

**BIG LAKE CITY COUNCIL
WORKSHOP MINUTES**

SEPTEMBER 13, 2023

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, Community Development Director Therese Haffner, Police Captain Sam Olson, Streets/Parks/Fleet Superintendent Norm Michels, Water/Wastewater Superintendent Dan Childs, and Big Lake Student Liaison Allie Cross.

3. PROPOSED AGENDA

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

4. BUSINESS

4A. Discuss Well No. 2 Improvements

Dan Childs discussed the redevelopment of Well No. 2. During the redevelopment, a hole was discovered in the well casing and the MN Department of Health (MDH) approved a variance allowing non-code compliant repairs and for the City to continue using the well until the end of 2023. Childs reviewed a future project would modify the Well No. 2 site to be similar to the Well No. 1 site with the replacement of the existing well house, with two manholes and electrical components. The start-up of Well No. 1 last week brought online a completely reconstructed well and site facilities, which led staff to question the urgency of replacing Well No. 2. The City hired SEH, Inc. to explore options available for the City to consider. Option No. 1 would include drilling a brand new replacement well a short distance north of the existing well house and temporarily connect to the existing raw water piping inside the well house. This would replace the well, but delay the urgency of a project to replace the existing well house and electrical components with manholes and other site improvement to a time in the near future. The total estimated project cost of Option No. 1 is \$930,000. Option No. 2 would include demolishing the well house, overshoot existing Well No. 2, and redesign the well site to be similar to the Well No. 1 site all at once. The estimated project cost for Option 2 is \$900,000. Childs stated staff feels Option No. 1 is not a viable option due to concerns the new well will not operate as efficiently as it does in its current location, noting while this is an unknown, there are significant concerns with Option No. 1. The biggest concern of

sealing Well No. 2 is it is impossible to know for certain what a new well could supply until it is drilled and a pump is installed. Staff feels the best option is for the City to replace the casing in the existing well, which is Option 2 as discussed. Childs reviewed funding for this option would come from Water CIP fund 399, which would require the City to postpone rehabilitation of Water Tower No. 3 until year 2025.

Mayor Knier asked if we would get more longevity if we drilled a new well as opposed to rehabilitating the old one. Childs responded all new wells by today's standards are double cased with grout in between the casings which will give us a projected 100-year well. Childs also noted this projected timeline would be the same with a rehab as well.

Council Member Halverson noted the cost difference between the options is only \$30,000, with the cheaper cost being rehabbing the well which would give us a well that we will know what we are going to get.

Council Member Seefeld asked if the cons out-weigh the pros with Option 1. Childs reiterated we won't know what we are going to get with drilling a whole new well.

Council Member Noding asked what the timing would be for rehabilitating Well No. 2. Childs responded it will be a couple years out, noting he feels more comfortable with that timeline now that Well No. 1 is operational.

Council unanimously directed Staff to move forward Option No. 2 which includes replacing the casing in the existing well and postponing the rehabilitation of Water Tower No. 3 until 2025.

4B. Discuss Parking Kiosk Payment Box

Deb Wegeleben reviewed the history of the City purchasing and installing the parking kiosk payment box at Lakeside Park. In February 2020, staff started looking at alternatives for daily parking at Lakeside Park. Options considered included installing a gate as well a parking box for payment. In April 2020, staff brought forward the Lakeside Park parking policy due to COVID concerns at the time, which was an effort to reduce staff contact at the park and move towards a cashless collection for safety purposes. At that time, Council directed we move forward with the Smart Parking Meter System Kiosk. Wegeleben reviewed after much discussion among staff including the Public Works Superintendent, City Engineer, City Administrator, Police Chief and Finance Director, the direction was determined to go with the walk-up payment system instead of a gate entrance. The parking box was installed in May 2020 at a total cost of \$10,216.50 which was funded with COVID funds. Wegeleben discussed issues we have experienced with double charges, which are estimated to be 30 to 50 customers each year. The issue is due to the machine not being a chip reader and the customer not understanding they have to remove their card before the card is processed. The machine also does not produce a receipt automatically which has led to confusion, noting staff has placed instructions on the parking box to assist customers with using the box. Wegeleben reviewed revenue generated from parking at Lakeside Park which is used to help cover wages of seasonal staff and maintenance at the park. Wegeleben reviewed options for addressing issues we have seen at the park relating to the payment kiosk. Option 1 is to keep the equipment as is while doing additional training with staff on how the kiosk works, Option 2 is to upgrade the equipment to a

new enhanced model which would allow a more detailed script on screen, Option 3 is to only sell seasonal parking passes, which would require adjustments to future budgets to account for the \$50,000 loss in daily parking pass revenue, or Option 4 would be to eliminate the fee for parking at Lakeside Park, which would generate a \$75,000 loss in revenue annually and a transfer from the CIP fund would be necessary to accommodate this option for 2024. Wegeleben stated the revenue generated from parking at Lakeside Park lowers the total levy amount each year.

