

**BIG LAKE CITY COUNCIL  
WORKSHOP MINUTES**

**APRIL 27, 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: Interim City Administrator/Community Development Director Hanna Klimmek, City Clerk Gina Wolbeck, Finance Director Deb Wegeleben, City Planner Lucinda Spanier, Acting Police Chief Sam Olson, Liquor Store Manager Greg Zurbey, Streets/Parks/Fleet Superintendent Norm Michels, 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 Noding, unanimous ayes, Agenda adopted.

**4. BUSINESS**

**4A. Review 2022 City Personnel Policy Amendments**

Deb Wegeleben reviewed proposed amendments to the City Personnel Policy. Amendments included the addition of a Whistleblower Protection section, suspension with or without pay language, pay-out of sick pay upon separation, vacation accrual for new hires, and funeral leave benefit to be in-line with best practices and as recommended by the League of MN Cities.

Council Member Halverson discussed the veteran suspension federal rules. Wegeleben reviewed federal guidelines pertaining to veteran suspension procedures, noting that a person must have veteran's protection and be a designated veteran. Seefeld explained that it means that they served in honorable standing. Wegeleben noted that it is a perk of serving our country, and serves as protection for veteran's who work for a less than reputable employer.

Mayor Knier asked for clarification on the vacation accrual for new hires. Wegeleben clarified accrual for years of service, noting that staff recommends the whole paragraph be removed.

Council Member Hanson discussed the proposed funeral leave amendment. Hanson suggested that as this type of leave doesn't happen often, he would rather exceed best practices and offer five days of

funeral leave for employees who lose an immediate family member. Halverson asked what the definition is for immediate family. Wegeleben reviewed language in the personnel policy as it relates to which family members would be considered an immediate family member which includes parent, step-parent, spouse, child, step-child, brother, sister, step-brother, step-sister, grandparent, grandchild, spouse's parents, brother and sister in-law, and a member of the immediate household. Halverson stated he agrees with Hanson on offering a five-day paid leave. Hanson stated that he would rather go above and beyond. Council Member Noding expressed that she experienced the loss of a child and understands the need to go above and beyond. Noding agreed that offering a five-day leave is not excessive. Wegeleben clarified that a staff person would be allowed to take additional time off which would come out of their time-off bank. Mayor Knier discussed that staff does have their 200 hours of paid time off. Halverson noted that we could have a new employee who doesn't have the time-off accrual so the five days leave makes sense to him. Knier stated that he can see the need when an employee loses a close family member, but he is just looking out for taxpayer's dollars. Hanson stated that an employee might choose not to take the full five days if they aren't needed. Knier stated that he is fine with the five-day funeral leave change.

Council directed Staff to move forward with changes to the personnel policy as discussed and with the change to funeral leave to five days for immediate family members.

#### **4B. Review On-site Fuel Options**

Norm Michels reviewed the Public Works Department process for fueling City owned vehicles and equipment, and noted that Staff has been monitoring the cost and time of fueling at local fuel stations in Big Lake. Michels reviewed that having on-site fuel availability, Staff would be able to control fuel quality and moisture in both diesel and unleaded fuels, as well as the ability to monitor microbial levels that can be present in the ultra-sulfur diesel fuels. Fueling on-site would also be a time savings by eliminating the need to drive vehicles to the station and would eliminate the need to haul off-road equipment to the fuel station. Michels noted that the Police and Public Works Departments currently average \$30,000 in fuel purchases each year, and discussed that the Police and Fire Departments have expressed interest in participating in purchasing fuel on-site at Public Works. Michels asked for feedback from Council on if they want Staff to further research installing on-site fuel tanks at the Public Works facility.

Mayor Knier discussed that most theft happens from internal sources, and asked for feedback on what the plan would be to monitor that. Greg Zurbey reviewed a key fob security feature and how fuel usage can be monitored. Michels reviewed the key fob system that he has researched.

Council Member Halverson discussed the high cost of using off-site fuel options in labor and equipment. Halverson stated that this was looked at 7 years ago and the issue at that time was getting power to the fuel site. He asked that if we do decide to do this, can we piggy-back with the County on the cost of fuel. Michels discussed how competitive the fuel market is, and noted that what we will be saving on is the markup at the pump and the time spent fueling. The projected savings is expected to be between .08 to .18 cents per gallon from purchasing at the pump.

Council Member Seefeld asked if the tanks would be above ground. Michels indicated that they would be

above ground unleaded and diesel fuel tanks. Michels indicated that fuel is a competitive market and there are multiple fuel providers that provide this option. Knier stated that he wants to know what this project would cost on the front end.

Halverson asked if there is a way to distribute installation costs between departments that will use the fuel. Wegeleben discussed that the initial cost would be funded from the CIP fund.

Knier also discussed that we need to consider that the Police Department could potentially have to travel further to fuel up at the Public Works Facility rather than just fueling at a local gas station. Michels responded that the Police Department is the department that initially requested this two years ago. Michels also discussed that from a safety standpoint, the Public Works Facility would be a safer access for fueling City vehicles, rather than accessing some of the gas station sites.

Council Member Hanson discussed that the Fire Department has had issues with some of the stations losing credit cards that they have on file, and now we have fire fighters having to get reimbursed for fuel purchases on fire vehicles. Hanson also asked if we would consider installing a Def Reservoir. Michels reviewed this product noting that it has a very short shelf life. Halverson also discussed freezing issues as well. Michels stated that it could create problems if we carry this in a bulk supply.

Council directed Staff to move forward with further researching costs and processes for installation of an on-site fuel program.

#### **4C. New Ideas Discussion**

Council Member Seefeld discussed previous Council discussion about talking with the City Attorney. He stated that he doesn't see a problem with abstaining from a vote for any reason, and would like our bylaws to allow for that. Mayor Knier discussed that some people would say that you have a job to do so you should do it. Council Member Halverson stated that according to Soren, it is legal to abstain. Seefeld noted that if you feel that you are serving your constituents by abstaining, then Council should be able to do that. Knier stressed that he doesn't want to see 2:0 votes all the time because officials are abstaining. Council Member Hanson noted that he doesn't feel there was a question of legality, but that the bylaws state that you have to have a conflict of interest to abstain from a vote. Council Member Halverson discussed that we can't write a bylaw that supersedes the law, but we can make a rule that makes it stronger, but you can't make a rule that overrides it or makes it weaker. Council directed Staff to make the bylaws match up to law in reference to abstaining from a vote and bring back to Council for consideration.

Norm Michels provided information on the barricades that are set up at the boat landing. Public Works staff will be monitoring the concrete separation and collapse at the landing, and noted that half of the boat access is open, but the other side is blocked off for safety reasons. Michels also discussed proposed landscaping upgrades at the Veteran's Park, indicating that he doesn't see a problem with the improvements and he supports the project. Wegeleben noted that some donations have been received and the person heading the project up would like the project done by Memorial Day. They expect that all

the donations should be in by the time the project is completed.

Council Member Halverson asked about parking signage at the Freedom Rock. Norm Michels indicated that they are on order. The signs will identify a 30-minute time limit on Freedom Rock parking.

5. **OTHER** – No other.

6. **ADJOURN**

Council Member Seefeld motioned to adjourn at 5: 34 p.m. Seconded by Council Member Hanson, unanimous ayes, motion carried.

Gina Wolbeck  
City Clerk

05/11/22  
Date Approved By Council