

**BIG LAKE CITY COUNCIL  
WORKSHOP MINUTES**

**SEPTEMBER 27, 2023**

**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, 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 Engineer Layne Otteson, Police Captain Sam Olson, Liquor Store Manager Greg Zurbey, Streets/Parks/Fleet Superintendent Norm Michels, Water/Wastewater Superintendent Dan Childs, and Big Lake Student Liaison Allie Cross.

**3. PROPOSED AGENDA**

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

**4. BUSINESS**

**4A. Central Mississippi River Partnership (CMRP) Discussion**

Hanna Klimmek reviewed the formation of the Highway 25 Coalition in 2016, which was formed as a collaboration to benefit transportation in the region. By early 2019, extensive discussion of a river crossing revealed transportation factors alone could not drive a bridge crossing. With guidance from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and MnDOT, the group committed to creating a shared regional vision and goals, and then determined what's necessary to accomplish them. This led to plans to explore a broader range of issues in more depth. In June 2019, the group hired a consultant/facilitator with multi-jurisdictional process experience to provide support and guidance to the group. In July 2019, they adopted a new name, the Central Mississippi River Regional Planning Partnership along with a new Joint Powers Agreement that reflected the expanded scope. At their August 24, 2023 meeting, the group changed its name to the Central Mississippi River Partnership (CMRP) and are considering a transition to a Minnesota non-profit corporation. The most notable advantages of becoming a non-profit include the member structure and access to funding opportunities. Klimmek reviewed the CMRP is now at the point where they are asking for continued commitment to fix the transportation problem and for approval, from each City and County member, to move forward with the non-profit model. Klimmek also reviewed the 2023 membership annual dues was \$7,500, and it is now understood the dues for 2024 could be reduced considerably.

Mayor Knier reviewed he and Klimmek met with the Mayor and City Administrator of Monticello to discuss the City's future involvement with the CMRP. Knier acknowledged he feels it is important for Big Lake's name to continue to be part of the CMRP, and is in favor of the City kicking in the \$500 membership fee to have our name continue to be part of it. Knier also noted the group is now a County led organization.

Council Member Halverson asked if the Monticello Mayor has the authority to offer a \$500 membership fee. Klimmek responded he is the CMRP chair, and during their last meeting it was briefly discussed it isn't about member fees, it's about regional participation.

Council Member Hanson stated he is fine with a \$500 membership fee, noting he agrees we should be in the organization as there is power in numbers, which is the goal of this group. Hanson also stated he doesn't feel Big Lake will have another river crossing, but he is willing to support the group. Knier discussed there will be City staff time involvement in the CMRP.

Sherburne County Commissioner Raeanne Danielowski discussed she has been involved in the CMRP since its inception. The Bridge and Pell Study will be the guiding factors in determining where a bridge will go in the future, explaining the CMRP group doesn't get to pick the bridge crossing location. Hwy 25 is the bridge we see as the most used bridge in the area, and having another river crossing will benefit Big Lake even if it's not located in Big Lake. Danielowski urged City officials to stay at the table, noting we will keep elected officials as the decision makers. Danielowski also noted this will be a long game, reviewing the Stillwater Bridge took 64 years. Another bridge crossing is important for business growth in our area.

Council Member Seefeld stated he has been vocal about being in favor of leaving the CMRP, but now feels the reduced membership fee of \$500 is an ok compromise. Seefeld noted the benefit will be that another bridge crossing will eventually alleviate traffic from current Hwy 25.

Council Member Noding discussed the need for another bridge crossing has been a longtime problem, stressing we need to keep our name on the CMRP and to continue to be in support of it.

Council directed Staff to continue the City's commitment to the CMRP.

