

**BIG LAKE CITY COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
FEBRUARY 10, 2021**

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, and Paul Seefeld. Also present: City Administrator Clay Wilfahrt, City Clerk Gina Wolbeck, Finance Director Deb Wegeleben, City Engineer Layne Otteson, Deputy Police Chief Matt Hayen, Streets/Parks/Fleet Superintendent Norm Michels, and Big Lake Student Liaison Ella Dotzler.

4. OPEN FORUM

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

Bettina Potter, 120 Edgewater Place – Reminded Council that the City held open houses and public meetings in 2019/2020 to take citizen feedback on the street project. During that time residents along Euclid Avenue spoke out significantly against sidewalks and that was removed from the project, and that there were numerous residents who were in favor of sidewalks along Powell and Sherburne Avenue, and residents were assured that these comments would move forward with the 2021 Street Project. Potter encouraged Council to listen to open house comments for Red Oak Drive and Highland Avenue on whether these streets should be collector streets, encouraging Council to listen to those responses and not ignore them.

Chris Rauch, 106 Euclid Avenue – Extended thoughts and prayers to our neighboring community Buffalo, stating that he is grateful for first responders who put their lives on the line for us every day. Rauch also objected to sidewalks being constructed on Euclid Avenue, stressing that he is not alone on this objection. Rauch stated that he feels the high cost of installing a sidewalk is wasteful spending on these two streets, and anything that can be done to lower the City's costs will lower his costs one way or another. Rauch also

discussed that our current sidewalks are very icy in the winter and it is safer to walk on the street. Rauch also discussed concern that the install of a sidewalk on Euclid will create a freeway for people to park on Maple Lane and walk to the beach.

Ketti Green, 4722 Blanding Court - Stated that she feels the City did a really good job on the discussion of sidewalks. Green stressed that the bonding rate is at a historical low so if we are looking at doing sidewalks and street improvements, we need to keep the low bonding rate in mind.

Mayor Knier closed the Open Forum at 6:06 p.m.

5. PROPOSED AGENDA

Council Member Halverson motioned to adopt the proposed Agenda with the removal of item no. 7C. Police Department Towing Services Contract with Bob's Towing and Recovery, Inc. Seconded by Council Member Seefeld, unanimous ayes, Agenda adopted.

6. CONSENT AGENDA

Council Member Hanson motioned to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. Seconded by Council Member Halverson, unanimous ayes, Consent Agenda approved. The Consent Agenda consisted of: 6A. Approve List of Claims, 6B. Approve Council Workshop Minutes of January 27, 2021, 6C. Approve Council Meeting Minutes of January 27, 2021, 6D. Approve 2021 Parks Advisory Committee Officer Appointments, 6E. Approve Year End 2020 Inter-fund Transfers, 6F. Approve 2021 Planning Commission Officer Appointments, 6G. Approve Lake Dental Certificate of Completion, 6H. Approve Sale of Police Vehicle to the Sherburne Wright Cable Commission, 6I. Approve Outdoor Lighting Agreement with Connexus Energy for the Sandhill Villas Development, 6J. Authorize Aquatic Invasive Species Grant Application, 6K. Accept Resignation from Administrative Assistant Kati Peterson, and 6L. Set Special City Council Meeting at 1:30 p.m. on Friday, April 16, 2021 to Canvass the Results of the Special City Election

7. BUSINESS

7A. Receive Preliminary Engineering Report and Order Public Hearing for the 2021 Street and Utility Improvement Project ST2021-1

Layne Otteson reviewed the Preliminary Engineering Report for the 2021 Street and Utility Improvement Project ST2021-1. The project focuses on street rehabilitation and drainage improvements with ancillary work that includes water service insulation, sidewalk, water main looping, street lighting, and storm water quality improvements. Otteson noted that Staff has been communicating with property owners since spring of 2019 regarding this

project. Three open houses were held in 2019 and attendance varied from 30 to 50 residents. The project moved from concept to design to bid, but was not awarded in May 2020 with Council directing Staff to bring it back for consideration in 2021. In 2021, Council directed Staff to resume the project and the process started over with the City hosting three open houses with attendance ranging from 3 to 15 residents. Comments will continue to be taken and considered for revisions to the scope of the proposed project. Otteson noted that special assessments have been identified as one of the funding sources associated with this improvement which is regulated by MN State Statute Chapter 429. Otteson noted that the scope and cost of the project has been refined and adjusted during the preliminary engineering process. The estimated cost of the project is approximately \$3.65 million and project funding will be provided by bonds. The bonds in turn are supported with \$1.8 million in special assessments, \$50,000 from the enterprise fund, \$1.8 million in local funding through MSA and levy.

