewer, and 9082 (District No. 627) – Stormwater Pond for Birkholz 8<sup>th</sup> Addition, contingent upon receiving Developer’s up-front financing. Bids were received on April 23, 2026, for projects 9079-9082. Four (4) bids were received, and all were opened. The low bid was submitted by R.J. Zavoral and Sons, Inc., in the amount of \$1,668,140.45, which is 13.6% under the Engineer’s Estimate. City projects 9079-9082 consist of constructing sanitary sewer, watermain, storm sewer, and a stormwater pond to serve properties in the Birkholz 8<sup>th</sup> Addition development. The primary benefiting area consists of approximately 28 acres of land bounded by 17<sup>th</sup> Ave S on the north and S 42<sup>nd</sup> St on the west. These public improvements were initiated at the request of the property developer, Oxford Seventeen, LLC. The Developer is proposing that this public infrastructure be designed and constructed through special assessment, to be accepted by the City for operation and maintenance. Design and construction services associated with these projects are being accomplished under task order agreement with CPS, Ltd.

All costs for this project will be special assessed to the benefiting properties except for a City cost share associated with the construction of the stormwater pond. Per the current City CIP Cost Sharing Policy, the City cost share for stormwater ponds is calculated from the acres of the drainage basin that the pond serves. Based on a drainage basin of slightly more than 20 acres, the City's cost share would be 10%. This equates to a cost share of approximately \$60k, which will be paid from Fund 5400 (Stormwater Fund). According to City of Grand Forks Code §18-0908(1)(B), before the contract for any City-constructed facility in any new subdivision will be awarded, the developer must provide the City with cash or a negotiable security in the amount of 50% of the costs expected to be special assessed to their properties. This financing arrangement reduces the financial risk to the City for fronting project costs. City staff has been working with the Developer’s bank to make these arrangements, and we expect to receive a Letter of Credit before contract execution.

Motion by Weigel, second by Berg, to move the recommendation to City Council with a recommendation to approve. Motion passed unanimously.

**Federal Aid Request for Project No. 9123 - 2028-2031 TIP/TA/HSIP/SS4A**

City staff presented to committee members the recommendation to direct staff to submit an application for Safe Streets and Road for All (SS\$A) Implementation Grant. The Bipartisan Infrastructure Bill (BIL) established the new Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS\$A) discretionary program. The SS4A program funds regional, local, and Tribal initiatives through grants to prevent roadway fatalities and serious injuries. These grants come in two forms: Planning Grants and Implementation Grants. To be eligible for an Implementation Grant to construct safety projects, the applying entity needs to have adopted a Comprehensive Safety Action Plan. City Council adopted the comprehensive safety action plan on August 4, 2025. Applying for this grant is the next step in the process. The Notice of Funding Opportunity for the SS4A program was released on March 27, 2026. The minimum federal award for Implementation Grants is \$2 million, with a maximum federal contribution of 80%. The application is due on May 26, 2026. Staff is recommending a project centered around Phoenix Elementary School. The work would include building a roundabout at the intersection of Belmont Road and 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue South, as well as adding bump-outs and replacing the road surface on 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Chestnut Street adjacent to the school. The bump-outs and geometry realignment on Chestnut Street would encourage traffic to obey the one-way direction and help one of the high-risk crosswalks remain safe. The current estimate for this project is \$3,500,000, with a 20% City share of \$700,000.

Motion by Weigel, second by Lunski, to move the recommendation to City Council with a recommendation to approve. Motion passed unanimously.

**Water Customer Portal**

City staff presented to committee members the recommendation to provide staff with direction on the implementation of a customer water consumption portal. With the residential water meter replacement project expected to be substantially completed in 2026, City staff are looking for direction from City Council on the implementation of a customer portal in 2027. The portal would provide customers with real-time water consumption data, leak alerts, and customizable notifications. If directed to proceed with a user portal, City staff will go through a Request for Proposal (RFP) process and return to City Council for approval of the preferred vendor.

Motion by Berg, second by Fridolfs, to move the recommendation to City Council with a recommendation to approve. Motion passed 5-1 with Osowski dissenting.

**CITY COUNCIL MEMBER DISCUSSION MATTERS**

None

**ADJOURNMENT**

Motion by Osowski, second by Fridolfs, to adjourn the meeting at 5:57 p.m. Motion passed unanimously.