

**BIG LAKE CITY COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
MARCH 9, 2022**

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 Clay Wilfahrt, City Clerk Gina Wolbeck, Finance Director Deb Wegeleben, Community Development Director Hanna Klimmek, City Planner Lucinda Spanier, 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 Ella Dotzler.

4. OPEN FORUM

Mayor Knier opened the Open Forum at 6:01 p.m. No one came forward. Mayor Knier closed the Open Forum at 6:01 p.m.

5. PROPOSED AGENDA

Council Member Seefeld motioned to adopt the proposed Agenda with the addition of item no. 7C. Resolution Supporting Modifying Route No. 25 Statutory Language. Seconded by Council Member Hanson, unanimous ayes, Agenda adopted.

6. CONSENT AGENDA

Council Member Noding 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 February 23,

2022, 6C. Approve Regular Council Meeting Minutes of February 23, 2022, 6D. Approve a 2022 Recycle Day SCORE Grant Agreement with Sherburne County, a 2022 Participation Agreement with Big Lake Township, and set a Council Gathering on May 21, 2022 from 7am to 2pm at the Big Lake Township Maintenance Building located at 20150 166th Street for the event, 6E. Approve Appointment of Planning Technician Will Bucheger, 6F. Approve Advertisement for Bid for Replacement of the Big Lake Fire Department Roof, 6G. Approve Release of Claims Agreement between the City of Big Lake and Matthew Hayen, 6H. Approve Ordinance No. 2022-03 Amending Section 321 (Mobile Food Units) Exempting Licensing Requirements for Big Lake Farmers Market Vendors and approve Summary Publication Resolution No. 2022-23, 6I. Approve AUAR Services Proposal and Escrow Agreement with On and Off, LLC for the Parkwood Knolls Development, 6J. Approve Resolution No. 2022-24 approving 2022/2023 Liquor License Renewals, and 6K. Approve Resolution No. 2022-25 Re-establishing Precinct and Polling Locations in the City of Big Lake.

7. BUSINESS

7A. Receive Bids and Award Contract for the 2022 Street and Utility Improvement Project No. ST2022-1

Layne Otteson reviewed the bid opening that was held on February 17, 2022 for the 2022 Street and Utility Improvement Project No. ST2022-1. Plans and specifications were sent out to contractors and material suppliers, and seven bids were received. The low bid was received from Knife River Corporation of Sauk Rapids, MN in the amount of \$4,129,130.10. Otteson noted that the three lowest bids were within 10 percent of each other which indicates a competitive bidding atmosphere and a clear understanding of the project. The low bid was 16.3% under the engineer's estimate. Otteson also reviewed the timeline of the project noting that the contractor is prepared to begin construction in April and expects a completion date in early November 2022 or by June 2023. Otteson reviewed the City's notification efforts for affected property owners in order to minimize disruption to residents. Otteson also noted that funding for the project will be Municipal Bonds, which are reimbursed over time using Assessments, the General Fund, Enterprise Funds and State Aid Funds.

Mayor Knier stated that he feels really good about the job we are doing for the taxpayers by moving forward and condensing these projects, and taking advantage of the low borrowing rate. We knew we weren't going to have cash to pay for this and that we would have to borrow, and Knier commented that he feels really good about saving the taxpayers this amount of money. Mayor Knier thanked Otteson for his good work on this project.

Council Member Noding motioned to approve Resolution No. 2022-26 receiving bids and awarding the Contract for the 2022 Street and Utility Improvement Project No. ST2022-1 to Knife River Corporation of Sauk Rapids, MN in the amount of \$4,129,130.10. Seconded by Council Member Halverson, unanimous ayes, motion carried.

Council Member Noding thanked Otteson for taking on this large of a project and expressed her appreciation to him.

