

**BIG LAKE CITY COUNCIL  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES  
JANUARY 11, 2023**

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

Mayor Paul Knier called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

**2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

**3. 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, City Planner Lucinda Spanier, City Engineer Layne Otteson, Police Chief John Kaczmarek, Streets/Parks/Fleet Superintendent Norm Michels, Water/Wastewater Superintendent Dan Childs, and Big Lake Student Liaison Allie Cross.

Mayor Knier invited Pastor Dan and Barb Montague, members of Living Waters Church, to conduct an invocation to start the meeting off.

**4. OPEN FORUM**

Mayor Knier opened the Open Forum at 6:01 p.m.

George Quinn, Lake Street South – discussed plowing issues at the corner of Highway 25/10 affecting businesses located in this area. The plowing situation has been a thorn in the side of the City and businesses since the redesign of this intersection over a decade ago. Quinn noted that he notified the City that the area was going to be an issue prior to the last storm. It is understood that this area is MNDOT's responsibility and they agree with that. It is their responsibility to plow the sidewalks, clear the street curb to curb, and ensure parking spaces are open for customers. It is MNDOT that is placing snow on the sidewalk, over the parking spaces, and putting a large snow pile in the area near the railroad tracks. If it's the merchants job to clean the sidewalks and they don't, the City will fine them. Private contractors are not plowing a 30-foot long, 10-foot high, 15-foot wide snow bank to the right of the railroad crossing. It is not in the best interest of Public

Works to tell BNSF or MNDOT that the merchants are responsible for the bad condition of the sidewalk and snow bank. It is not in the best interest to fail to meet with taxpaying businesses but to brush them off and tell us to have a good weekend. The new businesses that are there cannot survive if customers can't even get into the store, and asked why it is necessary for him as a citizen to make arrangements and actually meet with MNDOT officials at the site. If this is a state issue, then why did the City spend two and a half hours on a 20-ton bulldozer removing that snow bank. This could all be taken care if we just do the plow.

Mayor Knier closed the Open Forum at 6:04 p.m.

Mayor Knier noted that Council Members Halverson and Noding were sworn in to office prior to the 5:00 p.m. Workshop.

**5. PROPOSED AGENDA**

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

**6. CONSENT AGENDA**

Council Member Halverson motioned to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. Seconded by Council Member Hanson unanimous ayes, Consent Agenda approved. The Consent Agenda consisted of: 6A. Approve List of Claims, 6B. Approve Council Workshop Minutes of December 14, 2022, 6C. Approve Regular Council Meeting Minutes of December 14, 2022, 6D. Accept Resignation from Part-time Liquor Clerk Zach Gesicki, 6E. Accept Resignation from Parks Advisory Committee Member Kristi DeCamillis, 6F. Approve Collective Bargaining Agreement with Law Enforcement Labor Services, 6G. Approve Purchase of Utility Locator Equipment, 6H. Approve In-House Fleet Service Agreement with the Big Lake Fire Department, 6I. Approve Hire of Part-time Liquor Clerk Brian Kramer, 6J. Approve Conditional Offer of Employment to Michael Kern to the Police Officer Position, 6K. Approve Conditional Use Permit Resolution No. 2023-01 for Style Catering, Inc. at 617 Rose Drive, 6L. Approve Conditional Use Permit Resolution No. 2023-02 for 421 Foley Avenue, 6M. Approve Sponsoring Agency Resolution No. 2023-03 and Operation/Maintenance Resolution No. 2023-04 for the MNDOT Transportation Alternatives Grant Application for the Pedestrian and School Crossing Safety Enhancement Project, 6N. Approve Sponsoring Agency Resolution No. 2023-05 and Operation/Maintenance Resolution No. 2023-06 for the MNDOT Transportation Alternatives Grant Application for the Pedestrian Connectivity Project, 6O. Approve Resolution No. 2023-07 and Order for Repair and Removal of Hazardous Conditions at 421 Eagle Lake Road North, and 6P. Accept Source Water Protection Competitive and Implementation Grant Awards.

