

**BIG LAKE CITY COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
MAY 13, 2020**

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Mike Wallen called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

3. ROLL CALL

Council Members present: Seth Hansen, Rose Johnson, Paul Knier, Mike Wallen, and Scott Zettervall. Also present: City Administrator Clay Wilfahrt, Finance Director Deb Wegeleben, Community Development Director Hanna Klimmek, City Engineer Layne Otteson, Police Chief Joel Scharf, Deputy Chief Matt Hayen, City Clerk Gina Wolbeck, Liquor Store Manager Greg Zurbey, and Assistant Fire Chief Mark Hedstrom.

4. OPEN FORUM

Mayor Wallen opened the Open Forum at 6:06 p.m.

Joe Fowler, 401 Lakeshore Drive – stated that he appreciated the discussion at the Workshop and for the open communication amongst Council Members. Fowler also asked where questions relating to the street project should be directed. Mayor Wallen noted that these types of questions can be directed to the City Engineer or sent to Council Members.

Bettina Potter, 120 Lakeshore Drive – stressed that citizen input is extremely important. We should pay attention, listen and be respectful of our state and federal representatives. Potter reviewed the number of COVID-19 cases to date, and discussed citizen's rights.

Jean McQuay, 1471 Powell Street North – discussed that our Governor has consulted with many professionals and she believes that he has done a really good job of keeping us safe. Urged citizens to stay with him on this, noting that elderly have been severely affected by the COVID-19 virus, and now the virus is showing up in children. McQuay stated that she feels it would be irresponsible to approve a resolution opposing the Governor's Order.

Brandon Backes, 1371 Powell Street North – Stated his support for Council approval on a Resolution in Opposition to the Governor’s Order No. 20-48.

Staff read a statement sent by email by Lawrence Sundberg, 1075 Kilbirnie Road, in opposition to the City Council approving a Resolution in Opposition to the Governor’s Order 20-48, and stating that City government should not be a platform for partisan politics.

Staff read a statement sent by email by Carolyn Fowler, 210 Oregon Avenue, in opposition to the City Council approving a Resolution in Opposition to the Governor’s Order 20-48, stating her concern that this type of action could jeopardize our relationship with the State of MN.

Mayor Wallen closed the Open Forum at 6:22 p.m.

5. PROPOSED AGENDA

Council Member Zettervall motioned to adopt the proposed Agenda with the addition of item no. 7H. Hire of Part-time Liquor Clerk Brady Bebeau. Seconded by Council Member Hansen, unanimous ayes, Agenda adopted.

6. CONSENT AGENDA

Council Member Johnson motioned to approve the Consent Agenda with the removal of item no. 6I for separate consideration. Seconded by Council Member Knier, unanimous ayes, Consent Agenda approved. The Consent Agenda consists of: 6A. Approve List of Claims, 6B. Approve Council Workshop Minutes of April 22, 2020, 6C. Approve Regular Council Meeting Minutes of April 22, 2020, 6D. Approve Reclassification of Accounting Technician Position, 6E. Approve Employment Status Change for Part-time Liquor Clerks Darcy Miller and Tamara Bergstrom, 6F. Approve Employment Status Change for Part-time Lead Liquor Clerk Jodie Audette, 6G. Approve Northern Lighters Pyrotechnics Fireworks Display Permit Application for May 29, 2020, 6H. Approve Joint Resolution No. 2020-01 approving a Second Amendment to Joint City/Township Resolution No. 92-03 for Orderly Annexation Agreement OA-260, ~~6I. Approve Lakeside Park 2020 Parking Policy~~, 6J. Approve Resolution No. 2020-43 approving the Safe Routes to School Plans and Specifications and Order Advertisement for Bid, 6K. Approve Appointment of Streets/Parks Operator II Gary Bautch, 6L. Approve Appointment of Seasonal Public Works Employee Tristan Martin, and 6M. Approve Appointment of Part-time Administrative Assistant Kati Peterson.

6I. Approve Lakeside Park 2020 Parking Policy

Council Member Rose Johnson requested to separately discuss the Lakeside Park 2020 Parking Policy due to comments presented at the May 11, 2020 Big Lake Economic

Development Authority (BLEDA) Meeting, and in a letter submitted today by the Big Lake Chamber of Commerce. Council Member Johnson noted that BLEDA and the Chamber have concerns about restricting access to Lakeside Park to non-residents and the negative impact that could have on local businesses.

