



City of Big Lake Fall 2024 Newsletter



2024 Election Information

The General Election will take place on **Tuesday, November 5, 2024**. Polls open at 7:00 a.m. and close at 8:00 p.m. There are three precincts in the City of Big Lake as described on the precinct map on page 2. To be eligible to vote, you must be:

- ⇒ A U.S. citizen
- ⇒ At least 18 years old on Election Day
- ⇒ A resident of Minnesota for 20 days
- ⇒ Not currently incarcerated for a felony conviction
- ⇒ Not under a court order that revokes your right to vote



Big Lake City Council and Mayor Candidates

City of Big Lake Residents will elect one Mayor for a 4-year term and two Council Members for 4-year terms at the November 5, 2024 General Election. The following City of Big Lake residents have filed for office to fill the Mayor Seat: Paul Knier. The following City of Big Lake residents have filed for office to fill the City Council Member Seats: Ken Geroux, Robert O’Leary, Paul Seefeld, and Bryce Tradewell.

Big Lake Chamber Political Forum

The Big Lake Chamber of Commerce is hosting a Political Candidate Forum on Monday, September 23 at the Big Lake High School. A Candidate Meet n’ Greet will start at 6:00 p.m. and the Forum will start at 6:30 p.m. Candidates invited to participate in the Forum include those running for Big Lake Mayor and City Council, Big Lake Township, Big Lake School Board, US Senate, and US Representative.

All citizens are encouraged to come out and hear what the candidates have to say and where they stand on issues that will impact our community. The public will be able to submit questions for the candidates during the Forum. The Forum will be videotaped by the Sherburne Wright Cable Commission and will play back on the Chamber Website and government channel 180 (Charter customers).

Contact the Big Lake Chamber of Commerce with any questions at 763-263-7800 or by email at info@biglakechamber.com.

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City Offices Closed

- ⇒ Monday, November 11
Veterans Day
- ⇒ Thursday, November 28
Thanksgiving Holiday
- ⇒ Friday, November 29
Thanksgiving Holiday Observed
- ⇒ Wednesday, December 25
Christmas Holiday
- ⇒ Wednesday, January 1
New Year’s Day Holiday

Voting Locations for City of Big Lake Residents

⇒ **Precinct 1:** Big Lake City Hall, 160 Lake Street North

All residents who live on the north side of Hwy 10, east of Lakeshore Drive and south of Hiawatha Avenue vote at Big Lake City Hall (located at the intersection of Hwy 10 and 25).

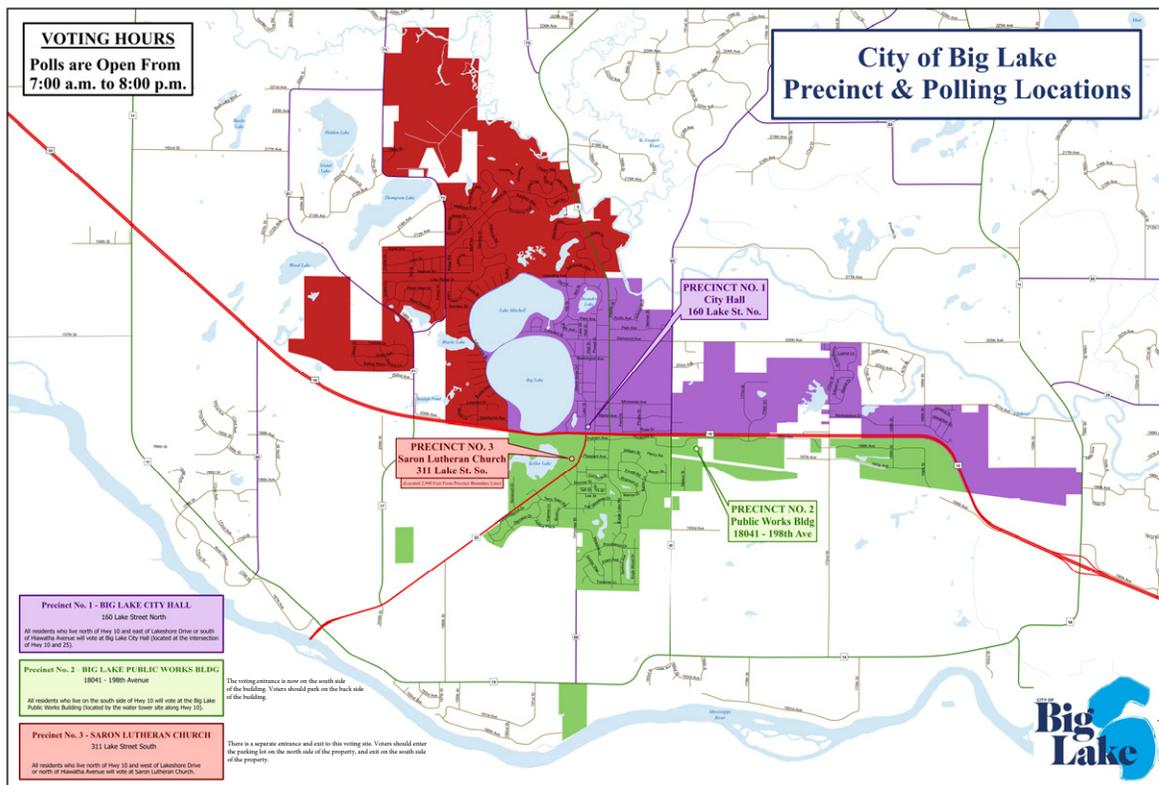
⇒ **Precinct 2:** Big Lake Public Works Building, 18041 198th Avenue

