

**BIG LAKE CITY COUNCIL
WORKSHOP MINUTES**

APRIL 14, 2021

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, and Paul Seefeld. Also present: Council Member Elect Kim Noding, City Administrator Clay Wilfahrt, City Clerk Gina Wolbeck, Finance Director Deb Wegeleben, Community Development Director Hanna Klimmek, City Engineer Layne Otteson, Acting Police Chief Matt Hayen, Liquor Store Manager Greg Zurbey, Streets/Parks/Fleet Superintendent Norm Michels, Water/Wastewater Superintendent Dan Childs, and Big Lake Student Liaison Ella Dotzler.

3. PROPOSED AGENDA

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

4. BUSINESS

4A. Music in the Park Musician Application Discussion

Corrie Scott reviewed the draft Musician Application that is proposed to be utilized for the City's Music in the Park events. Musicians will be asked to sign the application prior to their performances. Applications will outline that all performers will abide by Lakeside Park policies and recommends that performers have insurance. The application will also outline inclement weather protocols.

Council Member Halverson asked if larger contracts have to come to the City Council for approval, or can they just go to the Finance Committee. Scott explained that official contracts do require Council approval, and clarified that the Music in the Park document is an application which does not require Council approval.

Mayor Knier discussed the inclement weather protocol and asked if a noon cut-off time is too early for some bands. Scott reviewed that the inclement weather language in the application is more about payment policies, noting that if the band can wait to decide to play that is great, but some travel long distances who will need an early determination on inclement weather.

Council directed Staff to move forward with finalizing the application as presented.

4B. Planning Technician Position Discussion

Hanna Klimmek reviewed staffing in the Community Development Department, discussing the possibility of hiring a full-time Planning Technician instead of the budgeted two, 20-hour per week part-time Administrative Assistants. Klimmek reviewed the current state of the Planning/Zoning Department's support personnel costs as well as the cost for utilizing the City's Planning Consultant. Klimmek also stressed that the Community Development Department strives to provide an excellent service and the current trends in growth and development are challenging capacity. Klimmek discussed the benefits of hiring a Planning Technician versus two part-time Administrative Assistants and reviewed what the potential job description would entail. Klimmek reviewed that the Personnel Committee was presented this option at their meeting on March 31, 2021 and recommended the City Council move forward with hiring a Planning Technician.

Council Member Halverson asked if this position is being created mainly to get someone internally to head up the code revision taskforce instead of using a consultant. Klimmek explained that this position would allow us to do the larger projects in house which would include the code revision taskforce project.

Mayor Knier asked if implementing this position would allow us to determine a hard deadline for the code revision taskforce project. Klimmek estimated that the code revision taskforce project is estimated to be an 18-month long project, and updates will be given during this time. A definitive deadline is hard to predict right now, and training the new employee will take some time. Halverson stated that 18-months to complete the project would be impressive. Clay Wilfahrt discussed that we can start working on the project right away, and a goal could be set on when we would like to see the project completed. Klimmek also noted that Lucinda Meyers will be heading up the taskforce with support from the new Planning Technician.

Council Member Hanson reviewed discussions held at the personnel committee, noting that the committee members looked at the plan and agreed that there is a lot of work to be done.

4C. I-LIDS Contract Discussion

Layne Otteson reviewed the history of the install and agreement for Environmental Sentry Protection, LLC (ESP) to provide Internet Landing Installed Device Sensors (I-LIDS) services to the City under a 3-year contract. ESP installed and operated two video cameras at the Lakeside Park boat launch and one video camera at the Lake Mitchell boat launch. Otteson reviewed how the systems operate, and noted that from May through October, approximately 6,000 videos are captured and stored in the cloud from the three cameras. ESP personnel review the videos and log their findings. City Staff and members from the Big Lake Community Lakes Association (BLCLA) also have access to the videos and are able to review activity at both launches. The I-LIDS cameras have been most beneficial at the Lake Mitchell boat launch since it operates autonomously with a locked gate. The annual cost to provide the video service, management, maintenance, cellular service, and video review is \$2,100 per camera. The City was recently notified that recent wireless provider changes requires that each camera have internal upgrades to 4G in order to function, with the cost of the upgrades being \$595 per camera. Otteson