Layne Otteson reviewed past Council discussions on implementing a restricted parking policy at Lakeside Park due to a potential influx of park users due to COVID-19. It was agreed that a significant increase by non-resident and distant users would likely have an adverse impact to season pass holders and residents. At the last Council Workshop, Council unanimously agreed that the best approach was to monitor parking capacity and directed Staff to draft a policy that would define and designate areas of the parking lot for seasonal passes and day passes. Seasonal pass holders would be prioritized while still allowing day passes. Otteson noted that the Policy would only be implemented if absolutely necessary. Otteson also discussed that we want things that attract people to Big Lake, noting that visitors spend their money at local establishments. The installation of the new parking meter at Lakeside Park will be evaluated, and we should encourage the sale of seasonal passes. Otteson stressed that we should know early on in the season if there will be an issue at Lakeside Park.

Council Member Hansen stated that he is fine with holding off on implementing the Policy until we see issues at the park.

Council Member Knier noted that we can implement the Policy when it becomes necessary. Knier also discussed that there could be a delay in getting the word out if we wait to approve the Policy.

Council Member Zettersval stressed that he originally didn't want to implement the parking restrictions, and is fine to wait to see if one will be needed.

The general consensus of the Council was to wait to consider the Lakeside Park 2020 Parking Policy until a time that parking becomes problematic at Lakeside Park.

7. BUSINESS

7A. Proclamation – Designating National Police Week and Peace Officers' Memorial Day

Mayor Wallen read a Proclamation proclaiming the week of May 10 through May 16, 2020 as National Police Week and May 15 as Peace Officers Memorial Day in the City of Big Lake. Council thanked the Police Department staff for their dedicated service. Joel Scharf thanked Council for recognizing Police Week, noting that it reaffirms to the Officer's the Council's support of the Department as well as support from the Community.

Council Member Johnson motioned to approve Resolution No. 2020-44 proclaiming the week of May 10 through May 16, 2020 as National Police Week and May 15 as Peace Officers Memorial Day in the City of Big Lake. Seconded by Council Member Knier, unanimous ayes, motion carried.

7B. Update on the 2020 Street and Utility Improvement Project No. ST2020-1

Layne Otteson reviewed past Council discussion on the 2020 Street and Utility Improvement Project No. ST2020-1 including project costs, award options, and funding concerns. The project cost is estimated to be \$3.37M, and the project would be funded by the City in the amount of \$1.99M, and by Special Assessments in the amount of \$1.74M. At the April 22, 2020 Council Workshop, Council consensus was to delay the award decision and continue monitoring the economic impacts of COVID-19 and prepare to address immediate 2020 needs. The latest an award decision can be made is May 27th as bids have to be awarded or rejected within 60 days of opening. Otteson reviewed the Governor's Stay At Home Order which is still in effect, reopening of some businesses on a limited basis, unpredictability of the Bond Market, noted that the State of MN is reporting a revenue loss and are forecasting a budget deficit, identified that some cities are delaying projects, noted that Staff has received resident concerns regarding cost as well as the need to fix bad pavement areas, insulate water services, and fix flooding areas. Otteson also discussed the cost of oil fuel which has stabilized at very low prices, and the possibility that asphalt costs could begin to trend lower. Staff recommended that Council wait to take action on the bids until the May 27th meeting.

Council Member Johnson stated that she would like to hear from anyone in the audience who has comments on the project. Mayor Wallen allowed interested persons to present their comments.

Joe Fowler, 401 Lakeshore Drive - discussed that the street is bad, but noted that it could be put off for one year. Fowler also discussed that there are areas that have significant drainage issues, and requested that the City pave the alleyway behind his house as part of the project.

Mayor Wallen clarified that the only reason the City is considering putting the project on hold is a direct reaction to the COVID-19 Pandemic and the economic concerns it has produced.

Council Member Hansen motioned to direct Staff to continue monitoring the economic situation and bring back a final bid recommendation for the Council to formally act on at the May 27, 2020 Council Meeting. Seconded by Council Member Zettervall, unanimous ayes, motion carried.