All residents who live on the south side of Highway 10 vote at the Big Lake Public Works Building (located by the water tower site along Hwy 10).

The voting entrance at Precinct 2 is now on the south side of the building. Voters should park on the back side of the building.

⇒ **Precinct 3:** Saron Lutheran Church, 311 Lake Street South

Residents who live west of Lakeshore Drive and north of Hiawatha Avenue vote at Saron Lutheran Church. *There is a separate entrance and exit to this voting site. Voters should enter the parking lot on the north side of the property, and exit on the south side of the property. For safety, barricades will be set up to restrict voters from exiting through the entrance.*



Registering to Vote

⇒ **Online:** You can now register to vote online at <https://mnvotes.sos.state.mn.us>. To register online, you must:

- Be eligible to register and vote in MN.
- Provide an email address.
- Provide your identification number (MN issued driver's license, MN Identification card, or provide the last 4 digits of your SSN).

Registering to Vote Continued

- ⇒ **Paper:** Paper Voter Registration Application forms can be filled out and mailed or delivered to the Sherburne County Auditor's Office located at 13880 Business Center Drive NW, Elk River, MN 55330.
 - The last day to pre-register to vote for the State General Election is: 5:00 p.m., Tuesday, October 15th.
- ⇒ New Registrations can also be processed on Election Day at all polling locations.

Absentee Voting Information



You can vote early by using an absentee ballot instead of voting in person at the polling place on Election Day. You can vote absentee by mail, in person, or by having a person you know pick up and deliver your ballot for you (agent delivery). **Any eligible voter may vote by absentee.** Absentee applications and ballots are available from the Sherburne County Auditor's Office. The Auditor's Office will be open extra hours for voting by absentee ballot. Please call 763-765-4351 for information on dates and times. You can also apply to vote by absentee online from:

<https://mnvotes.sos.state.mn.us/ABRegistration/ABRegistrationStep1.aspx>.

For your ballot to count, remember this important information:

- ⇒ Read the instructions that come with your ballot carefully!
- ⇒ You will need a witness when you vote and complete your ballot. The witness can be either a registered Minnesota voter or a notary.
- ⇒ Return the ballot and forms by mail as soon as they are completed. Your ballot will not count if it is received after Election Day. You may also drop off your ballot envelope in person at the Sherburne County Auditor's Office no later than 8:00 p.m. on Election Day. You may NOT drop your Absentee ballot off at your designated polling place on Election Day.

Dates Absentee Ballots Become Available: Absentee ballots are available 46 days before an election. In 2024, ballots will be ready starting September 20 for the General Election.

Military and Overseas Absentee Voting: Voters in the military and citizens living outside the United States use a different process to vote absentee. Access information from the MN Secretary of States Website at: sos.state.mn.us/elections-voting/other-ways-to-vote/vote-from-military-or-abroad/.

Track Your Absentee Ballot: You can track the progress of your absentee ballot with the absentee ballot lookup tool at mnvotes.sos.state.mn.us/AbsenteeBallotStatus.aspx. If there is a problem with your ballot, election officials will send a replacement.

Where to Find Election Results on Election Night

Unofficial Election Results will be posted on the MN Secretary of State's Website when they become available: www.sos.state.mn.us/elections-voting/election-results/. **This site will have the most up-to-date totals available.**

Proposed Property Tax Levy 2025

The proposed Property Tax Levy for 2025 is \$5,887,013. The City’s tax rate is anticipated to be 39.52%, which is an increase of 2.28% over the 2024 tax rate. This is due to a decrease in the City’s overall net tax capacity of approximately 1.73% and the increase in the general levy. With the increase in the City Tax rate and new construction, most residents will see an 5.5% increase in the City’s portion of the property taxes. Below is a summary of estimated city property taxes based on the following home values (assuming 1% decrease in home value). **Mark your calendars!** The 2025 Budget and Levy Public Input Meeting takes place on **Monday, November 25th at 6 p.m.** in the Big Lake City Hall Council Chambers.