**7. BUSINESS**

**7A. Annual Update – Sherburne County Attorney Kathleen Heaney**

Sherburne County Attorney Kathleen Heaney provided an update on the Sherburne County Attorney's Office statistics and services provided to the City in 2022. Heaney reviewed Big Lake cases their office sees as part of the prosecution contract with the City including petty misdemeanors, misdemeanors, and enhanced gross misdemeanors. Her office also statutorily handles gross misdemeanor and felony cases as well. Per the contract, a portion of the fines that are set aside for prosecution services are the monies that are remitted back to the Sherburne County Attorney's Office for payment of their time. Last year there were 733 cases that came out of the City of Big Lake that were handled through the district court. In return for handling those 733 cases, the County Attorney's Office received the prosecutors portion of the fine, which amounted to \$10,041.75. This equates to \$13.70 for every case they handled. Heaney noted that they are through most of their backlog with felonies and gross misdemeanors. They are still working through some of the petty misdemeanors and misdemeanors. The court has added additional calendars, initially with retired judges, and now they are using referees to try and handle that backlog. Juvenile cases they are handling now are more serious in nature than in the past, so they have reallocated some of their caseloads so they are able to spend more time dealing with those cases that are coming through. Heaney also reviewed that 44 gross misdemeanor cases were referred to their office last year, and during that same time 46 felony cases were also referred for review and potential charging. Heaney commended the Big Lake Police Department, noting that they have continued to collaborate with other agencies across the county, and the implementation of the mental health co-responder program has been embraced by the local police department.

Mayor Knier asked how case numbers compare to the previous years. Heaney responded that in terms of Big Lake case numbers, overall they are about even. Countywide case referrals in 2020/2021 increased double digit in certain areas, but this past year, they haven't seen the double-digit increases. Knier also discussed that he recalls that last year, Heaney had mentioned that Sherburne County had a higher percentage of prosecution compared to other counties. Heaney responded that she doesn't remember that discussion last year. Heaney noted that she appreciates the opportunity to serve the City.

**7B. Big Lake Freedom Rock Canopy Project Fundraiser Contract**

Deb Wegeleben reviewed the request from the Citizens for the Big Lake Freedom Rock to hold a fundraiser to secure funding for a canopy over the Freedom Rock site. Wegeleben indicated that the group would like the City to enter into a contract with Deuces Wild! LLC for a fundraising event scheduled on April 22, 2023 at the Buff in Big Lake. The proceeds from the event, along with

continued sales of pavers, will be used to construct the canopy as well as continued upkeep of the Freedom Rock and viewing area.

Council Member Noding motioned to authorize a Freedom Rock Canopy Project fundraising event on April 22, 2023, and approve a Contract between Deuces Wild! LLC and the City of Big Lake for the event. Seconded by Council Member Seefeld, unanimous ayes, motion carried.

### **7C. 2023 Official City and Council Committee Appointments**

Hanna Klimmek reviewed recommendations from Mayor Knier for Council appointments for 2023, as well as various City appointments including the Big Lake Fire Relief Association, Tax Assessor, City Attorney, Financial Consultants, Prosecuting Attorney, Official Newspaper, Official Depositories, and committee/staff appointments. Klimmek also reviewed Council direction from the Workshop to change the City's designated newspaper from the Elk River Star News to the Patriot News MN based on distribution.

Council Member Seefeld motioned to approve Resolution No. 2023-08 adopting the 2023 Official City and Council committee appointments with amendments to the City's designated newspaper to the Patriot News MN. Seconded by Council Member Noding. Mayor Knier asked for any further discussion.