7C. Order Preliminary Engineering Report for the 2020 Street and Utility Improvement Project No. ST2020-2

Layne Otteson discussed street and utility work that is needed throughout the City including pavement deterioration, water service insulation, manholes, water main breaks and sidewalks. Otteson recommended Council order a Preliminary Engineering Report for the 2020 Street and Utility Improvement Project No. ST2020-2.

Council Member Knier motioned to approve Resolution No. 2020-45 ordering the preparation of the Preliminary Engineering Report for the 2020 Street and Utility Improvement Project No. ST2020-2. Seconded by Council Member Zettervall, unanimous ayes, motion carried.

7D. Request to Exchange Police Department Equipment

Joel Scharf discussed an offer of equipment exchange presented by Maximum Defense. They would provide the Department with 10 fully equipped rifles in exchange for the Department's 2013 Polaris RZR. The Polaris RZR is valued at approximately \$18,000 and the value of the rifles is \$22,960. The Department would also sell the current rifle inventory for an estimated value of \$5,000 as in-store credit at Streicher's Police Supply. Streicher's would resell the rifles to law enforcement only. Scharf reviewed the Department's use of the Polaris RZR which was acquired through the Military Return to Duty (RTD) Program in 2018. The unit was utilized for patrolling parks and trails, used as a resource for search and rescue and utilized for community events. Since the acquisition of 2 Polaris Sportsman 850 ATV's from the RTD Program, the RZR has been used less frequently due to its size. Maximum Defense is proposing to utilize the RZR for promotional purposes. Scharf also reviewed the current rifle equipment that is comprised of a number of platforms, most built or acquired over time. The benefits of acquiring new rifles for patrol vehicles include having a standardized patrol rifle across the Department, ease of carry, uniformity, weight, ease to dock/remove from patrol car, and ease of operation. Scharf stressed that the Department's readiness to respond to critical incidents and active threats, along with Officer safety, are the primary objectives in the training and equipping of our Officers. Using the resources from the Polaris RZR in this manner continues our intent of the RTD Program.

Council Member Zettervall questioned if there are any ties to the company that would present a conflict of interest for the City. Chief Scharf indicated that there are no ties to Maximum Defense and there is no conflict of interest. Scharf also noted that the City is getting much more in return for the trade.

Council Member Hansen motioned to approve the exchange of the Police Department's 2013 Polaris RZR for 10 Maximum Defense Patrol Rifles. Seconded by Council Member Knier, unanimous ayes, motion carried.

7E. Annual City Report

Clay Wilfahrt provided an annual City Report for 2019. Updates were provided on Community Development, Engineering, Finance, Public Works, the Fire Department, and the Municipal Liquor Store. Joel Scharf and Matt Hayen provided a 2019 update on the Police Department.

7F. Liquor Store Wage Increase Extension

Greg Zurbey reviewed the on-going major impact the COVID-19 Pandemic continues to have on the operations and Staff of the Municipal Liquor Store. Zurbey reviewed current staffing at the store, the substantial increase in sales and the increased number of customers Liquor Store Staff are in direct contact with. Staff recommended Council approve an extension of the temporary hourly increase of \$4.00 per hour for all Non-Exempt Liquor Store Staff effective through May 27, 2020.

Council Member Zettervall questioned when Staff thinks we will get back to normal hours. Zurbey explained that staffing availability is a concern along with government guidelines that have been enacted. Zurbey stressed that we want to limit staff's exposure to the public as much as possible. Zettervall asked how different the day-to-day operations is compared to pre-COVID-19. Zurbey discussed Staff turnover due to COVID-19, sanitizing of the store, working under hazardous conditions, and noted that Staff can't keep up with stocking shelves. Vendors are no longer coming into store which has increased work level and stress on management, and stressed that Staff is doing more in less time. Zettervall questioned how close to payroll neutral have we been. Deb Wegeleben reviewed payroll trends indicating that there were step increases during this timeframe. Wegeleben indicated that payroll is cost neutral, and profits are substantially higher.

Council Member Knier asked what has been the additional cost due to the wage increase. Wegeleben indicated that payroll has increased \$3,500 over nine payrolls since the start of 2020. Knier stated that he continues to be in favor of a \$2.00 increase and doesn't feel the need to continue on-going discussions on this topic.