Mayor Knier discussed degradation of curbing joints on Lakeshore Drive asking if there is no recourse to that, and if we can expect the same issues on this project. Otteson discussed that the time of year construction occurs can play a very important role on the longevity of street materials, noting that cold weather construction can be done, but we have to watch our temperatures. Otteson reviewed issues with concrete de-cracking, which tends to be worse near interstates and highway systems due to the use of de-icing chemicals. Otteson also advised that when we do concrete work, we should seal it which should protect it from chemicals that cause degradation, as well as ensuring we have proper inspections and testing during construction.

Council Member Seefeld asked what kind of curbing is being proposed for this project. Otteson reviewed various curb styles that the City can consider including a six-inch vertical barrier curb and surmountable curbing at approximately a 45 degree angle.

Council Member Halverson motioned to approve Resolution No. 2021-11 receiving the Preliminary Engineering Report and Calling for a Public Hearing on the 2021 Street and Utility Improvement Project No. ST2021-1. Seconded by Council Member Hanson, unanimous ayes, motion carried.

7B. Channel Property Acquisition – Resolution of Support

Layne Otteson discussed State owned land that is located along the channel area going from Big Lake to Lake Mitchell. The property is 0.71 acres and is approximately 475 feet long and 65 feet wide. There is lake-frontage on both sides and is land-locked with private property owners to the east and west. Land above water varies in width from 10 to 25 feet with vegetation growth including tall grasses, wildflowers, shrubs, and trees. The land is posted by the MNDNR as sensitive and is not to be trespassed upon. Otteson reviewed significant channel improvements that were City funded. The channel provides navigation

from one lake to the other. There has been no stabilization of the shoreline except adjacent to the channel. Recent observation found that the channel walls are separating and are in need of immediate repair, as well as shore stabilization that will be needed along the length of the property. The shore appears to be slowly eroding away and has a vertical bank in many areas that is about 2 to 3 feet tall. Otteson informed Council that the DNR contacted the City to see if there was interest in the City purchasing the land. The State of MN determined that the property could be sold to the City for less than market value if the Legislature approved the sale as part of a Land's Bill. Otteson noted that his request for inclusion of repair and stabilization funding was denied as they determined it could not be part of the Bill. The DNR suggested that the City would be very competitive in applying for grants after acquisition of the land. Otteson also stated that the State has not specified a purchase price, but indicated it would be minimal.

Council Member Seefeld motioned to approve Resolution No. 2021-12 supporting the sale of PID 65-124-1120 from the State of Minnesota to the City of Big Lake. Seconded by Council Member Hanson, unanimous ayes, motion carried.

7C. Police Department Towing Services Contract with Bob's Towing and Recovery, Inc.

Item was removed from the Agenda.

7D. Monthly Department Reports

Fire Department – Fire Chief Seth Hansen provided statistical information on calls for service for the month of January. Hansen also reviewed online training that included blood borne pathogens and cold weather rescues, discussed new gear extraction equipment purchased by the Department and installation of a new security system, and reminded residents to clear the area surrounding fire hydrants in their neighborhoods. Chief Hansen also paid tribute to victims of the Buffalo Allina Health Clinic mass shooting that occurred on February 9, 2021, and offered condolences to Township Supervisor Larry Alfords on the recent passing of his wife.

Police Department – Deputy Police Chief Matt Hayen updated Council on police statistics, calls for service, significant arrests, and self-initiated policing activities for the month of January. Hayen reviewed three recent significant arrests including two vehicle pursuits, and an arrest of a 15 year-old for possession of a large amount of drugs. Hayen also discussed the Departments youth reading program, and introduced new Police Officer Tim Mikelson. Hayen also paid tribute to victims of the Allina Buffalo Clinic shootings.

Council Member Halverson asked what the process is for the City to cover vehicle damage costs when we do a PIT maneuver with a police vehicle. Hayen indicated that the violator is court ordered to pay restitution to the City.

Council Member Seefeld discussed a recent Police Department social media post and asked if there is a concern with LSD coming back. Hayen indicated that he hasn't seen much activity for this type of illegal drug, but noted that the quantity of drugs the youth had is concerning, and officers will continue to be pro-active on traffic stops to get this substance off the streets.

Council Member Hanson discussed PIT maneuvers, and how they can impact availability of our fleet vehicles. Hanson questioned if we have a procedure for alternative ways to address PIT maneuvers. Hayen discussed that new push bumpers have been installed that hold-up to PIT maneuvers very well, indicating that these last two PIT maneuvers did not create any damage to our police vehicles.

