

**BIG LAKE CITY COUNCIL
WORKSHOP MINUTES**

FEBRUARY 9, 2022

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Knier called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL

Council Members present: Ken Halverson, Sam Hanson, Paul Knier, Kim Noding, and Paul Seefeld. Also present: City Administrator Clay Wilfahrt, City Clerk Gina Wolbeck, Finance Director Deb Wegeleben, Community Development Director Hanna Klimmek, City Engineer Layne Otteson, Acting Police Chief Sam Olson, Liquor Store Manager Greg Zurbey, Streets/Parks/Fleet Superintendent Norm Michels, Water/Wastewater Superintendent Dan Childs, Fire Chief Seth Hansen, and Big Lake Student Liaison Ella Dotzler.

3. PROPOSED AGENDA

Council Member Seefeld motioned to adopt the proposed Agenda as presented. Seconded by Council Member Hanson, unanimous ayes, Agenda adopted.

4. BUSINESS

4A. Review Quotes for Executive Recruitment for Chief of Police Position

Clay Wilfahrt reviewed quotes submitted for an executive recruitment process to fill the Police Chief position, noting that the Personnel Committee recommended that the City move forward with the David Drown and Associates Human Resources quote in the amount of \$22,000. Upon Council approval, the timeline will begin immediately with advertising to take place in March, with the first phase of interviews to begin in April and the final interview phase in May. The anticipated start date is projected to be in June 2022.

Council Member Halverson asked what the process will be for candidate interview selection and how many candidates will be interviewed. Wilfahrt discussed that the firm will work with us on that process, and assumes that it will be the Personnel Committee along with the consultant who will most likely narrow down the candidate pool based on scoring of the applications. Usually they will go down until there is a natural break in the scoring, and there generally won't be more than 15 selected for an initial screening, and then narrow those down to approximately a half dozen or so who will be invited to interview. Halverson also asked if we used an outside firm for past Police Chief hirings. Wilfahrt reviewed that he is not aware of the City using a firm for past Police Chief hires, but that we possibly used a

consultant during the backgrounding process. Deb Wegeleben reviewed the interview panel process used the last time where we brought in two representatives from outside law enforcement agencies as well as Council, Staff and a citizen who all sat on the panel. Halverson stated that it has been mentioned that possibly the one candidate, if we would have done a more thorough background check, it would have raised flags and we wouldn't be in the position that we are in now. Wilfahrt discussed that we have heard in conversations with the Police Department in general that a more comprehensive background analysis is something we should do as part of the hiring process. Right now, it is unclear if either of the two firms would provide that type of service so we may need to ask them if there is a way to do a more detailed background check outside of the services they typically provide. These types of firms generally provide a criminal history, credit check, and basic prescriptive types of backgrounding. A lot of times when a City is hiring for the Police Chief position, backgrounding will include character interviews including interviews with previous employers, landlords, and neighbors, just to make sure they understand the true character of the person they are hiring, not just the paper reports a basic background would provide. Halverson stressed that we need to have a more extensive background process in order to get the kind of Chief our Department needs and deserves. That part of the hiring process is just as important because that will determine how this person will treat our Officers. Wegeleben discussed that these types of companies are more than likely going to do the more extensive backgrounding than what we could do internally. Wilfahrt reviewed that we can ask them specifically to do this type of extensive backgrounding. Council Member Noding agreed that we need to do a more expanded background process. Noding also discussed the leadership issues we have had in the Police Department over the last 10 to 15 years, stressing it would be good for the community, our Officers, and for the Department to have stability. Halverson also asked if it will just be Council doing the interviews or we will include others like we did last time. Wilfahrt reviewed that the interview structure will be up to Council on how they want to tailor that process. The consultant will ask Council what process they want to use and will build the interviews around that.