Council Member Halverson stated that he has served for over 2 years, he was elected by the most votes at two elections, so the taxpayers have spoken that they expect him to represent them and he should be able to represent them in the best manner in which he can. Halverson reviewed past discussions with the Mayor about putting him on the Fire Board due to his knowledge of the department. Then the Mayor talked to some other people and then changed his mind. Halverson stated that this is absolutely ludicrous; he spent 30 years on the department and stated that there is not one person on this council who has more knowledge about the Fire Department. He has had to sit here and watch us do frivolous spending and not have any say about it. He stated that he knows what questions to ask, but that the current Fire Board Members don't know what questions to ask. He is disappointed in the Mayor because his job is to put the people in the right positions and on the right boards to best represent the City. In his opinion, if the Mayor can't distance himself from the personal issues, noting that he has sat here watching us do frivolous spending on a truck with push button valves because the Chief says the new generation wants the push buttons. That was \$28,000 of taxpayer money. He has watched them recommend that now we are going to put black paint on trucks which is going to cost us tens of thousands of dollars in the long run because now we are going to do every truck down the road. Halverson stated that he has asked questions about information and got push back on timing and access of data so he had to go to the County to get legitimate information, which was presented to the Mayor. This is the second go around on this and noted that Paul Knier ran on being fiscally responsible, and that your vote matters. If the

taxpayers vote matters, how come by what he does goes exactly against the voting people. If he can't do that, then how can he be the Mayor when he is so influenced by people, and he doesn't do what the taxpayers tell him to do by voting. Halverson stressed that they voted him on twice with the highest vote count, twice they expect him to represent them in the best manner, and Knier as the Mayor overrides their votes. He is the Mayor for now, but if we don't start changing, then he thinks we need a new Mayor. We need a new Mayor who is willing to look out for the taxpayers, look out for the best interest and put the people in the right positions and if he can't do that, then he has a problem and we need a new Mayor. Mayor Knier stated that he appreciates Council Member Halverson speaking his mind. Halverson stated that he wants to stop watching money go down the drain and that we need to be more fiscally responsible. Knier noted that Halverson was given the freedom to speak and he now gets to say a little bit as well. Knier stated that he is watching out for the taxpayers, clarifying that he was elected as well. Knier acknowledged that Halverson is very knowledgeable when it comes to the Fire Department, stressing that he would love to recommend putting him on the Fire Board, but there is too much history. You don't know how many people that don't have a horse in the race that have come to him and said that it would be a bad idea, and that we would have all sorts of ramifications if that were to happen. Knier noted that he is feeling it right now, with Halverson taking things to an extreme level. Halverson responded that these are all facts and asked what is extreme by him stating the facts. Knier responded that Halverson has a difference of opinions, noting that he has talked to other people who are not involved in the Fire Department, and have different opinions than what Halverson has. Some feel that the color change on the truck can foster some pride in the department and is also a great thing if you have a large scale event where your firemen can find a truck in a hurry, and noted that this very experienced, non-Big Lake Fire Department person he was talking to, had commented that it wouldn't be a problem with an experienced fire fighter, but for a new fire fighter it might be beneficial to have that black stripe on our vehicles. Your opinions are your opinions, they are differing from other people's opinions, but that doesn't make other people's opinions wrong. Halverson commented on the truck coming in over budget and then you make it more over budget by doing these things. Knier stressed that the truck was not over budget by more than \$3,000. Halverson stated that we should take our money and spend it on AED's, thermal imagers, and CBA's. Knier responded that Halverson just stated that the truck was over budget and it made it more over budget, which is not a true statement. The fact that they put the black paint on was not over budget and generally speaking, there is a budget buffer built in that was acceptable. Halverson stated that when you start doing these things, you create a standard for the next truck. Halverson quoted price increases for the valves and paint, which is not fiscally responsible as these improvements don't add life safety. Halverson discussed that the Mayor can't stand up to people, and that he was previously told he would be on the Fire Board and then Knier changed his mind. The difference between himself, Knier, and the people on the Fire Board is that by putting him on the Fire Board, all four people get both sides. Knier asked Halverson why he doesn't come to meetings and speak during open forum. Halverson responded that as a Council Member he shouldn't have to speak at open forum. Halverson stated that if the