Mayor Knier inquired if the Police Department is involved with the local schools and what type of presence and relationship they have with the schools. Hayen discussed that the Sherburne County Sheriff's office is the designated School Resource Officer for Big Lake Schools, but noted that if the school reaches out to the Police Department, we will send in an officer to help them in whatever capacity they request. Hayen also noted that the Department does walk-arounds in the school buildings to stay familiar with the building layouts and Staff.

Engineering/Public Works Department – Layne Otteson provided an update on engineering projects underway in the City and activities in the Utilities Department. Otteson reviewed the status of projects currently underway including the 2021 Street and Utility Improvement Project, meetings with developers and property owners, the recent Big Lake Community Lakes Association Meeting, the Sherburne County CR 43 project projected for 2022, and cell tower upgrade projects. Otteson also discussed the low water tower temperatures, and the well study currently in process.

Mayor Knier discussed the upcoming CR 43 project and asked how the City will be preparing for potential City costs for the project. Otteson indicated that costs will be evaluated once we have the complete project package from Sherburne County, noting that potentially we will be bonding for these costs. Mayor Knier also asked for an update on Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) in our lakes, specifically Zebra Mussels that were found last year. Otteson noted that unfortunately, there is no treatment for Zebra Mussels available right now, stressing that we need to focus on prevention of other AIS.

Council Member Halverson inquired if we will be looking at hooking up sewer services to the Fire Department building when CR 43 is reconstructed, which could address some of the sewer issues the facility has faced in the past. Otteson noted that it will be part of the study which will determine where it makes sense to run water and sewer services within this corridor, and what the potential costs will be. Otteson clarified that this project is still in the concept design stage. Halverson stated there are no blueprints for the sewer system at the Fire Hall and they have experienced freeze-ups. Halverson stated that he would like the project to include documentation of the sewer system at the Fire Hall.

Student Liaison – Ella Dotzler provided an update on Big Lake Schools. Dotzler discussed COVID-19 and its current impact on the schools. Grades K-5 remain fully in-person learning, and grades 6-12 remain in hybrid learning, with a return to a five day in-person schedule on March 18th anticipated. Dotzler also discussed that the school moved to make Big Lake Online an official online school, and discussed the learning lag caused by COVID-19.

Mayor Knier discussed school activity schedules, and asked Dotzler if masks are still required in the schools. Dotzler indicated that masks are still required. Dotzler also reviewed the Big Lake Online School.

8. ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

Clay Wilfahrt discussed that the CMRP is starting their final phase of engagement and will be circulating a survey. Wilfahrt also discussed Facebook Live events, and provided a reminder that the Special Election filing period closes next Tuesday. Wilfahrt also informed Council that the property owner of 4303 Ridge Circle has been court ordered to clean the property up, and discussed how this type of junk and blight on a property can affect neighboring properties.

Council Member Halverson inquired how the city will recover its legal and clean-up costs on this property. Wilfahrt explained that all City incurred expenses will be charged back to the property through the property assessment process.

9. MAYOR & COUNCIL REPORTS and QUESTIONS/COMMENTS

Mayor Knier: Reviewed the February BLEDA, CMRP, and Finance Committee meetings. Mayor Knier also thanked Staff for all their great work on behalf of the citizens of Big Lake. Knier also expressed the City's support to the City of Buffalo and offered condolences to victims of the Allina Clinic mass shooting.

Council Member Halverson: Discussed the February BLEDA and Finance Committee meetings. Council Member Halverson also discussed his recent tour of JMS Developments

in Eden Prairie and Minnetrista, noting that these developments had houses with valuations of approximately \$500,000 and were not comparable to what the developer was proposing in Big Lake. Halverson stated that he would prefer the developer construct homes of higher quality similar to his other projects. Halverson also discussed that he has met with every department head to better understand what each department does, and encouraged other Council Members to do the same.

Council Member Hanson: Reviewed the February Big Lake Community Lakes Association (BLCLA) Meeting that he attended. Hanson noted that the Big Lake Community Education Advisory Committee Meeting was held the same evening as the BLCLA so he was not able to attend. Hanson indicated that he will switch attendance between the two committees until the new Council Member gets their new committee appointments.

Council Member Seefeld: Discussed the February Planning Commission Meeting, and the CMRP meeting.

10. **OTHER** No other.

11. **ADJOURN**

Council Member Halverson motioned to adjourn at 7:07 p.m. Seconded by Council Member Seefeld, unanimous ayes, motion carried.

Gina Wolbeck
Clerk

Date Approved By Council 02/24/21