

**AGENDA**  
**BIG LAKE CITY COUNCIL EMERGENCY MEETING**

MS 13D.04, subd.3

**COUNCIL CHAMBERS**

160 Lake Street North, Big Lake, MN

**MARCH 18, 2020**

6:00 p.m.

- 1) **CALL TO ORDER**
- 2) **ROLL CALL**
- 3) **ADOPT PROPOSED AGENDA**
- 4) **BUSINESS** – COVID-19 Update and Proposed Plan
- 5) **ADJOURN**

**Attendance At Meeting** – All attendees are expected to follow CDC recommendations ensuring social distancing of at least 6 feet away from other persons. Some members of the Council may participate in this Emergency Meeting via telephone or other electronic means on an as needed basis.

**Disclaimer:** This agenda has been prepared to provide information regarding an emergency meeting of the Big Lake City Council to discuss the COVID-19 Pandemic. This document does not claim to be complete and is subject to change.



# EMERGENCY MEETING

## Big Lake City Council

<b>Prepared By</b> Clay Wilfahrt, City Administrator	<b>Meeting Date:</b> 3/18/2020	<b>Item No.</b> <b>4</b>
<b>Item Description:</b> COVID 19 Update and Plan	<b>Reviewed By:</b> Hanna Klimmek, Community Development Director Deb Wegeleben, Finance Director Joel Scharf, Chief of Police Layne Otteson, City Engineer Gina Wolbeck, City Clerk Greg Zurbey, Liquor Store Manager	

### **BACKGROUND/DISCUSSION**

As the COVID-19 pandemic has swept the nation, there have been health concerns and government intervention that have dramatically changed our way of life. City staff has been closely monitoring this situation and has been developing and implementing plans. Thus far, everything has been done administratively, but now we will need Council support to implement the next phase of changes. Below is a summary of the plan that the staff would like Council to approve:

- 1. Building Inspections** – as of right now, our Building Official has been given discretion to postpone building inspections that he is not comfortable conducting. In particular situations where he would be required to enter an existing residence are of concern. We are working to do some inspections via virtual means where possible.

**Action Requested:** Direct staff to proceed with Building Inspections at the discretion of the Building Official.

- 2. Public Access to City Hall** – We would like to restrict public access to City Hall. People can still drop things off, call, or email staff, however interacting with staff will only be available by appointment and for things that can only be conducted in person and not electronically. Due to the health concerns, and the concern that a COVID case among City staff could potentially compromise provision of services due to quarantine, we are exercising caution in public interaction. This restriction can be removed when the Council or the City Administrator deems it prudent to remove. This or similar restrictions are being employed by a number of municipalities including the following local cities:

- ✓ Sherburne County – Access by appointment only
- ✓ Albertville – access by appointment only
- ✓ Buffalo – City Hall Closed to Public
- ✓ St. Joseph – City Hall Closed to Public
- ✓ Rogers – City Hall Closed to Public
- ✓ St. Cloud – Public directed to Council Chambers for interaction with staff
- ✓ Clearwater – open for “urgent” city business
- ✓ Clear Lake – Closed to the Public

Additionally, staff is aware of several other local cities that will be considering restricted access in the next few days.

Another option would be to encourage residents and businesses to limit interaction with City staff, and sanitize the front counter frequently. This is a method currently being employed by some localities including Elk River, Monticello, St. Michael, and Princeton. Other Cities including Becker, Zimmerman are continuing to operate without restrictions. We are aware that several of the cities currently open are likely going to restrict access within the next few days.

**Action Requested:** Direct staff to immediately restrict access to City Hall until further notice.

- 3. Public Access to the Police Department** – The police department receives little foot traffic normally, however residents will now be required to submit things like data practices requests and other forms online. Staff plans to have a computer in the public area for submission of these types of items. Similar to City Hall, appointments could be made for meetings required face-to-face. This restriction can be removed when the Council or the City Administrator deems it prudent to remove.

*Action Requested: Direct staff to immediately restrict access to the Police Department until further notice.*

- 4. Liquor Hours** – The Liquor store has been spending an extensive amount of time cleaning and restocking. They sold over \$34,000 worth of product on March 16, which is similar to a holiday weekend day. Because of the extra time spent on restocking and cleaning, we are recommending that we move towards different hours until next Friday. We will be moving to a 9am to 5pm schedule for all days except Sunday which will be 11am to 4pm. We are also going to be posting signs asking people to use credit cards vs. cash to limit employee exposure. This change can be reversed when the Council or the City Administrator deems it prudent to reverse.

