

**BIG LAKE CITY COUNCIL
WORKSHOP MINUTES
MARCH 13, 2019**

1. CALL TO ORDER

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

2. ROLL CALL

Council Members present: Dick Backlund, Rose Johnson, Paul Knier, and Mike Wallen. Council Member Seth Hansen arrived at 5:06 p.m. Also present: City Administrator Clay Wilfahrt, Finance Director Deb Wegeleben, City Clerk Gina Wolbeck, Police Chief Joel Scharf, Public Works Director Mike Goebel, Community Development Director Hanna Klimmek, City Engineer Layne Otteson, City Planner Michael Healy, Recreation Coordinator Corrie Scott, and Liquor Store Assistant Manager Lisa Miller.

3. PROPOSED AGENDA

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

4. BUSINESS

4A. Advanced Resignation Draft Policy Discussion

Clay Wilfahrt reviewed the proposed advanced resignation policy, noting that staff expects that over the next few years some key positions will be turning over. This type of policy would offer outgoing staff the option to give advanced notice up to 180 days in exchange for financial compensation. This notice would allow time to advertise and fill the position as well as transfer knowledge, reducing the gap time between staffing changes. Wilfahrt reviewed the proposed compensation structure and noted that the personnel committee has reviewed the policy and recommended it move forward to the full Council for consideration.

Council Member Knier questioned if offering extra incentive for an employee to provide a 180 day notice is necessary. Council discussed the potential timeframe needed to hire and train a new employee, and that it is ideal to overlap employees for a smooth transition. It was noted that we need the benefit to be enough money to incentivize an employee to provide advanced notice. Council also discussed that this policy isn't just meant for employees who are retiring, but could be used for any type of staff turnover. Council also discussed potential legal issues with how to approach an employee about possible retirement. The general consensus of the Council was that they like that the policy will sunset and would be revisited at that time. Council directed staff to move forward with bringing the Advanced Resignation Policy to an upcoming meeting for Council consideration.

4B. Land Alteration Permit Fee Adjustment Request Review

Michael Healy reviewed the Big Lake School District \$2.26 million parking lot rehabilitation and improvement project at the main school campus. The project is expected to begin in May and will involve removal of most of the existing parking lot surfaces and drive lanes at the High School and Middle School. Some pedestrian safety improvements are also being implemented in accordance with the 2015 Safe Routes to School Plan. This project is basically a replacement of the existing parking lots, and that the proposed changes to the site plan are very minor and do not require a formal site plan review process. This type of project does require a Land Alteration Permit which is approved administratively by the City Engineer with review from the City Planner, the Police Department, and the Fire Department. The fee schedule identifies that Land Alteration Permits be calculated in the same manner as Building Permit Fees and is based on valuation of the project. Per the City Fee Schedule, the permit fee for this project would be \$12,324.65. Healy noted that the School District has requested the City consider reducing the permit fee amount. Healy reviewed the history of when the Land Alteration Permit Fee structure was approved by Council noting that a majority of projects being reviewed through this permit have had valuations of \$500 to \$20,000, with permit costs ranging from \$29.50 to \$400. The School District's project is unusual in terms of its size, scope, and valuation, noting that it is much larger than other permits of this type. Healy reviewed hard costs the City has or will incur related to processing the permit. Consultants and staff have spent a significant amount of time processing this permit, and the City has received invoices related to review of this project. Healy noted that it is a Council decision if they wish to collect a reduced fee from the School District, or require them to pay the full Land Alteration Permit fee based on the City's Fee Schedule. Staff recommended that at a minimum, the City Council should require a permit fee that is sufficient to recoup all hard costs the City has and will incur, and to require an escrow.

Council discussed billing an hourly fee for staff time and all pass-through costs on to the school, and to require submittal of escrow dollars determined by staff. Council directed staff to bring this fee reduction request to the next Council Meeting for consideration.