7B. Department Reports

Engineering Department – Layne Otteson provided an update on engineering projects underway in the City. Otteson reviewed the status of the ST2021-1 street project noting that the project is substantially complete, and will be completed this spring. Otteson provided an update on the ST2022-1 street project noting that the bid was awarded at tonight’s meeting, reviewed the Fire Station Roof project, and discussed the CR 81 project. Otteson also noted that the County Road 43 project has been delayed due to Federal Funding being awarded for the project. Otteson provided updates on current projects underway and discussed various permits issued.

Student Liaison – Ella Dotzler provided an update on Big Lake Schools. Dotzler reviewed enrollment statistics, activities of the Big Lake Student Council, and highlighted Sno-Daze activities.

Mayor Knier asked what the difference is between the Executive Council and the Student Council. Dotzler explained that the number of Student Council members had gotten very large due to all interested students being accepted into the Council, and noted that currently they have approximately 40 members on the Council. Members of the Student Council elected members to serve as an Executive Council which has representation from each class. Knier suggested Dotzler invite these school leaders to attend an upcoming meeting before school lets out.

7C. Resolution Supporting Modifying Route No. 25 Statutory Language

Layne Otteson reviewed past discussion on Sherburne County’s request to support a jurisdictional exchange between County Road 11 and MN 25. Staff has reviewed and discussed benefits and concerns with Council and County Staff such as resurfacing in the future, cost participation policies, communication channels, right-of-way impacts, and a cost agreement limiting City costs. Otteson brought forward a Resolution that has contingencies protecting the taxpayers of Big Lake which include requiring an acceptable County agreement by April 8, 2022. The contingency states that there can’t be an increase in construction cost responsibility from what currently exists on MN 25. Otteson explained that in other words, it can’t go up for taxpayers and that the County will absorb that cost.

Council Member Halverson motioned to approve Resolution No. 2022-27 Supporting Modifying Route No. 25 Statutory Language. Seconded by Council Member Noding, unanimous ayes, motion carried.

8. ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

Clay Wilfahrt announced that he has accepted the Assistant County Administrator position at Wright County and his last day of employment with the City will be April 8, 2022. Wilfahrt also reviewed that based on feedback from the Council at tonight's Council Workshop, he will be working with Hanna Klimmek during the next month in preparation for her appointment as the Interim City Administrator.

Mayor Knier noted that Administrator Wilfahrt will be missed and stressed that he has done a fantastic job for the citizens of Big Lake. Knier also thanked Klimmek for stepping into the Interim Administrator position, noting that it gives him great peace of mind knowing that we have someone of her caliber to step in to fill that role during the transition.

9. MAYOR & COUNCIL REPORTS and QUESTIONS/COMMENTS

Mayor Knier: Thanked staff for doing such a great job in keeping this City humming, noting that the best days are ahead of us. Knier thanked everyone for all their hard work, dedication, and integrity.

Council Member Halverson: Reviewed the February Parks Advisory Committee Meeting.

Council Member Hanson: Discussed the February Big Lake Community Lakes Association Meeting.

Council Member Noding: Reviewed the recent Fire Board Meeting.

10. OTHER – No other.

Council Member Halverson discussed that he has had an issue with lift assists at the Fire Department, which was brought up at the last meeting. Halverson stated that he has asked for information that has not been very forthcoming, so he went a different way to get information on how many of these types of calls come in, and noted that at the last meeting it was said that they had 47 lift assists in 2021. He went to the County with a data request to get their run sheets, which showed they had 94 calls which amounts to one in every four calls for lift assists. Halverson stressed he is disappointed that he had to go to the County, as a Council person, to get this information. As a Council we need to know where our money is being spent. If our money is not being spent properly, that needs to be addressed. On top of the 94 lift assists, they actually made a truck on scene 34 times, so approximately a third of the time the truck actually made it on scene. They ran 27 medicals. He has some issues with the paperwork showing there were unnecessary medical calls which he feels are an inappropriate use of taxpayer dollars and isn't good for our Fire Department to be responding to these calls as it is going to burn them out. Halverson stated this is