Fire Board so chooses to be neglectful and not want to be educated on the things that are going on, that's a legitimate problem. Knier stressed that is not the case, they review the details as they are presented. Halverson commented that they hash through everything so much that the former City Administrator gave him the blue prints for the truck and asked him to go through it because they didn't understand it. Halverson asked why we don't put the right person on the board. Knier responded that there is so much history there, that it could be a problem. Halverson stated that there is only history there because Knier chooses to hang his hat on history. When the Department Head won't give him correct information that is requested by a Council person, and when it is given it isn't correct information, and asked if this is him being disrespectful to them, or them being disrespectful to him. Knier responded that it depends on who you ask, they would say the other way, and Halverson says another. Halverson stressed that if it is a Council person requesting the information, they should answer the question correctly, and when you don't, it shows that you are not being truthful and that is exactly what happened during the meeting. He was elected by majority votes twice, and Knier is not doing his job by putting the right people on the right board because of a foregone conclusion that something is going to happen. Nothing has happened in two years, but Knier has continued to hang his hat on something that hasn't happened. Knier restated that it is a concern. He addressed a comment made by Halverson that he has personal issues, and asked for more information on that statement. Halverson responded that Knier is influenced by other people. Knier clarified that he does not have a personal issue with Halverson, and Halverson stated that Knier doesn't have the resolve as the Mayor to stand up and say this is what was voted, these are the people that voted, this is what they said, this is the representation they want. Knier stressed that you don't get a blank check to do whatever you feel is best because you were elected. The Council is a body and we all will decide this together, as far as who is best for the committees and who is best suited. Knier acknowledged that Halverson is knowledgeable, but we need more than knowledge, we need to have someone who can work with a team. He would love to have Halverson come to the meetings if he wants to help out, but he is not going to recommend Halverson for the Fire Board as he is concerned what would happen to the Fire Department. Halverson stated that he would like to hear what would happen to the Fire Department and asked how one person's input will change everything. Knier again stated that there is a lot of history between Halverson and the Fire Department, and Halverson clarified that he retired from the Department, noting that he did not leave dishonorably. Knier stated that Halverson was upset at the Fire Department. Halverson again stated that Knier needs to do his job, and his job as the Mayor is to put the right people on the right committees. Knier stated that he agrees with that statement. Halverson responded that by doing this, we are going to continue to waste money, we are going to continue to put wants in front of needs, and we are just going to let it go. Halverson stated that Knier has proved that by the things that have happened. They don't even question things and now we are going to go for three more trucks in the next couple of years and we don't have one representation on the City Council that has knowledge other than himself, and he is kept on the outside. Mayor Knier stated that Halverson's knowledge is great and he would love to have him come to the Fire Board Meetings. He was encouraged to call the Mayor with concerns, and

noted that he hasn't gotten any calls from Halverson with specific concerns regarding the Fire Board. Halverson stated that he gave Knier information about that first truck and it got blown up at the meeting. Halverson stated that you have to be knowledgeable about what you are dealing with. He doesn't debate with Knier about finances, and he shouldn't debate with him about the Fire Department. Knier responded that he isn't debating with Halverson about a lot of the details, but he has to be able to work with people. Halverson commented that it is a two-way street, they have to be willing to work with him also.

Council Member Noding commented that we have had discussions about this, and her thought is that she is of two minds on this topic. Part of her will willingly serve, but the other half feels she is not the best person to represent the interests of the Fire Department and we clearly have someone here who has more knowledge. Noding discussed the ability to work with each other, and someone pointed out to her today that these are people who have dived into burning buildings to save people. They have a certain attitude and willingness about them, they don't give it a second thought, they just dive right in and go in and save people. Noding acknowledged that they can be relatively strong-willed, and stated that she would happily give up her seat to Ken, even on a trial basis to see if it will work out. If it doesn't work out, it can be switched back. Even though they are strong-willed and have strong opinions and may disagree strongly on things, she thinks they can work together to get along civilly with each other. Either way the vote goes, she will happily serve, but acknowledged that she is not the most knowledgeable or most qualified person, which she has mentioned to more than one of you.

Council Member Hanson asked for an amendment to the Motion on the table to appoint Council Member Noding to the Big Lake Community Education Advisory Committee, and Council Member Hanson being appointed to the Big Lake Community Lakes Association. The requested amendment to the Motion was accepted by Council Member Seefeld. Motion passed with a vote of 4:1 with Council Members Hanson, Knier, Noding and Seefeld voting aye, and Council Member Halverson voting against. Motion carried.