reviewed that Staff has evaluated the usefulness and effectiveness of the program, and feels that the presence of the cameras and audible announcements provide valued protection against potential aquatic invasive species (AIS). This is likely more important when no watercraft inspectors are present. Staff has determined that reducing the number of cameras from 3 to 2 would be cost effective, yet still provide the desired education and monitoring of AIS. With the likelihood of added watercraft inspection hours at Lakeside Park during the busier times, one camera with audible announcements should be adequate when boat launch activity is low and unstaffed. ESP has provided a proposal reducing the number of cameras from 3 to 2 along with the 4G cost upgrades. This proposal is also on the April 14th Agenda with a recommendation for approval.

Mayor Knier asked how many times the video has caught violators. Otteson explained that while he doesn't have exact numbers, the reports show that there were a couple of instances that show AIS hitchhikers on boats leaving our lakes. Council Member Halverson asked if the reports are enforceable. Otteson noted that at first they thought the reports would be enforceable, but the City has been informed that they are not enforceable with the MNDNR. Halverson also asked if we will we have the same coverage with only two cameras. Otteson discussed that the one we are proposing to keep in service at the Lakeside Park launch has a better view than the one we are proposing to remove.

Council Member Hanson asked for clarification on which camera we are planning to remove from the Lakeside Park launch. Otteson discussed that the service provider has recommended we keep the one on the south side as it will pick up a higher percentage of launches as it is near the magnet that trips the video. Hanson also discussed that he will be proposing a different plan for the Lake Mitchell Launch which can be discussed during item no. 4E. He will be proposing that the Lake Mitchell Launch only be open 2 weeks at the beginning of open water season, and again for 2 weeks at the end of season, and to remove the I-LIDS camera from that launch.

4D. Lakeside Park AIS Watercraft Inspection Discussion

Layne Otteson reviewed aquatic invasive species (AIS) inspections that have been taking place at Lakeside Park for several years under direction from the Sherburne Soil and Water Conservation District (SSWCD). Inspectors look for AIS hitchhikers on boats and trailers, as well as provide education to individuals regarding AIS. Otteson reviewed past inspection hours and costs, and reviewed potential costs for the City to hire part-time seasonal employees to do the inspections, and funding committed by the Big Lake Community Lakes Association (BLCLA). Otteson explained that the City is proposing to deliver more hours at nearly the same cost. Staff recommended Council authorize preparation of an advertisement for part-time seasonal positions and a formal cost share agreement with the BLCLA for future Council consideration. Deb Wegeleben reviewed budgeted dollars for inspections, noting that costs will be covered whether we choose to hire seasonal staff or use an outside inspection company. With the needs being unknown at budget time, funds were set aside to cover either staffing costs, or contracted inspection service costs.

Mayor Knier asked for clarification on what support we are getting from SSWCD. Otteson explained that we are getting hours of inspections versus funds for May and September. Clay

Wilfahrt reviewed budgeted dollars and noted that with SSWCD providing inspection hours in May and September, we could potentially have excess funds for inspections.