Council Member Hanson discussed that since the Personnel Committee meeting, he has changed his mind about which quote would better suit the City. After further reviewing the quotes, he feels Baker Tilly has far more experience in recruitment for Police Chief's than David Drown and Associates has. Hanson stated that he would be more comfortable paying \$3,000 extra to go with the firm that has extensive experience with Police Chief recruitment. Clay Wilfahrt reviewed that Baker Tilly is a nationwide firm and would have a lot of executive recruiters, and noted that Staff doesn't really have a strong preference one way or another. Noding asked if we decide to go with Baker Tilly, would that push the approval back 2-weeks. Wilfahrt explained that the item on the Consent Agenda is for approval of the Personnel Committee recommended firm of David Drown. If Council wishes to go with Baker Tilly instead, the item would need to be pulled from the Consent Agenda for separate consideration.

Mayor Knier asked what the search would entail that would be specific to the hire of a Police Chief. Wilfahrt explained that they would have a network for who we are recruiting, noting that often times these executive search firms build a network of professionals who would fit the roll we are advertising for. They get to know the pool of candidates who are looking for a job, so the more recruiting you do in a certain field, the more they are going to know a network of people they can reach out to. The biggest advantage he can see is that they are going to be able to bring more people to the table to apply for the position. Just having a familiarity with what types of experience and education we are going to want to

build into the requirement process for an applicant pool is a benefit. Council Member Seefeld pointed out that Baker Tilly does social media outreach, but with David Drown we would have to ask them to conduct that type of outreach.

Council directed Staff to move forward with bringing the Baker Tilly quote forward to tonight's Council meeting for Council consideration.

4B. CR 81 Project Update

Layne Otteson provided an update on the Sherburne County Road 81 project. The reconstruction of this section of CR 81 is an opportunity for the City to extend water and sewer trunk lines and save substantial costs related to removals and restoration. Water and sewer needs to be extended 350 feet northwest along CR 81 past Lake Ridge Drive and to the edge of future development. This extension will position the City utility system for expansion to the north and west in the future. In previous discussions, Staff estimated these costs could potentially be \$65,000 for a 12" trunk watermain and \$80,000 for an 18" trunk sanitary sewer. Sherburne County opened bids on January 19, and costs came in slightly higher than estimated. The bid for trunk watermain is \$66,201.47 and \$95,962.38 for the trunk sanitary sewer. Otteson noted that the sewer cost includes \$9,032.11 in dewatering if needed. Seasonal water table fluctuates seasonally, and dewatering may not be needed. Otteson asked for Council feedback on moving forward with the extension of utility services on the CR 81 project.

Council directed Staff to move forward with the extension of utility services as bid for the Sherburne County Road 81 project.

4C. Discuss AIS Grant Opportunity

Layne Otteson reviewed grant opportunities for treatment of Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) in Big Lake and Lake Mitchell. Historically, the City has budgeted for the treatments and has received grant assistance. The MNDNR recently recommended consideration for treating Curlyleaf Pondweed as it seems to be expanding. Otteson noted that the Big Lake Community Lakes Association (BLCLA) is in support of the grants, treatment and diving inspections on our lakes. In 2021, divers performed Starry Stonewort inspections near 2 lake access as recommended by the MNDNR and the Sherburne Soil and Water Conservation District (SSWCD). The DNR suggests the threat can be minimized through inspection and immediate response if needed. Staff is recommending the City pursue grant funding to have divers search the lake for Starry Stonewort in targeted areas. The cost was funded at 75% by a SSWCD grant in 2021. Otteson reviewed that the estimated project cost is \$14,500 with \$5,000 potentially funded from a DNR grant, \$1,000 funded by a SWCDD grant, and the remaining cost of \$8,500 to be funded by the City.

Council directed Staff to move forward with securing grant dollars towards treatment of AIS in Big Lake and Mitchell Lake.

4D. New Ideas Discussion

Council Member Seefeld suggested that it would be good for us to schedule a Special Workshop on Tax Abatement and TIF training. Deb Wegeleben discussed that Tammy Omdal from Northland Securities has indicated that she would be able to provide the training, and Council discussed scheduling a Special Council/BLEDA/Planning Commission Workshop at 5:00 p.m. prior to the April 11th BLEDA meeting.

5. **OTHER** – No other.

6. ADJOURN

Council Member Hanson motioned to adjourn at 5:21 p.m. Seconded by Council Member Noding unanimous ayes, motion carried.

Gina Wolbeck
City Clerk

02/23/22
Date Approved By Council