4C. McDowall Trail Discussion

Layne Otteson reviewed the condition of the McDowall Park Trail which is heavily cracked, heaved and has some drainage issues near the south end of the park. Otteson noted that he has interviewed several users and responses have been consistently negative towards the existing trail condition and supported new pavement. Otteson noted that staff has reviewed the project and concur the trail is in need of surfacing and minor drainage improvements. Replacement of the pavement was proposed last year but was found to be too expensive. This bid included removal of the existing pavement instead of just resurfacing. While a rebuild would provide the best long term performance option, removal and restoration were found to add significantly to the cost of the project. An overlay would include placing a 2 inch thick asphalt layer over the existing trail, with minimal work beyond the edge of the trail. The trail will be smooth for a couple years, but existing cracks will begin to reflect through which will require crack seal maintenance going forward to minimize deterioration. Otteson reviewed the low spot on the southeast segment of the park which is inundated with water each spring into summer. Raising the trail 8 inches would alleviate this issue except in high moisture years. The cost to

raise this segment is estimated at \$17,000. The work includes adding culverts, filling, grading, erosion control, and wetland restoration. This estimate does not include the cost of asphalt paving overlay in the area. Otteson reviewed the \$200,000 in CIP funds that are estimated to be available towards this project. Alternate 4 is projected to cost \$206,000, and additional funding could become available if the City receives a MNDOT grant for the Highline Drive/CR 73 trail project, which has successfully advanced to compete with statewide projects for funding. Deb Wegeleben noted that these grant funds will not be available until possibly 2021. Otteson also noted that costs could possibly be reduced if combined with the 2019 Street Resurfacing Project by taking advantage of volume pricing. The two projects are very similar as they are mainly asphalt paving work with the same equipment being used.

Council discussed the need to complete some type of work on the trail, but recognized the potential high cost for a complete reconstruction. The consensus of the Council was that it doesn't make sense to leave the low spot in its current condition as it appears it is the largest impediment, with most complaints fielded by staff relating to the low area flooding. Council discussed possibly fixing the low spot and putting off paving the rest of the trail until funds are available. Council discussed bidding Alternate 2, and to include raising the southern low area as a separate alternate.

4D. MN GreenCorps Host Site Discussion

Corrie Scott reviewed the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency application for organizations interested in hosting an AmeriCorps member for the 2019-2020 MN GreenCorps program year which runs from September 2019 through August 2020. Scott noted that applications from eligible organizations are due by March 17th.

Council directed staff to proceed with submittal of a MN GreenCorps Host Site application.

4E. Recreation Coordinator Position Review

Clay Wilfahrt reviewed the Recreation Coordinator position which provides staffing for recreation duties. The addition of the position in 2018 has taken numerous duties from existing staff, allowed continuation of the Farmer's Market, and has started new initiatives in the City. Changes have significantly impacted the amount of time other staff spends on recreation duties including duties from the City Clerk, the Deputy City Clerk, the Administrative Assistant, the Public Works Director, and the City Administrator totaling 515 hours. Wilfahrt reviewed various options for the position including keeping the position at a part-time status, moving to full-time status, or revert the position to only a Farmer's Market Coordinator which would lead to redistributing 500+ hours of recreation duties to other staff, or cutting programming. Wilfahrt noted that the Personnel Committee reviewed the costs and benefits of the position, determined that the position is effective, and increases capacity in other areas, and felt that there is enough work to move the position to full-time, but that keeping the position at its current level is the most effective use of resources at this time.

The general consensus of the Council was that while there is merit to making the position full-time, resources are limited. Council directed staff to leave the position as part-time, and to re-evaluate it next year.

4F. New Ideas Discussion

Mayor Wallen opened up the workshop for any further Council comments or questions.

Council Member Knier discussed comments he has received from citizens interested in being allowed to have chickens. Knier noted that he has researched past minutes on this discussion, and would like to see the ordinance changed. Council Member Hansen discussed his concerns with viruses that can spread through areas that house poultry. Council Member Johnson noted that she would like to revisit the option to allow chickens, but isn't sure if city properties are the best place to house poultry.

Council directed staff to bring information to the next Council Workshop for continued discussion.

5. **OTHER** - No other.

6. **ADJOURN**

Council Member Hansen motioned to adjourn at 5:52 p.m. Seconded by Council Member Knier, unanimous ayes, motion carried.

Gina Wolbeck
City Clerk

03/27/19
Date Approved By Council