

**JOINT MEETING OF THE
CITY OF BIG LAKE, BIG LAKE TOWNSHIP, ORROCK TOWNSHIP, BIG LAKE SCHOOL DISTRICT,
AND THE SHERBURNE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

JANUARY 20, 2022

1. CALL TO ORDER

Acting Mayor Halverson called the meeting to order at 6:04 p.m.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

3. ROLL CALL

Big Lake City Council Members present: Council Member Ken Halverson. Mayor Paul Knier arrived at 6:16 p.m.

Big Lake Township Board Members present: Supervisors Dean Brenteson, Mark Hedstrom, and Norm Leslie.

Orrock Township Board Members present: Paul Ellinger.

Big Lake School Board Members present: Chair Tonya Reasoner and Tony Scales.

Sherburne County Commissioners present: Chair Raeanne Danielowski.

Staff present: City Administrator Clay Wilfahrt, City Clerk Gina Wolbeck, Community Development Director Hanna Klimmek, Finance Director Deb Wegeleben, Acting Chief Sam Olson, Sherburne County Administrator Bruce Messelt, Sherburne County Parks Coordinator Gina Hugo, Big Lake Schools Director of Community Education & Communication Services Allen Berg, Big Lake Schools Buildings and Grounds Manager TJ Zerwas, Big Lake Township Clerk Brenda Kimberly-Maas, and Big Lake Student Liaison Ella Dotzler.

4. PROPOSED AGENDA

Commissioner Danielowski motioned to adopt the proposed Agenda. Seconded by Supervisor Brenteson, unanimous ayes, Agenda adopted.

5. BUSINESS

5A. Sherburne County Topics

Bruce Messelt discussed the County's plan for a full rewrite of the Sherburne County Comprehensive Plan, and reviewed that the County is in the beginning stages of determining what their next big focus will be, which could focus on a re-alignment of CR 11 to Hwy 10 to help with the flow of traffic in this area. As part of this project, they will be pursuing the idea that they would ask MNDOT to swap CR 11 and Highway 25. The reason for this is that Highway 25 carries county traffic, and CR 11 carries regional and statewide traffic. If MNDOT is behind it, there is a better chance of getting money for a major intersection improvement. There would be a 2-pronged approach to this project, one being to ask the Legislature to approve the potential re-alignment as right now it is statutory that Hwy 25 has to come into the City of Big Lake. Sherburne County will be asking to work with the City to see if the Big Lake area would allow that re-alignment to occur, and then they would work on dramatically improving CR 11 to carry the traffic in a way that it should and not have the flow-off traffic come up Hwy 25, or worse yet wrap back into it. What we are looking for now is the statutory language change, and then the county would start lining up the project down the road. Commissioner Danielowski asked Messelt when this language was put into the constitution, and noted that we are not the only State Aid road that is set up this way. Messelt responded that this language goes back to when the highway system was first coming into play. The language would be easy to change unless the entities are divided. If one organization says they don't want to do this, it won't go anywhere. Messelt also stated that the County Board will take on the expense and staff to make this happen. Their intent would be to write up a Bill that changes Hwy 25 terminus to the Big Lake area, not just the City of Big Lake. They would prefer this route instead of looking at annexation adjustments. Danielowski explained that this project is a step towards the area getting a future bridge. Messelt also provided an update on the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds Sherburne County is expected to receive totaling \$9.43 million. To date, \$6.8 million of the ARPA funds have been allocated/earmarked. \$172,000 is allocated to housing, \$1.5 million towards broadband, \$2.21 million towards organizational support, \$478,000 towards business/NPO support, \$1.2 million towards community support, and \$1.24 allocated towards mental health. Messelt provided information on county-wide broadband initiatives including information on current service levels and future project areas for Big Lake Township and Orrock Township.

Gina Hugo reviewed 2021 county-wide park improvements including improvements at Bridgeview Park that were State funded through the MNDNR. Hugo also reviewed plans for expanding pedestrian trail connections, TAP grant funding for a future pedestrian bridge over the Elk River along CR 5 for possible construction in 2025, and a trail and crossing along CR 9 in the Refuge for possible construction in 2024. Hugo also reviewed the Story Stroll program in partnership with the City of Elk River, SHIP, and the Great River Regional Library.