#### **4B. Humboldt Drive Reconstruction Discussion**

Layne Otteson reviewed recent discussions in the past year regarding the street corridor consisting of Putnam Avenue, Humboldt Drive and 198<sup>th</sup> Avenue extending from MN 25 to CR 43. Concerns relating to parking, traffic lane width, and an aging pavement segment have been identified. Otteson noted there are four segments along this corridor including Section A – MN 25 to Eagle Lake Road, Segment B – Eagle Lake Road to 500 feet east (Lupulin Brewing), Segment C – 500 feet east of ELR to 550 feet east of US 10 access, and Segment D – 550 feet east of US 10 access to County Road 43. The pavement condition in Segment C is significantly deteriorated, and reconstruction will be needed soon. The area is generally in front of Lupulin Brewing, TGK Auto, M&M Express and McPete's Sports Bar and Lanes, and reviewed the 1,350-foot long segment was constructed in 1988. Otteson noted the other three segments were

constructed in the late 1990's to early 2000's and are not deteriorating as significantly as Segment C. Staff recommended Council move forward the improvement process by formerly ordering a preliminary engineering report for this corridor at a future Council Meeting.

Council Member Halverson asked how far the other three street segments are from needing reconstruction. Otteson responded they are approximately 10 to 12 years out, noting they are in generally good condition.

Mayor Knier asked if the project can be put off, with Otteson responding Council can choose to hold off on doing the project. Halverson suggested waiting it out, and then do a full project all at one time instead of piecing together different phases of construction over time. Council Member Seefeld discussed the need to complete segments C and D at the same time. Knier discussed putting the project off until the other segments are ready to go.

Council Member Halverson discussed since the "No Parking" signs went up, parking issues have greatly decreased in the area. Sam Olson responded we haven't had as many issues as we have had prior to signage placement. Council Member Noding asked if we will have issues with the temporary "No Parking" signs. Otteson responded this area of roadway is a State Aid Road and the City can respond to requests from MnDOT if signage issues arise. Council Member Seefeld asked if the temporary signs will hold up during plow season. Norm Michels responded while the signs are considered temporary, they are on steel posts and should be able to withstand the winter months.

Council directed Staff to hold off improvements to this corridor until the entire segment needs to be done.

#### **4C. LMC Grant Writing Assistance Opportunity**

Layne Otteson reviewed a grant opportunity through the League of MN Cities (LMC) that can assist with grant writing. The City can apply for grant writing assistance and receive up to \$5,000 for a specific project. The State Local Road Improvement Program (LRIP) will be accepting grant applications, which could provide an opportunity for the City to get partial funding for resurfacing Hiawatha Avenue, Lakeshore Drive and Highline Drive. This project will likely cost approximately \$1,000,000 and there is limited special assessment frontage available. The funding combination of a LRIP grant and State Aid could offset the use of the City's Street Fund, thereby protecting the balance and avoiding debt. Otteson noted these streets have regional significance and should be very competitive. Otteson reviewed, if awarded, the \$5,000 LMC grant would be utilized to hire a consultant to provide mapping and assist Staff with telling a story within the application. This type of consultant would have experienced grant writers who are able to develop and enhance a competitive application.

Council directed Staff to apply for the LMC grant as discussed.

#### **5. OTHER**

Hanna Klimmek discussed the upcoming December 5 Joint Committee Workshop and the possibility of

holding the workshop at Style Catering instead of in the Council Chamber. Klimmek discussed this joint workshop was originally held at a Big Lake restaurant until the recession forced the event to be scaled back to a potluck setting in the Council Chambers. Klimmek noted the Style Catering facility would provide a nice setting for a workshop dinner, with the only draw-back being the workshop would not be able to be audio recorded, but minutes will be taken during the workshop. Council consensus was to hold the December 5 Joint Committee Workshop at Style Catering located at 617 Rose Drive.

**6. ADJOURN**

Council Member Seefeld motioned to adjourn at 5:28 p.m. Seconded by Council Member Hanson unanimous ayes, motion carried.

Gina Wolbeck  
City Clerk

10.11.23  
Date Approved by Council