Council Member Hanson reviewed discussions at the recent Big Lake Community Lakes Association (BLCLA) meeting and discussed the new Big Lake Youth Bass Team who plans to practice at the lake on Monday nights. The BLCLA had asked if an inspector can be out there during these times. Mayor Knier stated that having City inspectors staffed during these practice dates would be a little bit overkill and discussed that the team coaches will be onsite during their practices. Hanson also reviewed discussion from the BLCLA about the possibility of adding a few extra inspection hours during the summer months to cover events or higher boat traffic times during COVID restrictions which could increase boat traffic on certain days. Hanson noted that the BLCLA has offered to increase their financial contribution by \$700 if the City can match that to bring our total inspection hours up to 936 hours. Otteson explained that there is flexibility in the schedule and we will have to respond to what happens this summer. Council Member Hanson asked what gap will be covered by adding the additional hours, and Otteson responded that coverage could be possible on Mondays, but that we aren't going to spend resources that aren't necessary. Mayor Knier indicated that he is alright with the BLCLA proposal, and Council Member Hanson discussed that this would give us level 1 inspectors who receive better training so it would be a good investment. Council Member Halverson stated that he is also alright with the BLCLA request, and Council Member Seefeld asked if the level 1 inspectors will be different than using part-time staff. Otteson explained that that the seasonal part-time staff would do the level 1 DNR training. Council unanimously directed Staff to move forward on advertising for budgeted part-time seasonal positions, and with negotiating a cost-share agreement with the BLCLA for the discussed cost and inspection hours.

4E. Lake Mitchell Access Discussion

Layne Otteson reviewed past Council discussions on the Lake Mitchell Boat Launch, and asked for Council direction on how they want Staff to proceed with the lock/key/sticker program at the launch.

Council Member Hanson reviewed discussions at the last workshop and information provided by Keith Benker from the BLCLA who discussed concern about Starry Stonewort AIS and the potential costs for treatment. The BLCLA's recommendation is to close the launch, and Hanson indicated that he would like to allow homeowners on the lake to launch for two weeks at the beginning and end of season. This would help reduce our risk, and would allow us to remove the I-LIDS at the Mitchell Launch.

Council Member Halverson questioned why we would give the lock/key/sticker program only one season to test, noting that generally the people that have the key are locals. Halverson stated that he would rather leave it as is and try another year. We need to continue to provide education, and stressed that we shouldn't throw the system out based on a few violations. Halverson also clarified that a launch user needs to have Big Lake City residency to get the sticker/key issued to them, and suggested we treat this year as the year of education. Council Member Hanson reminded Council that we have a unique situation in that we own our two launches, stressing that the AIS treatment burden falls on us.

Council Member Seefeld asked Mitchell Lake resident Dave Denny if he uses the launches. Denny stated that he used to use the Lake Mitchell launch when it was open all the time and he isn't about to pay for a key, stating that he feels they are trying to take our freedoms away. Seefeld stated that he generally agrees with Council Member Halverson and asked if Dave is o.k. with Council Member Hanson's proposal. Keith Benker discussed that the program didn't work, noting that every boat launched is a risk. Seefeld stated that he prefers to continue as is and evaluate in a year.

Mayor Knier thanked Council Member Hanson for his well thought-out statements, and thanked the BLCLA for their efforts assuring them that we hear their concerns. During past discussions with the BLCLA, the point was made that unfortunately the reality is that it is virtually impossible to keep AIS out of our lakes. Knier stated that he agrees with Halverson that this launch is for local residents, and agrees with Mr. Dennis about freedom of the people being limited. Knier stated that he understands the situation, but noted that these are local residents who are utilizing a back door to our lakes. Mayor Knier stated that he prefers to leave the program as is, and that we need to educate, and that consequences for violators be enforced. Otteson discussed that we would need to pass an Ordinance to charge a fee, and noted that we really do need to focus on educating lake users. Council Member Halverson asked if we can take the key away if people violate the rules of the Mitchell Launch. Otteson discussed that we are ready to lock the gate and Staff will send an informational letter to key holders. It was also discussed that violators without a City sticker would be identifiable through the boat stickers and/or the I-LIDS camera. Clay Wilfahrt discussed that on-going violations could jeopardize the lock/key/sticker program.

4F. New Ideas Discussion

Council Member Hanson reviewed that the Big Lake Youth Bass Team Board would like food trucks available for their tournaments. Wilfahrt noted that this topic will be discussed with the Parks Department Staff.

5. **OTHER** – No other.

6. ADJOURN

Council Member Seefeld motioned to adjourn at 5:48 p.m. Seconded by Council Member Hanson unanimous ayes, motion carried.

Gina Wolbeck
City Clerk

04/28/21
Date Approved By Council