

**BIG LAKE CITY COUNCIL
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES**

JANUARY 15, 2019

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Mike Wallen called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

3. ROLL CALL

Council Members present: Dick Backlund, Seth Hansen, Paul Knier, and Mike Wallen. Also present: City Administrator Clay Wilfahrt, City Attorney Representative Amy Schutt, City Clerk Gina Wolbeck, Finance Director Deb Wegeleben, Police Chief Joel Scharf, Police Corporal Joe Kalla, Liquor Store Manager Greg Zurbey, and Assistant Liquor Store Manager Lisa Miller.

4. PROPOSED AGENDA

Council Member Hansen motioned to adopt the proposed agenda as presented. Seconded by Council Member Knier, unanimous ayes, agenda adopted.

5. BUSINESS

5A. City Council Member Vacancy

Mayor Wallen discussed the January 9, 2019 Council Meeting noting the need for all Council Meetings to follow "Robert's Rules of Order". Mayor Wallen promised that future meetings will be run more appropriately. Wallen also thanked City Administrator Clay Wilfahrt for showing a tremendous measure of professionalism since the Council vacancy occurred. Wallen stated that he believes each Council Member is prepared for this meeting and has a clear idea of how they will vote to fill the vacancy. Wallen reviewed the 2018 General Election that was held 70 days ago. Two Council seats were voted on at this election, noting that Paul Knier received the most votes at 1,939, Mike Wallen received the second most votes at 1,303, and Rose Johnson came in third receiving 1,167 votes. Wallen recommended to Council to appoint Rose Johnson to fill the vacancy.

Council Member Hansen motioned to appoint Rose Johnson to fill the vacant City Council Member seat effective upon taking the Oath of Office. Seconded by Council Member Backlund. With a motion and second on the table, Mayor Wallen opened it up for Council discussion prior to the vote.

Council Member Knier stated that he will welcome Rose Johnson upon her appointment to the Council. Knier noted that he disagrees with filling the vacancy by appointment and reviewed how votes are calculated in a two open seat position. Knier stated that he feels we are disenfranchising the voters of Big Lake by filling by appointment as people should have a say in who represents them.

Council Member Hansen stressed that the Council left the December 19th Workshop with a consensus to appoint which was not followed through with at the January 9, 2019 Council Meeting. Hansen noted that this put staff in a terrible position and indicated that we need to move on and get back to City business.

Council Member Backlund agreed that it is time to move on.

Motion passed with a vote of 3 to 1 with Mayor Wallen, Council Members Backlund and Hansen voting aye, and Council Member Knier voting against. Motion carried.

Council Member Rose Johnson accepted the appointment and took the Oath of Office.

Council Member Hansen motioned to hold a Special Election at the November 3, 2020 General Election to fill the remaining 2-year City Council Member term that will expire December 31, 2022. Seconded by Council Member Backlund. With a motion and second on the table, Mayor Wallen opened it up for Council discussion prior to the vote.

Council Member Knier stated that the people of Big Lake should be heard, stressing that appointments have consequences. Knier stated that he would prefer to have the special election as soon as possible rather than wait until the next General Election.

Council Member Hansen clarified that he also heard from countless people on this issue, with a majority of those people stating their preference to have the special election at the next General Election. Hansen stressed there is always two sides to an issue.

Motion passed with a vote of 4 to 1 with Mayor Wallen, Council Members Backlund, Hansen, and Johnson voting aye, and Council Member Knier voting against. Motion carried.

Council Member Knier stated that what's done is done, asking citizens to come together so that Big Lake can continue to be a strong community, and stressed the importance of being kind to one another.

6. **ADJOURN**

Council Member Hansen motioned to adjourn at 6:17 p.m. Seconded by Council Member Knier, unanimous ayes, motion carried.

Gina Wolbeck
City Clerk

01/23/19
Date Approved By Council