

**BIG LAKE CITY COUNCIL  
WORKSHOP MINUTES**

**AUGUST 24, 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 Hanna Klimmek, City Clerk Gina Wolbeck, Finance Director Deb Wegeleben, 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, and Big Lake Student Liaison Allie Cross.

**3. PROPOSED AGENDA**

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

**4. BUSINESS**

**4A. Big Lake Food Shelf Construction Proposal Discussion**

Hanna Klimmek reviewed the proposed construction proposal that has been requested by the Big Lake Community Food Shelf. Sandy McClurg discussed their vision for the remodeling project to provide a more efficient, safe, and inviting food shelf for staff, volunteers and guests. The space has become difficult to manage and keep up with, noting their increasing number of guests and the additional programming they have initiated to keep up with the needs of the community. They would like to open up the current space to resemble more of a warehouse setting, which would help make shopping and stocking more efficient and less crowded and the indoor portion of the remodel plan would immediately increase their shelf space by 46%. McClurg also noted that they would like to add a walk-in freezer/cooler combo unit to the outside of the building which will increase their cold storage space by 1,260 cubic feet. They anticipate an overall customer growth rate in 2022 to be between 25% to 30%. McClurg discussed that in first quarter 2022, their Freebie Friday program numbers have increased 43%, their Pop-Up Pantry program increased by 70%, their Mobile Food Shelf program increased by 28%, and their regularly monthly service increased by 7%. During the first quarter period, they have served 6,984 individuals and provided 156,196 pounds of food to those in need.

Mayor Knier asked what the project is expected to cost. McClurg responded that the Food Shelf has raised \$115,000 of the \$176,000 expected cost, noting that with funds they have already set aside they will be able to begin construction immediately.

Council Member Hanson asked what the life expectancy of the City Hall building is. Klimmek reviewed that there has been discussions on the future of the City Hall building and if the City Hall offices would be moving in the future, noting that she feels there needs to be more thought put into that by staff and Council. Hanson stated that he is concerned that with the cost of the Food Shelf improvements, we could be putting the Food Shelf in a bind if we decide to move. McClurg discussed that the biggest part of the project is the walk-in freezer and that would be moveable.

Council Member Noding asked when the parking lot in this area is slated for construction. Layne Otteson discussed the timeline for the ST2022-1 project, noting that it wouldn't be done until next year at the earliest. McClurg indicated that it would be better for them to construct their exterior project before the City reconstructs the parking lot area.

The general consensus of the Council was that they do not object to the improvements being considered for the Big Lake Community Food Shelf space.

#### **4B. Discuss Amendments to Chapter 8 (Municipal Utilities)**

Deb Wegeleben reviewed proposed changes to the municipal utilities code pertaining to water meter inspections and violations. After staff reviewed our current code language, it was determined that additional requirements were needed for the City to conduct water meter inspections. Wegeleben discussed that with the new water meter project starting this year, we need to be sure that staff has the ability to replace and/or repair meters. Staff recommends additional language regarding violations and unlawful acts pertaining to tampering with, illegally connecting to, or bypassing the City's water meter, which would all be considered theft of water.

Mayor Knier discussed the language as proposed and asked for changes to Section 800.10, A as he feels the language is too strong, noting the "authorized meter readers and repair personnel shall have access at reasonable hours of the day to all parts of every building" should possibly be changed to "authorized meter readers and repair personnel shall have access at reasonable hours of the day to water equipment areas". Council Member Halverson discussed the difference between residential and commercial water meter equipment, noting that we need language that will allow the City to investigate all water meter areas. Council Member Seefeld stressed that if an area of a structure is not pertaining to the water, staff does not need to inspect that area. Halverson stated that he would prefer the language be separated as commercial is going to be different than residential. Seefeld reiterated that if the inspection is pertaining to the water, then they should only have access to necessary areas. Council Member Hanson stated that he likes the equipment language and feels it would cover both residential and commercial.

Knier also asked for changes to Section 800.27, subd. 3, suggesting that the language should possibly indicate that the City rather than the City Administrator, notify users of the water system that additional use restrictions are being implemented.

Council Member Noding reviewed the language proposed under Section 800.10 B, relating to charges against and collected from the water consumer, suggesting that we add in a payment plan option for persons that are owing a substantial amount. Wegeleben responded that the whole intent of the section is that we want to correct the non-payment issue and encourage payment. Wegeleben also clarified that if the resident doesn't follow through with what they have committed to doing, their water will be shut off.

Noding also reviewed language under Section 800.23, Subd. 1 that pertains to theft. Wegeleben noted that staff will work with law enforcement to best determine appropriate language to reference state statute. Sam Olson reviewed penalty options for theft of services. Noding also discussed damage to property penalties.

Council directed Staff to bring back amendments to Chapter 8 of the City Code as discussed, for future Council consideration.

#### **4C. Discuss Financial Policy Amendment**

Deb Wegeleben reviewed proposed changes to the City's Financial Policy regarding adding information to the Utility Collection Policy to provide for those properties that have been designated by the City as subject to freezing pipes who are asked to run a slow stream of water during the winter months. Staff proposed that their water be billed at tier one in the event that this recommendation causes the user to use more than 6,500 gallons of water each month. Staff also recommended that if more than 6,500 gallons of water is used during that time, the account would receive a \$25 credit towards their sewer usage fee since those fees are based on water usage during the winter months.

