

**BIG LAKE CITY COUNCIL  
WORKSHOP MINUTES**

**OCTOBER 25, 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, City Planner Lucinda Spanier, 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 Consultant Planner Kendra Lindahl from Landform.

**3. PROPOSED AGENDA**

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

**4. BUSINESS**

**4A. Review Parkway Feasibility Study**

Kendra Lindahl reviewed the City recently adopted a new functional roadway classification map to help with the future growth and development of the City. The next step is to identify the specific elements that are present within each classification of roadway. The Comprehensive Plan has an identified action step to, "conduct a study to determine the feasibility of the proposed parkway system". Parkway continue to serve as a transportation corridor but have a landscaped median and boulevard to create a more scenic route. The benefits of a parkway system need to be balanced against the costs of making the improvements necessary to upgrade the street from a collector to a parkway. The increased costs are a big factor in determining where and when parkways should be used. Lindahl discussed Landform has worked with City staff to develop an illustration for both collector and parkway street sections, and can be applied to future roadway construction and reconstruction within the City. Cost estimates provide a comparison of the cost difference between a typical collector street and a typical parkway street, noting the cost associated with constructing a parkway exceeds a standard collector roadway by approximately \$128 per foot or \$675,840 per mile. This increase comes from a combination of the increased plantings and lighting in the median, and the additional roadway width. Lindahl also discussed land acquisition/County participation, financing options, and parkway benefits. Lindahl asked for Council feedback on acceptance of the Parkway Feasibility Study and to provide direction on the streetscape

policy, noting if supported by Council, staff would develop a streetscape policy and update engineering development standards.

Mayor Knier asked how many miles of parkway are in the plan. Layne Otteson estimated the miles on the map amount to approximately eight 8 miles.

Council Member Noding discussed some of the proposed parkways are county roads, and questioned why a developer would improve these areas if the county won't participate in the costs.

Council Member Halverson discussed some of the identified parkways could mess with the schools, noting retro-fitting a parkway into an existing street section would be challenging. Halverson also stated he doesn't like the parkways proposed on county roads.

Mayor Knier discussed concerns with the financing of parkways, as well as how taxing it would be on our Public Works staff to maintain parkway sections. Knier stated this isn't money we need to be spending.

Council Member Hanson reviewed the parkway map is just for us to use as a tool, noting he is not ready to spend \$2.5M on a parkway. Hanson stated we can look at them when development occurs.

Council Member Halverson asked if we need any action tonight, or can we just accept the results of the study. Layne Otteson reviewed when a developer comes in, they always want to know how much right of way will be required by the City, noting the City would pay for any oversizing or an increase in an amenity to a parkway.

Knier stated it's his opinion that we don't need a parkway due to high maintenance costs and the initial cost for construction, noting he doesn't believe a parkway would increase property values. Knier stated he is not a fan of parkways, and doesn't feel we should use taxpayer dollars on them.

Council Member Seefeld suggested we remove the parkways identified on the north side of Hwy 10, and leave in the one identified on the south side of Highway 10. Seefeld agreed he feels parkways won't increase property values.

Lindahl reviewed we have one chance to take the right of way, noting if there is any chance in the future the City would want to build a parkway, we should take the right of way and defer construction of a parkway until the future. Lindahl also discussed if we don't want parkways, we should remove them from the map. Halverson responded he doesn't like the suggestion for the City to take 100 feet right of way, but just put in a standard street. Knier stated he would be alright removing all parkway plans from the map. Lindahl discussed the City could revisit the parkway concept at the time of a Comprehensive Plan update.

Council directed Staff to accept the Parkway Feasibility Study from Landform, and to remove all parkway areas north of US Highway 10.

#### **4B. Discuss Roof Replacement at 790 Minnesota Avenue**

Deb Wegeleben reviewed in July 2023, the police building sustained roof damage due to hail storms in Big Lake. A claim was filed with the League of MN Cities Insurance Trust (LMCIT), who sent an adjuster out to review the claim. The adjuster determined the roof did sustain damage and needs to be replaced. Two proposals were obtained with the low proposal being from Ken Geroux Construction in the amount of \$50,904. The LMCIT has approved the replacement value of \$50,904 and the City's deductible would be \$2,500. Staff asked for Council feedback on moving forward with completing the work through Ken Geroux Construction.

Mayor Knier discussed the possibility of moving City Hall over to the Police Department building in the future, but feels this will not be in the near future.

Council Member Halverson discussed because we have an open claim on the damage, we shouldn't wait to too long to have the work completed.

Council directed Staff to move forward with the Ken Geroux Construction proposal for replacement of the police department roof due to storm damage, and to bring back for Council consideration at a future meeting.

#### **4C. Review Advance Resignation Policy Amendments**

Deb Wegeleben reviewed in March 2023, staff brought to workshop the City's Advance Resignation Notice Program which is scheduled to sunset on December 31, 2023. Council was asked if they wanted to continue with the program with specific changes, or to let it sunset. At that time, Council directed staff to extend the program through December 31, 2025 and to bring back for Council consideration. During recent budget discussions, there was further discussion about additional changes to the program going forward, including the need to budget for the projected costs. Wegeleben reviewed additional changes to the policy including minimum years of service to qualify for the program, payment calculations, and eliminating the program sunset date.

Council Member Noding stated she feels the program is valuable to keep.

Council directed Staff to move forward with amendments to the Advance Resignation Policy as presented and bring back to Council for consideration at a future meeting.

#### **4D. Review Financial Policy Amendments**

Deb Wegeleben reviewed proposed changes to the City's Financial Policy including budgetary and financial control, investments, and capital assets.

Council directed Staff to move forward with amendments to the City's Financial Policy as presented and bring back to Council for consideration at a future meeting.

**4E. Review Personnel Policy Amendments**

Deb Wegeleben reviewed proposed changes to the City’s Personnel Policy due to recent State legislative changes including the new Cannabis Law, and the Sick and Safe Leave Law. Amendments also include removing volunteer firefighters from the City’s Employee Recognition Program as the Relief Association provides longevity awards to the fire department. Wegeleben also discussed with the new Sick and Safe Leave Law, identifying staff will have to use sick time if and when they are out for any of the purposes outlined in the law, noting staff believes it could be a future requirement to report to the state the amount of sick and safe time used each year. Wegeleben also asked for Council feedback on limiting the sick time increment staff would be allowed to use. Council discussed the time limit should be no less than 1 hour of sick time to be used per day.

Council directed Staff to move forward with amendments to the City’s Personnel Policy as presented and bring back to Council for consideration at a future meeting.

5. **OTHER** – no other.

**6. ADJOURN**

Council Member Seefeld motioned to adjourn at 5:42 p.m. Seconded by Council Member Hanson unanimous ayes, motion carried.

Gina Wolbeck  
City Clerk

11/08/23  
Date Approved by Council