#### **7D. Big Lake Fire Station Easement Agreements**

Layne Otteson reviewed the request from Sherburne County for permanent acquisition of 17 feet of land in front of the Fire Station for the County Road 43 improvements. Otteson indicated that a temporary construction easement and permanent easement would need to be obtained from the City and Township to accomplish the County's planned construction in this area. Otteson reviewed that Sherburne County is offering payment in the amount of \$4,869 to the City and Township for the conveyance of the easement.

Council Member Halverson asked if they will cut out the front apron at the Fire Station. Otteson reviewed that typically they do, and then restore at completion, noting that it will be built to

interstate standards. Otteson also noted that he will work closely with the County to minimize the amount of apron that will be disrupted, and will work to make sure it is built back to acceptable standards.

Council Member Noding motioned to approve Resolution No. 2023-09 to accept compensation in the amount of \$4,869 and approve temporary and permanent easement agreements with Sherburne County for Parcel No. 10-120-2403 subject to concurrent approval by Big Lake Township. Seconded by Council Member Hanson, unanimous ayes, motion carried.

## **7E. Department Reports**

Engineering Department – City Engineer Layne Otteson provided an update on engineering projects underway in the City. Otteson reviewed grant applications underway for pedestrian safety and trail/walk gaps, discussed the status of the ST2022-1 street project noting that work will resume in the spring on the north side of the lakes, noted that the County Road 43 project design is 98% complete and construction will likely start in June or July 2023, and reviewed that staff is looking at the 2023 infrastructure plan that focuses on street preservation efforts.

Council Member Noding asked if the CR 43 project design includes everything including the roundabout portion as well as other City improvements. Otteson responded that CR 43 is expected to be constructed in summer/fall of 2023 which means they will start in the spring and work probably all the way up until snow. There may be some leftover restoration and minor work that will take place in 2024. The roundabout and main corridor will be constructed and substantially complete unless there are hiccups, but they have performed a lot of utility work last year in this area and have moved out of the way. Noding asked if any of our utility work was done last year or is that still yet to come. Otteson responded that our utility work includes brand new sanitary sewer and water main, and will be going in the ground when they tear it all up.

Council Member Halverson asked what the intention is for the Fire Hall lift station. Otteson responded that it is not for him to decide. Halverson asked if it is Otteson's suggestion for us to hook up to City water and sewer. Otteson indicated that we are extending the sanitary sewer to the south west corner of the Fire Department property. We are going to stub out at an angle to the northeast into the property and that is as far as this project will take it. If it is the wishes of the Fire Department to connect to that and run it to the building, that is something that they can do at any time. It does make sense that when you have an opportunity to replace a parking lot, that at that time you look at doing underground work. They have had some discussion on the condition of the Fire Station parking lot and what it would cost to do that. If we do improvements to the parking lot, then we should take the next step and look at getting the pipe underground because you don't want to put a brand new parking lot in and then decide after to install pipes underneath. It is a likely discussion that we will be having with the Fire Department. Halverson also discussed



connecting sewer and water from Minnesota Avenue to Glenwood Avenue so it loops the system. Otteson discussed that the water main will connect north to south from Glenwood Avenue to Minnesota Avenue, and the sanitary will extend north from Minnesota Avenue northerly on the east side of CR 43 just to the corner of the Fire Department property, noting that is as far as it will go. One of the reasons why, is because it runs out of elevation as you keep going with gravity, you start coming up out of the ground. On the north end where the roundabout takes place, we have sewer there that we will be extending to the south, because as that comes to the south it starts going up and we can only go so far that direction.

Student Liaison Allie Cross provided an update on Big Lake Schools. Cross provided an update on enrollment statistics, Big Lake Hornet Hospitality projects, Student Council activities, the Veteran's Day celebration at Liberty Elementary, and the use of Otus and Seesaw learning systems for e-learning days.