why the calls for service have increased so much in the past two to three years. He noted that he believes they had 13 lift assists in January. If you look at the paperwork, 41 of the lift assists were from the same facility in town. Knier clarified that the facility is a multi-unit senior facility. Halverson restated that these calls are for moving individuals from one area to another and as a Council person, he feels that this is taxpayer money and we were voted in here to represent everybody. This needs to be addressed, and he has tried numerous times with talking to Fire Board representatives, and asking the question, and the last meeting when it was said 47 and two officers verified that it was a non-substantial number of calls. The comment was made to him that it is very time consuming to get this information which is why he was told he couldn't get the information. Halverson stated that it only took him an hour and ten minutes to put this data together and offered a copy to Council Members. Halverson acknowledged that there are some calls that could have gone either way as a lift assist or a call for aid. He stated that he is very disappointed that he had to go to this extent to show this data, and hopes that when a Council Member asks for information in the future, it is forthcoming. Halverson also stated that when somebody knows something and is knowledgeable in a subject, we should use them as a resource and not, not used, because if we are using the people in the right places, we don't have this. Halverson also clarified that the run sheets are public record and were provided by Sherburne County with private information crossed off. He had asked for calls that were labeled as fire assist, which there were 68 of them that were lift assist. He also asked for page outs for others and for medical as different dispatchers will enter things differently for the Police Department and Fire Department. He had to weed out actual calls that shouldn't be labeled as lift assist. That is why he had all three categories run as a dispatcher will type in call information differently than another one. Halverson stated that he prefers not give up the data he received as he had to go get it, but is willing to meet with anyone who wants to review them. He typed out every address, date, the type of call, truck on scene, truck out the door, and truck in-route. There were a couple that looked like they were paged, but didn't have complete information so he put these under inconclusive information.

Council Member Hanson stated that Council Member Halverson had 30 years of experience on the Fire Department and asked what he suggests as a solution to this when other law enforcement agencies can't respond. Halverson responded that it is a very easy solution, noting that some of the calls are legitimate, especially when a call comes in to lift a 400-pound person noting that our officers are not able to lift a 400-pound person. Moving from a couch to a chair is not a call. Halverson stated that what should happen is medicals that are being ran are controlled by the Fire Department and there is no reason to page out for someone that has flu-like symptoms or a bloody nose. That needs to be clarified. It was policy that if the Police Department is tied up, Fire is paged. If the Police Department goes there and it is a 90-pound person, they move them and no page goes out to the Fire Department. Halverson stated that he was the one to make the change, which was supposed to be a one-year temporary deal. It used to be that when the Police Department was called out and they determined if it was a person that they could not sustain,

they would call out the Fire Department, that is the way it has always been. When you get 33% on scene, and get 66% cancel, we are going to burn our guys out. Out of the 33% on scene, he is willing to bet that a vast majority of them could have not been paged. It should be that the Police Department gets on scene as they are a full-time department, they make an executive decision that they need Fire's help; or if the Police Department is tied up on a call, then Fire should be called out. As far as medicals, it was always if the Police Department is called and the ambulance is tied up, they would call the Fire Department because they need help. Medical calls were always as-needed, not automatically paged so it should go back to an as-needed service and we need to do that because we have to do something about this. If you take 12 guys at \$14/hour x 90 some calls, we are talking about a lot of money. Money, taxes that we pay, fuel, and workers compensation all go up as we use our services more. It should go back to the way it was. He spent 30 years on the Department and he shouldn't have to go through this to show members of the Fire Board this. We need to use our people in the right places.

Mayor Knier indicated that he would be interested in visiting more with Council Member Halverson on this to hammer out Halverson's concerns. Halverson indicated that he would be willing to share the information with Knier.

11. ADJOURN

Council Member Hanson motioned to adjourn at 6:34 p.m. Seconded by Council Member Halverson, unanimous ayes, motion carried.

Gina Wolbeck
Clerk

Date Approved By Council 3/23/2022