

**BIG LAKE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
MEETING MINUTES**

MONDAY, MARCH 14, 2022

1. CALL TO ORDER

President Alan Heidemann called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

3. ROLL CALL

Commissioners present: J. Brian Calva, Jim Dickinson, Ken Geroux, Alan Heidemann, Cole Hendry, Paul Knier, and Kim Noding.

Also present: BLEDA Executive Director Hanna Klimmek, BLEDA Assistant Treasurer Deb Wegeleben, and BLEDA Secretary Corrie Scott.

4. ADOPT AGENDA

Commissioner Knier motioned to approve the agenda as presented. Seconded by Commissioner Noding, unanimous ayes, motion carried.

5. APPROVE BLEDA MEETING MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 14, 2022

Commissioner Geroux motioned to approve the February 14, 2022 BLEDA minutes. Seconded by Commissioner Calva, unanimous ayes, motion carried.

6. BLEDA BUSINESS ITEMS

6A. SET SPECIAL JOINT COUNCIL/PC/BLEDA WORKSHOP

Klimmek stated that Council directed staff to schedule a Joint Worksession with the Council, Planning Commission, and the BLEDA to receive educational information on Tax Abatement and Tax Increment Financing. Tammy Omdal from Northland Securities will be in attendance to provide information on how these financial tools can be used by the City to assist developments.

Commissioner Knier motioned to set a Special Joint Council/PC/BLEDA Workshop at 5:00 p.m. on Monday, April 11, 2022 in the Big Lake City Council Chambers located at 160 Lake Street North, Big Lake, MN for Tax Abatement and Tax Increment Financing training conducted by Northland Securities. Seconded by Commissioner Calva, unanimous ayes, motion carried.

6B. CITIZEN SURVEY DISCUSSION

Klimmek reviewed the costs and benefits of a citizen survey and recommended that the BLEDA discuss the potential to lead a citizen survey project.

Calva asked about an example of a City policy that this type of survey could help with. Wegeleben stated that parks, trails, and financial policies could be affected. Dickinson stated that the city he works for puts out an annual survey to residents and they ask questions about street maintenance, snow plowing, communications, and other items to see if the City is spending their efforts efficiently. Noding asked how they conduct their survey. Dickinson stated that they hire a consultant to conduct the survey. Calva asked if Dickinson finds the survey helpful. Dickinson stated that it is the most helpful after two to five surveys so that the data can be compared. He stated that these surveys are expensive, but that the information is valuable.

Calva stated that he is worried about getting rational data due to the lack of interest from residents to take surveys. Dickinson stated that the consultants who conduct these surveys are very careful to ensure the information is not skewed. Knier stated that he feels those who take surveys tend to want more spending from their government and he fears that will skew the data. He stated that he believes the consultant might lead the residents to encourage more government spending. Dickinson stated that the consultants allow the Council to direct them. He stated that having a consultant conduct the survey helps get information from those who will follow through with meaningful answers to the survey questions.

Hendry stated that he would prefer to see a variety of surveying styles including email, phone, text, etc. to avoid information being skewed to one demographic. Dickinson stated that he is unsure on what style a consultant offers, but that it's possible consultants do a variety of survey styles. Calva asked Hendry what tools he uses to get meaningful information at RiverWood Bank. Hendry stated that he looks at Brownbook and the Minneapolis Treasury. He stated that they contract a third party to compare them to other banks to bring to light weaknesses so they can fix them. He stated that he feels this type of survey could bring information that is meaningful to the forefront.

Noding stated that she also feels this type of survey could be beneficial to see what residents feel is working and what is not. Geroux stated that he doesn't feel the survey should be conducted on behalf of the BLEDA. He stated that he doesn't see the benefit at any dollar level. He stated that the City staff and elected officials are easy to get

ahold of and that there is a level of personal responsibility for a resident who wants to see change. He stated that there are already roads and park plans in place that we can base decisions on. Geroux stated that by electing an official, the residents are saying they have trust that those elected officials will make the right decision. He stated the only time he could see this being necessary is if City staff feels it is necessary to do their jobs.

Dickinson stated that the type of community organization that would value the information from a survey the most would be the school system. He stated that he finds it valuable as you are seeing what the majority of constituents find important, but that it is important to ask the right questions to avoid information being skewed.

Hendry asked about the survey that was done by Como Lake Marketing. Klimmek stated that the difference between the survey done by Como Lake Marketing is that they only targeted stakeholders and leaders within the community and that it was specifically used to market the community. Klimmek stated that she will table this idea for the time being. Dickinson stated that it might make sense to revisit this topic when specific information regarding a decision at the City Council level is needed.

6C. BLEDA BUDGET AND LIST OF CLAIMS

Commissioner Knier motioned to accept the budget report and approve the BLEDA List of Claims for February 2022 as presented. Seconded by Commissioner Noding, unanimous ayes, motion carried.

6D. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT UPDATE

Klimmek discussed the status of various projects within Community Development. This update included Housing, Commercial and Industrial, BLEDA, Planning and Zoning, Building, and Recreation and Communication.

Noding asked about the progress of Willy McCoy's. Klimmek stated that they are going to submit an application regarding a patio. Knier asked about barriers between the restaurant and neighboring homes. Klimmek stated that she is not aware of this happening and that there are residents who are concerned about noise. Dickinson stated that historically other locations of theirs are respectful of their neighbors. Klimmek stated that they are planning to put in docks.

7. OTHER

Klimmek stated that City Administrator Clay Wilfahrt will be stepping down from his position in April and that she will be taking over as Interim City Administrator for the time being. Geroux asked if City Council has approved the purchase of the building attached to City Hall. Klimmek stated that Council requested an appraisal report before that

decision is made. Geroux asked about the fertilizer plant. Klimmek stated that 421 Foley was rezoned from I-1 to R-3. She stated that there is a pending offer and those that have been calling to ask about it are looking to use it as storage. Because it is zoned R-3, a zoning amendment would be needed. She stated that the property owner is refusing to sign a zoning amendment application. Klimmek stated that ultimately the City is standing in the way of a private sale and that City Planner Lucinda Spanier is going to bring this conversation to the Planning Commission.

Knier asked about what would happen to the homeowners if a developer tried to acquire that land and the homeowner didn't want to leave. Klimmek stated that they would develop around that home. Geroux stated that although he is for getting out of the way of the private sector, he views the redevelopment of this property as very difficult. Dickinson stated that changing the zoning could happen either by an applicant or by the City itself without an application. He stated that he feels it makes sense for the BLEDA to facilitate acquiring the land in order to rezone and actively market it. Geroux stated that he would rather see other types of building happen in that area rather than storage. Knier asked if apartments will bring more value to the City than what is currently there. Dickinson stated that it depends on how many apartments were put in.

Klimmek stated that she will reach out to Bullseye Property and then meet with the Finance Committee. Geroux stated that the Fire Department should also be contacted.

8. ADJOURN

Commissioner Knier motioned to adjourn the meeting at 7:08 p.m. Seconded by Commissioner Geroux, unanimous ayes, meeting adjourned.