## **8. ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT**

City Administrator Hanna Klimmek reminded Council of next week's Joint Meeting with City/County/School/Township officials on Thursday, January 19, 2023. Klimmek also provided an update on staff and legal work on policy regarding expansion of licensed premises for events that our liquor license holders have throughout the spring/summer/fall months. Klimmek provided an update on HF 100 which is an adult-use cannabis bill that has been introduced and was scheduled for a hearing, today, in the House Commerce Finance and Policy Committee. The bill includes the THC edible products and is meant to establish a Cannabis Management Board, which would be responsible for all licensing and oversight of cannabis and cannabinoid products, with extremely limited local control.

## **9. MAYOR & COUNCIL REPORTS and QUESTIONS/COMMENTS**

Mayor Knier: reviewed the January BLEDA Meeting.

Council Member Halverson: discussed a BLEDA training session he attended, and reviewed a meeting with Norm at Public Works to discuss ways to make it easier for them to order vehicles and equipment. Council Member Seefeld encouraged Council Members to also read the Planning Commission packets and minutes as they provide a lot of good feedback.

Council Member Hanson: discussed the BLBYR Meeting, and reviewed a meeting he attended with Council Member Halverson to get a more in-depth understanding on how the BLEDA operates. Hanson also reviewed the recent Personnel Committee Meeting he attended.

Council Member Noding: reviewed the recent BLEDA and BLCLA Meetings.

Council Member Seefeld: discussed the CMRP Meeting and the January Planning Commission Meeting. Seefeld also reviewed the recent Personnel Committee Meeting he attended.

**10. OTHER**

Council Member Halverson discussed that people sit around and worry about big government and the federal government. He feels people better start to open their eyes about what is going on right here in our own town. Since he has been on the Council he has asked for a data release from Administration and found out we had a Department Head that was selling tens of thousands of dollars' worth of City equipment on EBAY, and bringing the money in through their own personal PayPal account. He has talked to the City Administrator and was told that they have plugged the hole, but that has been brought up to the Mayor a couple of times. There are some other things that people need to know that happened during his first two years that he doesn't understand. We allowed that development to use land that evidently has hazards built into it, we made it into an open area or park area. So far since he has been up here he has seen us take apartments and say we don't need decks, we don't need covered parking, when all the other communities around us are asking and requiring these types of things. That builds a better place which creates more tax money because the building is worth more money and we have chosen to go the other way and remove it. One statement that keeps being brought up is in order to pay debt off by 2034, we are going to be debt free. People need to pay attention because, no we are not going to be debt free by 2034, we have an enormous package coming for the wastewater treatment plant so that is not a true statement. We are having this deal with the water bills. We have spent hundreds of hours on these water meters and we signed a contract on this and we are still having meetings and we are still bringing people in and we are still taking up staff time and stuff like that. These things are costing the taxpayer's money. The contract is already signed. He stressed that he has sat up here and watched us take sidewalks out of developments that the developer would have to pay to put in at no expense to the taxpayers. This is a developer putting in a development and putting sidewalks in, and we have so chosen to take them out of there. That is not building a better community, that is not building a better area. That is going the wrong way. He has sat up here and had many discussions about the towing contract, and our City staff came up with a deal. He calls it government overreach when we are picking one company over another company just because. He has sat up here and it is very tough to sit up here when these things are happening when they aren't in the best interest of our community. We should be moving forward, we should be requiring nicer apartments, we should be requiring sidewalks in developments, we should be requiring this stuff, we should be trying to figure out payments being made to personal EBAY and PayPal accounts. Halverson noted that he has the receipts as he had submitted a data request. It's not hard to look through it, but we need to get back to being fiscally responsible and answerable to the taxpayers who voted us into these chairs. That is not being answerable to them. Halverson noted that we had the City Planner go out and spend weeks on beekeeping research and she stood