Council Member Halverson asked what a \$7,000 upgrade will provide. Wegeleben responded it would be a new machine, the screen would be a little easier to read, and the messaging would be easier to change for staff. Halverson discussed what it is costing us to have staff constantly refunding over payments.

Council Member Hanson discussed the possible option to use QR Code signage instead of a kiosk. Wegeleben commented even these will create technology issues, especially for those individuals who come to the beach without a phone or other device.

Mayor Knier suggested we try improving our training to seasonal employees on how to use the payment box so they can help people use the machine correctly.

Halverson asked how many citations get issued over a normal weekend. Sam Olson estimated they write 30 citations per month at Lakeside Park, noting each parking citation is \$50. Halverson stated he would rather have officers out patrolling streets over writing parking citations, with Knier responding parking citations are part of the job.

Council Member Seefeld asked if we would still have to have seasonal staff at the lake if we decide to eliminate the parking fee at Lakeside Park. Wegeleben responded we would have to raise our levy as we would no longer have the \$75,000 we budget and we would still have to pay for staff. Knier noted we would have a lot more parking issues at the lake if we didn't have a fee. Halverson stated he refuses to go to the park because he refuses to pay for parking at a park his taxes go to. Knier stated his taxes don't go towards the park, they go to everything else, and because we charge for parking, his taxes don't have to go towards that. If we didn't charge for parking, then his taxes would have to go towards the park. Halverson responded the park does not pay for itself, and park dedication funds were used from over by his house to pay for the parking lot improvements at Lakeside Park. Wegeleben noted the parking fees reduce the amount we have to levy by \$75,000.

Council directed Staff to improve the payment box training for seasonal employees who work at Lakeside Park so they are able to assist park users paying for parking on site.

5. OTHER

Council Member Hanson discussed the \$4,000 he has secured for walleye stocking at Big Lake and Lake Mitchell. Hanson reviewed he has received a \$500 donation from the Big Lake Lions Club, \$1,500 donation from the Big Lake American Legion Post 147, \$1,500 donation from Big Lake Spud Fest, and \$500 from the Graniteman Triathlon. With the costs expected to be \$5,000, Hanson asked for Council support for the City to fund the remaining \$1,000 needed. Council unanimously directed the use of \$1,000 in City funds to

complete the walleye stocking project this fall.

Therese Haffner reviewed the need for the Council and the Big Lake Economic Development Authority to meet jointly to discuss next steps with the old school/community building space. The joint meeting could be held prior to a BLEDA meeting, or could be held during a Council workshop.

Council Member Halverson asked why the BLEDA would be involved in discussions on the City Hall space of this building. Haffner responded this is the reason why we should be meeting jointly to discuss the direction of both spaces of the building. Knier discussed BLEDA is involved in the discussions because BLEDA is involved with economic development and we are on one of the most valuable pieces of real estate in the City. Haffner also noted she is in active discussions with the Pizza Factory in regards to relocating to the former Jerky Shoppe space which is City owned. Seefeld and Halverson questioned if this discussion can be done in 50 minutes. Discussion was held on scheduling the joint workshop on a stand-alone meeting night, or moving the start time of a Council workshop up to 4:30 p.m. Due to scheduling conflicts on October 18, Council directed staff to start the October 11 Council Workshop at 4:30 p.m. Klimmek noted this is just a first conversation between the BLEDA and Council and another workshop can be scheduled at a later date.

Hanna Klimmek reviewed the previous franchise fee discussion where Council directed staff to bring back further discussion in January 2024. Klimmek noted staff is recommending this discussion come back in November 2023 as changes could affect the 2024 budget. Klimmek also reviewed the past discussions on Council committee appointments, noting changes to the Council's appointment will be reviewed at year end, for implementation at the first meeting in January 2024.

6. ADJOURN

Council Member Hanson motioned to adjourn at 5:27 p.m. Seconded by Council Member Seefeld, unanimous ayes, motion carried.

Gina Wolbeck
City Clerk

09.27.23
Date Approved by Council