Council Member Johnson stated that she is in favor of continuing the \$4.00 increase, and questioned if it still makes sense to have the Liquor Store Manager report at each meeting, or can Council approve the wage increase until such a time that the liquor store returns to normal operations.

Council Member Zettervall motioned to approve an extension of the temporary pay increase of \$4.00 per hour for all Non-Exempt Liquor Store Staff effective until Liquor Store Operations return to normal operations and Council provides direction to return to the normal pay scale. Seconded by Council Member Hansen, motion passed with a 4 to 1 vote

with Council Members Hansen, Johnson, Wallen, and Zettervall voting aye and Council Member Knier voting nay, motion carried.

7G. Monthly Department Reports

Fire Department – Assistant Fire Chief Mark Hedstrom provided statistical information on calls for service for the month of April. Hedstrom also reviewed small group training activities in April, a recent house fire in Orrock Township, congratulated Jim Jensen on his 15th year anniversary, thanked staff from Minnco Credit Union for visiting the station, discussed the new Command 1 vehicle, noted that applications for new firefighters will be accepted through May 15, reviewed birthday parades the Department has participated in during COVID-19, and reviewed campfire safety tips.

Mayor Wallen discussed the Police and Fire Department's participation in recognizing a Zimmerman student who is battling Leukemia. Mayor Wallen thanked both departments for their continued public service.

Police Department – Joel Scharf updated Council on police statistics, calls for service, significant arrests, and self-initiated policing activities for the month of April. Scharf discussed recent amendments to the City's Recreational Vehicle Ordinance, recent donations, and the landscaping project at the Police Department that was funded through donations as well as from help from Public Works Staff. Scharf also reviewed the Department's creation and management of a new Facebook page created solely for law enforcement agencies to buy, sell, trade, and donate surplus or retired property, reviewed community events during COVID-19, and recognized this week as Police Week 2020.

Engineering/Public Works Department – Layne Otteson provided an update on engineering projects underway in the City and activities in the various areas of the Public Works Department. Otteson reviewed new employee training, implementation of COVID-19 Phase II staffing processes, noted that the Safe Routes to School plans are under MNDOT review, discussed high water table complaints fielded by Staff, noted that fence permits are on the rise, and informed Council that Engineering Intern Dylan Lannes is back for the summer. Otteson also discussed the high level of the wetland area near Ormsbee and Meadow Lane, the low spot area at McDowall Park that was recently upgraded and remains dry, reviewed activities in the Streets/Parks Division and the Water/Wastewater Division, and discussed the Mitchell Boat Launch padlock and key access that went into effect on May 8, 2020.

7H. Hire of Part-time Liquor Clerk Brady Bebeau

Greg Zurbey discussed the recent resignation of a Part-time Liquor Clerk and interviews that were held earlier this week to fill the vacant position.

Council Member Johnson motioned to approve the hire of Brady Bebeau as a Part-time Liquor Clerk/Cooler Stocker contingent on a successful background check. Seconded by Council Member Zettervall, unanimous ayes, motion carried.

8. ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

Clay Wilfahrt reminded Council that summer hours will start the week of Memorial Day, and informed Council that the front desk at City Hall is now fully open and safety measures have been taken in response to COVID-19. Administrator Wilfahrt also discussed the Lakeside Park parking kiosk that has been ordered and thanked all Staff who participated in implementation of this type of equipment. Wilfahrt discussed new equipment in the Council Chambers that was funded by the Sherburne Wright Cable Commission through PEG and Cable Franchise Fees.

9. MAYOR & COUNCIL REPORTS and QUESTIONS/COMMENTS

Mayor Wallen: Discussed the May BLEDA Meeting, the recent Fire Board Meeting, and Personnel and Finance Committee Meetings. Wallen also discussed a recent meeting with Jared Johnson from Cargill who announced their plans for reopening their Big Lake facility.

Council Member Johnson: Discussed the BLEDA, BLCLA, Fire Board, and Personnel Committee Meetings that she attended in May.

Council Member Knier – Reviewed the May Finance Committee Meeting.

Council Member Zettervall: Reviewed the May Planning Commission Meeting.

10. OTHER – No other.

11. ADJOURN

Council Member Knier motioned to adjourn at 8:15 p.m. Seconded by Council Member Hansen, unanimous ayes, motion carried.

Gina Wolbeck
Clerk

Date Approved By Council _____ 05/27/2020