Supervisor Leslie asked for an update on the acquisition of land for a park by Big Elk Lake. Hugo indicated that the County is working on a parkland acquisition program in this area, and Commission Danielowski discussed that Sherburne County is working to acquire 430 acres from the Wiese family.

Mayor Knier arrived at 6:16 p.m.

5B. Big Lake Township Topics

Dean Brenteson discussed residential development in the Township in 2021, reviewed the Township's 2022 estimated Net Tax Capacity and estimated Taxable Market Value, and the Township's certified 2022 Levy. Brenteson also reviewed 2021 road improvements, snow and ice control efforts, and spring sweeping costs. Brenteson discussed that Midco expanded their services along CR 15 and entered into a cable franchise agreement with the Township. The 2021 Recycle Day event went well, and the contract with Metro Appliance Recycling has been renewed for another 5-year term. Brenteson reviewed the Dog Vaccination Clinic held in 2021 where the Sherburne County Soil and Water Conservation District (SSWCD) offered free well water nitrate testing. Brenteson reviewed improvements at the Big Lake Township Park, and noted that Birch Lake has been taken off of the impaired waters list due to verified documentation of meeting water quality standards. It was also noted that the SSWCD selected Big Lake Township as the 2021 Outstanding Conservation Cooperator. Brenteson reviewed the Township's MS4 permit, recent purchases by the Big Lake Fire Department, annexation of the Petersen farm into the City, and discussed that Arrow Components recently purchased a lot in the BLIPE expansion area, thanking Hanna Klimmek and City Staff for their dedication and hard work to see results in this joint venture.

5C. Orrock Township Topics

Paul Ellinger discussed new residential construction in Orrock Township noting JP Brooks has moved forward with building within the Shores of Eagle Lake Development and 32 new building permits have been issued since November 2020. Ellinger reviewed the Township's 2022 Net Tax Capacity and Taxable Market Value. Ellinger recapped activities at the annual Recycling Day event held in May, and discussed road improvements and snow/ice maintenance costs. Ellinger reviewed

that the Annual Meeting Electorate approved and certified the 2022 levy in the amount of \$1,008,000. Ellinger also reviewed the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds the Township is expected to receive totaling \$411,000. With those funds, the Board is moving forward with plans to add on to the Town Hall building to expand the meeting and election space, make the bathrooms and ramp ADA compliant, and create office and storage space.

Council Member Halverson asked if the roads in the Shores of Eagle Lake Development are still signed as private roads. Ellinger noted that the private road signs were removed today. Brenda Kimberly Maas reviewed the small size of the Orrock Town Hall building, which is vastly inadequate to be used for an election precinct site.

5D. Big Lake School District Topics

Tonya Reasoner discussed the \$30 million bond referendum that was passed in 2021 and will be used to restore and renew our current school facilities. The school was awarded a 1.99% interest rate on the bonds which was significantly lower than the interest projection of 2.65%. This low interest rate will save \$2.4 million in interest costs. Reasoner also discussed that enrollment is increasing, with 120 more new students enrolled this year than in last year. This year's Kindergarten class size has had a substantial increase as well with 275 kindergarteners enrolled. The Big Lake School District is one of only 11 school districts who were able to start a K-12 online program this year. To date, there are approximately 300 students enrolled in the program. One of the successes of this program is that it ties into the youth apprenticeship program, in that students are able to do work-based learning during the day, and then take evening online classes. Reasoner reviewed the Community Education Program, noting that the Community Education Department, as well as the School District, is working to align with the City's new slogan of "Live Big". The school will be implementing "Learn Big" in their marketing materials. Reasoner reviewed partnerships the school is involved with including a tour of the Premier Marine site that included a delegation from the School District and the City, the annual Career and Apprenticeship Fair, and noted that Community Education will be partnering with the Big Lake Chamber of Commerce as co-sponsors of the Community Fair. Reasoner also reviewed accomplishments of the schools including Independence Elementary being awarded the 2022 STEM Innovation Award, the school's exceptional music programs, the newly launched Youth Volunteer Program, and recognized that the Boys Cross Country team won the State Championship this year.