Council Member Halverson discussed that if freezing issues arise from work completed by the City, we should layout the responsibilities of the City. Wegeleben reviewed that Staff will seek advice from the City Attorney on appropriate language that could be used to ensure protection for the residents, as well as the City. Hanna Klimmek also discussed that key public works and engineering staff should help identify processes for how we determine fault. Layne Otteson discussed that we should look at what other cities have done.

Council directed Staff to bring draft amendments to the City's Financial Policy to a future meeting for Council consideration.

#### **4D. ST2022-1 Project Update**

Layne Otteson provided an update on the 2022 Street and Utility Improvement project no. ST2022-1, noting that the project schedule started out strong, but hail storms and utility relocations have significantly changed the contractor's progression, as well as hindered other projects in the area. The contractor's original goal to complete all areas by November is no longer likely; however, the completion date is June 2023 per the contract. Staff continues to encourage the contractor to mobilize another crew, which would allow for work to be completed in two different areas this summer/fall. Otteson

reviewed that without substantial completion of the project, it is not expected that the project assessments will occur this fall, and the City will have to carry the costs for one year.

Council Member Halverson asked if by not doing the area up on top, how does that affect timeline and bonding. If we push it back a year will all the components be pushed back a year. Otteson reviewed the assessment process, noting that assessments would be delayed a year, after the project is fully completed.

Mayor Knier reviewed that delaying the assessments until next year will cost the City temporarily approximately \$150,000, but noted that the City will recoup that in 11 years. Knier also noted that we will have a savings on the project by removing Foley Avenue from the project.

#### **4E. Review Year-End Meeting Date Changes**

Gina Wolbeck reviewed potential Council Meeting date changes through year-end 2022 due to holiday conflicts. Council was asked to discuss whether they want to keep the regularly planned meeting date of November 23, move the meeting date a day ahead to Tuesday, November 22, or change it to Monday, November 8 and hold the Public Input Hearing during the regular meeting. Wolbeck also asked for Council feedback on the second meeting in December which falls two days after the Christmas Holiday. Wolbeck discussed that Council will be asked to set the Public Input Hearing date on November 28 at 6:00 p.m. and asked for discussion on designating a date to hold the annual Committee Workshop. The Chamber of Commerce generally schedules their Holiday Social either the first or second Thursday in December so staff is recommending setting the joint workshop to be held on Tuesday, December 6. Beginning at 5:00 p.m. Due to some scheduling conflicts, Council Members requested that the committee workshop be held on December 5 instead.

Council reviewed the proposed meeting date changes and directed Staff to move forward with moving the second meeting in November to be held on November 28, 2022 and to schedule the Public Input Hearing to be held during the regular meeting that same night, schedule the Public Input Hearing continuation date to be held on December 1 at 6:00 p.m., cancel the second Council Meeting in December, schedule the Joint Committee Workshop on Monday, December 5 at 5:00 p.m., and schedule the Joint City/County/Township/School Meeting at 6:00 p.m. on January 19, 2022 in the Council Chambers. Wolbeck noted that Staff will bring back an action item to the next meeting.

#### **5. OTHER**

Norm Michels discussed safety concerns with the gate entrance and parking at Lakeside Park. Staff have expressed concerns with reactions from park users when the vehicle/trailer parking is at capacity on weekends. Michels stressed that aggression has significantly increased towards park attendants and he is concerned about the safety of the park attendants as well as for park users. Michels proposed that we position one park attendant at the exit gate and block access for vehicles inappropriately trying to enter the park through the exit lane. Council Member Noding asked if these people have parking passes, and Michels responded that it is across the board and clarified that there is no reserved parking even for pass holders. Council Member Halverson asked if there is a way we can work with the County for the next holiday

weekend as the water patrol is their responsibility, and suggested we work on a solution to implement next season. Staff reviewed that discussions have been held, and Michels indicated that he will be reaching out to the County.

Council Member Hanson asked if we will still allow the launch and leave option. Michels responded that the launch and leave option hasn't been changed so boat users will still have that option, but that the police department has, and will continue to address parking violations in areas surrounding the lake. Halverson asked if we would have to sign the parking area to make it enforceable, and Sam Olson responded that regulations are already appropriately posted.

Hanna Klimmek informed Council that Building Official Lenny Rutledge has submitted his Advanced Resignation notice. Rutledge will be retiring effective January 31, 2023, and the Personnel Committee has reviewed and authorized the possibility of performing an interjurisdictional transfer to fill the position.

Council Member Noding reviewed a recent Facebook discussion relating to BLCLA information pertaining to AIS treatments at our lakes. Noding commented that the BLCLA received negative attention due to the treatments and asked for support from the City to post information on our Facebook page to alleviate concerns about the treatment materials used. Layne Otteson indicated that he has already responded to the comments and concerns have been addressed. Council discussed putting the information on the City Facebook page as well.

**6. ADJOURN**

Council Member Seefeld motioned to adjourn at 5:46 p.m. Seconded by Council Member Hanson unanimous ayes, motion carried.

Gina Wolbeck  
City Clerk

09/14/22  
Date Approved By Council