*Action Requested: Modify the Liquor Store hours to 9am to 5pm every day except Sunday which will have hours of 11am to 4pm until further notice.*

- 5. Telecommuting** – We will be requiring about half of City Hall staff to work from home effective immediately. Our major concern is that if someone at City Hall contracts the Coronavirus, everyone may end up in mandatory quarantine and it would shut down City Hall. Because of that we want to have two teams of staff, each capable of maintaining the mandatory functions of the City. Then if someone contracts the virus, we maintain continuity of services until the first team is out of quarantine. Those working from home will do whatever work they are able to from home, and they will continue to be paid at their normal rate for 40 hours per week. Some staff may not be able to conduct a full 40 hours of work from home, but staff believes that it will be close to that many hours. Staff will also be able to stagger shifts and come in during non-core hours to make up any hours missed. This change can be removed when the Council or the City Administrator deems it prudent to remove.

*Action Requested: Permit staff to adopt the above telecommuting plan until further notice.*

- 6. Divide Public Works Staff** – We are going to either park all Public Works trucks outside, or allow Public Works to take their trucks home during the pandemic. Limiting contact among the workers reduces the impact of a potential positive test among staff. If we had a positive case right now, everyone would be required to be quarantined. If we separate them, we will be able to only have one or two quarantined, vs. the entire staff. Again this is a response to ensure that if a positive case is found among staff, we will be able to continue with our services. This change can be removed when the Council or the City Administrator deems it prudent to remove.

*Action Requested: Authorize staff to take the actions outlined above until further notice.*

- 7. Water and Sewer Late fees and shut offs** – Due to this situation, and in response to the economic hardship this is creating for many of our residents, we will be waiving late fees for the next 30 days, and suspending shutoffs during that period as well.

*Action Requested: Authorize staff to waive late fees and suspend shut-offs for one month.*

- 8. Leave sick balances and home with pay** – Staff will be able to use sick leave even if they have not accumulated it. They will be able to accrue a negative balance of up to 96 hours. Attached is proposed language for a temporary policy change.

*Action Requested: Approve the attached temporary leave policy amendment.*

- 9. Community Gathering Spaces** – Because of the president’s recommendation to eliminate community gatherings greater than 10 people, the Senior Center and Community room will be closed until further notice. We will also not issue special events permits for gatherings greater than 10 people. This will continue until the CDC and Minnesota department of Health lift restriction of such gatherings.

**Action Requested:** *Authorize the closing of the Senior Center and the Community Room, and denial of special events permits for events greater than 10 people until further notice.*

- 10. Multi-family inspection** – To protect the safety of our inspectors, the City’s multi-family inspection program will be suspended until this situation stabilizes. This suspension can be removed when the Council or the City Administrator deems it prudent to remove.

**Action Requested:** *Authorize the suspension of the Multi-family inspection process until further notice.*

#### **Other Notes:**

These items do not require Council action, but here are a few other actions begin taken right now by staff.

- 1. New hires on hold** – We will be suspending the hiring of any new staff until after this situation stabilizes.
- 2. Meetings** – we will be following the guidelines of the CDC and the President and recommending that no meetings occur that have more than 10 people.
- 3. Travel** – No travel for the purpose of City Business is recommended. The only travel allowed will be travel that is essential to critical City business.
- 4. Lost revenue, track hours, etc.** – We are working to track any items that may be reimbursable by the Federal Government as part of an emergency declaration.
- 5. City Meetings** – The City has the option of hosting Public Meetings via a virtual service like skype, zoom, etc. or over telephone. All this takes is a determination by the City Attorney or Administrator that it makes more sense to hold meetings in a closed or virtual setting due to a health pandemic. Tonight Councilmember Johnson will be joining the meeting via telephone.

#### **ALTERNATIVES**

1. Direct staff to proceed with the plan as outlined
2. Direct staff to modify and bring back a new plan
3. Remain operating as normal

#### **ATTACHMENTS**

Temporary Leave Policy Change

## **City of Big Lake Temporary Leave Policy Change**

### *Policy Pertaining to Accrued Leave Use During Declared State or Federal Emergency*

In an effort to ensure the safety and wellbeing of Big Lake citizens and employees the Big Lake City Council is making temporary changes to leave language. The City of Big Lake will allow employees to utilize their accrued sick leave, vacation time and earned comp. time if they become ill or need to care for a family member that becomes ill from the novel coronavirus and the resulting COVID-19 disease. The requirement of having a doctor's note after three days of absence is temporarily waived. Employees that get ill or are needed to care for ill family members, and do not have banked sick leave, will be allowed to accrue a negative balance of up to 12 days. Employees that are wishing to transfer or borrow sick leave days to other employees will also be allowed to in full (8) eight-hour increments. Upon approval by the supervisor, employees may also be allowed to utilize their accrued sick leave, vacation time or earned comp. time to care for dependent children during the closure of the Public School Systems during the declared emergency. Minimum departmental staffing levels will be determined by the supervisor prior to this use of leave being approved. This policy will remain in place during the duration of this emergency.

Adopted this 18th day of March, 2020

By \_\_\_\_\_  
Mike Wallen, Mayor

By \_\_\_\_\_  
Gina Wolbeck, Clerk