TJ Zerwas thanked the Big Lake Community for their support of the Bond Referendum in 2021, and noted that improvement projects will take place over the next three years. The first round of projects will include roof repairs/replacement, ventilation improvements at the high school gymnasium and gymnastics center, building control system replacements, and score board replacements. Future phases will include ventilation improvements, special education classroom

improvements, improvements to media centers and other areas that help support STEM initiatives, improvements to Career and Technical Education spaces, and parking/traffic adjustments to help reduce vehicle congestion and address safety concerns.

Council Member Halverson asked which scoreboards will be replaced. Zerwas responded that it will just be the indoor scoreboards at the high school and middle school, and noted that he will be meeting with the Building and Grounds Committee to look at strategies for upgrades to the high school football field scoreboard by using potential rebates the school will receive to reinvest in other areas where they have needs.

Allen Berg discussed the District's commitment to provide transparency in where Bond dollars will be spent. Berg provided a preview of the district's website that has a section dedicated to each construction project, noting that the site will be updated after Board approval of all bids.

Mayor Knier discussed the Premier Marine tour. Berg reviewed the tour and noted that Premier Marine is very excited about the Career Based Learning Program.

5E. City of Big Lake Topics

Clay Wilfahrt reviewed City street projects for 2021 and 2022, and discussed the Freedom Rock project that was funded through a private citizen fundraising campaign that celebrates the lives of local members of the military and their families. Wilfahrt also reviewed industrial, commercial, and residential growth that occurred in the City in 2021, and reviewed the City's Tax Rate which decreased by 1.21% because of increasing property values, noting that the City has become very competitive with neighboring communities. Looking forward, the City will be commencing a comprehensive revision of the zoning code, will be undertaking an upgrade of all City water meters to newer technology, and will be initiating the planning phases of an expansion to our wastewater treatment facility.

Tony Scales asked if the City's water meter replacement project will be replacement of meters located inside of homes. Wilfahrt explained that 75% of the meters inside the home will need to be replaced, and that newer home meters will be able to be retro-fitted. Wilfahrt also reviewed that the City will need access permissions to change out the meters and that scheduling will take some time. Scales also asked if the homeowner would be responsible for the cost of the new meters. Wilfahrt responded that the program will be funded through the ARPA funds the City will receive.

Mark Hedstrom asked what the needs are for the expansion of the wastewater treatment plant. Wilfahrt reviewed that the solid's side of the treatment plant is in great shape and we have a lot of capacity in that area; however, the liquid side is at capacity and our nutrient emissions are getting

close to MPCA findings. Wilfahrt noted that we are just in the planning phase at this time and we will be getting quotes from engineering consultants which will include what their recommendations are for expansion needs.

Commissioner Danielowski provided a history of when the first expansion was done years back. The City had wanted to do the full project at that time, but the price tag came in really high so the project was cut in half.

Council Member Halverson commented on the difference in bond interest rates between the City and the School and asked why they are different. Deb Wegeleben explained that the bond sales are conducted in the same way, in that investors bid on the bonds. Wegeleben also noted that the school's bond amount is significantly higher than the City street project bond so the risk is higher on the school bond which is why their interest rate is slightly higher than what the City got on their bonds.

Mayor Knier asked if the school knows when they will have another bond referendum. TJ Zerwas responded that there is no way to know at this time, but noted that right now, they have capacity in their current school facilities, and they are in good financial health.

Mayor Knier thanked everyone for their time and commitment in attending the joint meeting, and for their commitment to the Big Lake Community.

6. ADJOURN

Supervisor Hedstrom motioned to adjourn the meeting at 7:09 p.m. Seconded by School Board Member Reasoner, unanimous ayes, motion carried.

Gina Wolbeck
Clerk

01/26/2022
Date Approved by the Big Lake City Council