at the podium and said that she needs this to do her job, and we overrode her. Mayor Knier asked Halverson to further explain that comment. Halverson reviewed that when Lucinda stood at the podium and said that she needs registered surveys so that she can legitimately do her job and so we know that they are on their property. She spent all that time and effort making a recommendation and we completely overrode her. We talk about staff time and doing the best job utilizing them, noting that we pay these people a lot of money to do a job, and we continuously override them, questioning if we are really doing what is in the best interest of the community. Halverson stated that he would like to see some of the hidden agendas and opinions, stressing that we have to start standing up for our community. He brought in the facts that show that the population of Big Lake has the largest demographic of the most people hit by cars every year. We are in that perfect number and we are taking out sidewalks when they are at no expense to us. From here forward, he would really like the City Council to consider what's in the best interest of our taxpayers, to consider where we are spending our money, and to use our staff how they should be used. He understands that we are going to disagree with them sometimes. Mayor Knier asked Halverson to say one thing that the Council has done right. Halverson stated that there is stuff that has been done right, but we are doing things that he feels is pulling our community down instead of pushing them up. When people come in and they legitimately ask us to look at everyone's picture, not just our own.

Mayor Knier stated that we all have opinions, noting that there are two sides to every issue. He stated that he would argue that 90% of what Council Member Halverson just said was erroneous in one way or another. He made it sound like Halverson talked to him about the EBAY and PayPal thing. He made it seem like Halverson talked to him about that while it was going on and he ignored it. That never happened. Halverson stated that he brought up to Knier at a meeting and his own opinion is that he would have liked the Mayor to look at him and ask how we plug that hole and not let that happen again. Knier discussed that this discussion happened after that happened and the person who did it had resigned. Halverson expressed that if they are supposed to be on the Finance Committee then he would have expected a different response out of the Mayor, more like holy schnickey, how do we plug this hole.

Council Member Hanson stated that he would like to speak to some hidden agendas. Last week he was brought into a meeting to listen to a phone recording of Council Member Halverson. This conversation was between the current Fire Chief Seth Hansen and Ken. The conversation wasn't started to be recorded until later on at a point of yelling by Council Member Halverson. In this recording, he called the Fire Department a bunch of scum sucking maggots. He went on further to say that he has no reason to hold himself to a high standard. This was in regard to a mailer that went out during the campaign time where he felt that he was being targeted. In this conversation, he said Bob's Towing is fair game so there is hidden agenda number 1. Halverson attempted to speak and Hanson stated that it is his turn to have the floor. Halverson stated that this is how this works. Hanson reiterated that if he wants hidden agendas he has the floor now. Halverson stated

that he will give him hidden agendas when we are done we will talk; he is done playing. Mayor Knier asked to let Hanson speak as Halverson had his time to speak. Hanson stated that in the recording he also made a couple of allusions that he should not have because earlier in the conversation he said some very inflammatory things about the owner of Bob's Towing and his wife. He felt remorseful for it and said maybe I shouldn't have called her that. Hanson also discussed that in a second recording that was also provided to him, noting that he doesn't want to use Halverson's specific wording but he actually said that I should not have called her this specific name. Another couple of comments on the recording were, why should he be the only one that sinks, this is in regard to the Fire Department. He made a couple brash threats towards the Fire Department saying that he is not the only one that is going to sink, he is going to take the Fire Department down. He said maybe the City should do something, he was referring to two fire fighters in this instance when he said they were miserable b\*\*\*\*s. Hanson stated that Halverson said in the recording that they do not have enough balls to talk to him. Hanson expressed that he is here with the balls to talk to Halverson, and tell Halverson that these hidden agendas he has been speaking of, that Halverson has some of his own. Hanson stated that Halverson thinks we are up here just trying to run this City down and we have had to sit up here and listen to this day in and day out. Halverson coming up here with his hidden agendas, noting that there are so many going on, and stressing that there is a great deal more that he can't talk about. Halverson commented that it would be really interesting if he produced the tape since we have so much talk about, and since Hanson wants to talk about this, him and his buddies were behind all the stuff for the election and Hanson had admitted that to him by saying that he knew they were doing it but he told them to not do it. Hanson stated that he did not say that. Halverson stated that he did too, so if Hanson wants to throw this out, it's probably not advisable at this time because he doesn't live in a glass house. Hanson asked Halverson if that that was a threat. Halverson stated that it is not a threat, he just commented that Hanson doesn't live in a glass house so don't throw rocks at him. Halverson stated that these guys came out after him for the election and they knowingly did it. Hanson asked who the guys are, clarifying that he helped Halverson with his campaign. Mayor Knier stated that we are making accusations. Halverson responded that Hanson is making the accusations because he hasn't produced the tape so anybody can say anything. What's really funny about that tape, that tape was supposedly asked for in a legal document and it was said that it doesn't exist. So now we perjured ourselves by saying that it doesn't exist when it was legally asked for, but now mysteriously is here. Halverson stated that is a very interesting concept. Halverson asked if we perjured ourselves when there was a data release, and the court system asked for it, but they said nope, there is no tape. Now mysteriously at a Council Meeting Hanson is saying, well, I heard the tape, I have seen it. Halverson stated that he can produce a data request that says there is no tape.

Council Member Seefeld stated that he would like an apology for the Good Old Boys Club comment from Halverson at the last Council Meeting, because he can't recall any single time that he has ever met Nick Christenson. He has had two phone conversations with him about this towing

contract agenda item. Seefeld stated that the reason why he would give Bob's a chance is because many items in their quotes they were half the cost. In the minutes Council just approved, Halverson said he would see the Collins Brothers guy daily because he's dating his neighbor. Halverson responded that he just sees his truck, he parks there, he doesn't know. Seefeld stated that the definition of a Good Old Boys Club is helping the people you are knowing and friends with, clarifying that is not him. Knier responded that it is not the Council either. Seefeld stated that it is only for financial reasons only why he made that decision. Halverson commented that what's really funny is that when he brought up the towing contract and that people were being charged \$900 to be towed from the Friendly Buffalo to the impound lot, the statement was made that we don't have any control over what they charge a private person, we are only looking at us and then now that it is on the other hand, we are now saying that the prices are higher. Halverson reviewed that he sat at the meeting listening that we can't control what they charge the private sector, we can't control what they charge people when they tow them and then now that's a determining factor, it comes down to how much we charge them, noting that now Seefeld flipped. Seefeld asked Halverson if he is saying that we need to control what they are charging private citizens. Seefeld clarified that this is what they are offering us in a contract, us as a City, us as taxpayers, and they were half the cost as Collins Brothers.

Mayor Knier noted that we could stay and have fun all night. He referenced the saying, believe nothing that you hear and half of what you see. There is a lot of things being thrown around here that have an amount of truth, but then are not true. There have been accusations made and it is tough. Knier stated he appreciates that Ken feels very passionate about some issues, but noted that they do differ on things like forcing developers to put decks on. For him, it comes down to allowing freedom and less government. Knier noted that Halverson started out his statements with saying to watch out for big government, but then he talks about forcing the developers to put on decks. He also talked about sidewalks not costing any money, but many of them do cost taxpayers money. Knier stated that freedom is a big concern and freedom does get messy. Sometimes when there is freedom it gets messy. If you look back at civilizations back in the 1940's, it was very clean but there was no freedom then, but there was big government telling everybody what to do and people would say it was very well run, but no freedom. He doesn't believe anyone wants that necessarily. He has often said when he was elected, that if he ever makes a mistake, he was going to err on the side of freedom. Seefeld echoed what Knier said, and noted that when Halverson made the comments at the workshop about the bond call, that was a good call, noting that Halverson does have good input. We all do it civilly though, and doesn't like that he called us a Good Old Boys Club, and asked Halverson to just disagree with us civilly without name calling. Knier agreed with Seefeld in that Halverson does have a lot of good ideas, noting that we are going to disagree at times, but that Halverson definitely brings things to the table that he doesn't have, and stated that he hopes that he can bring something that Halverson doesn't have, and he feels it works well for the taxpayers.

**11. ADJOURN**

Council Member Seefeld motioned to adjourn at 7:18 p.m. Seconded by Council Member Hanson, unanimous ayes, motion carried.

Gina Wolbeck  
Clerk

Date Approved by Council 01.25.23