What makes my property taxes change each year?

- a. My property’s value
- b. My neighbor’s property value
- c. My city council, county board, and school board
- d. The state legislature

Assessed Value (with 1% Decrease)	Estimated Annual City Property Tax	Estimated Annual increase for City Property Tax	Estimated Monthly increase for City Property Tax
\$275,000	\$995.00	\$52.00	\$4.30
\$323,375	\$1,209.00	\$63.00	\$5.24
\$373,125	\$1,423.00	\$74.00	\$6.13
\$497,500	\$1,959.00	\$102.00	\$8.54

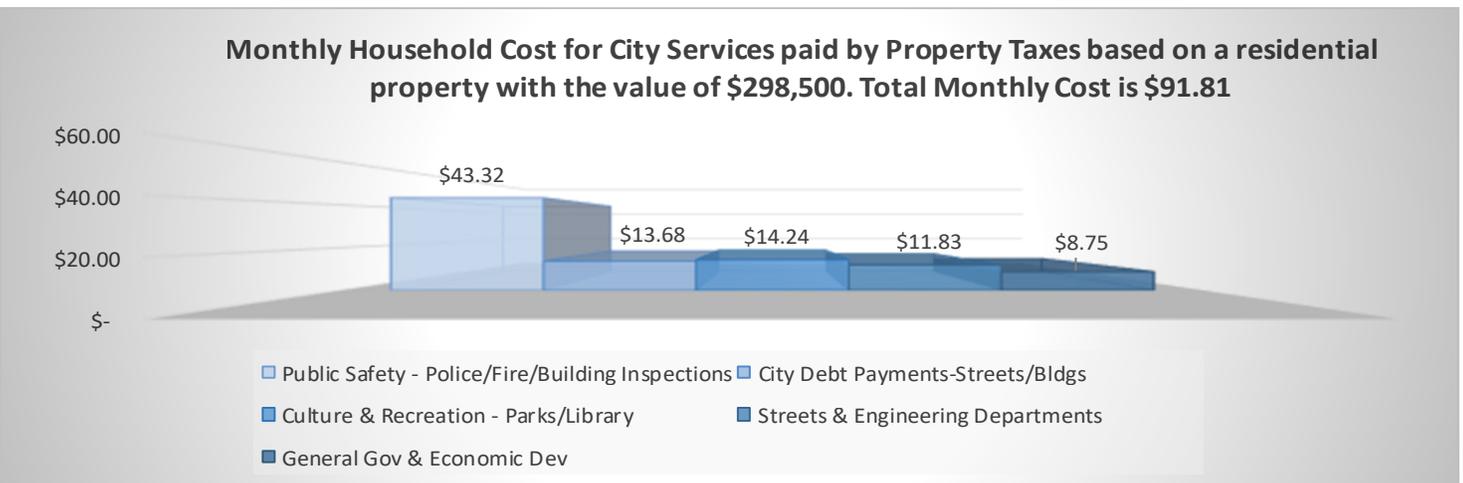
Answer: All of the above

The decisions of your City Council, County Board, and School Board regarding the amount of tax dol-

lars they need to deliver services may be the most obvious factor in your property tax bill. However, the value of your property, the total value of all the property in your community, changes in state programs, and changes in state laws that affect the tax system also play a role. Changes in any of these factors can make your tax bill go up in some years and down in others.

Below is the 2025 Proposed Preliminary Tax Levy for the City of Big Lake:

Component of Tax Levy	2024	2025	\$ Change	% Change
General Levy	\$ 4,542,990	\$ 5,043,359	\$ 500,369	11.01%
Property Tax Abatement Levy	57,050	92,050	35,000	61.35%
Debt Service Levy	877,276	621,604	(255,672)	-29.14%
Big Lake Economic Development Levy	130,000	130,000	-	0.00%
Total City Levy	\$ 5,607,316	\$ 5,887,013	\$ 279,697	4.99%



League of Minnesota Cities Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Some of the local news coverage talks about City budgets and other coverage talks about City levies. Are they the same thing?

A: The property tax levy is the amount of money the city (or other local government) decides it needs to collect from property owners in order to deliver services. However, Property taxes are just part of the overall city budget. The budget includes both discretionary spending (for services the city is free to choose to provide) and non-discretionary spending (to meet obligations such as paying off debt). The budget includes all the dollars the city collects from various sources – fees, grants, revenue sharing, and property taxes.

Q: What do I get for my property taxes?

A: Local governments receive the money they use to deliver services from a few different sources: property taxes, fees, revenue sharing with the state, and grants. Property tax dollars pay for the services that everyone in the community – as well as visitors, commuters, and tourists – can access. This includes things like streets, police and fire services, parks, and libraries. Other services – like economic development programs to help businesses grow and develop, snowplowing, garbage removal, and recycling are also typically paid for with tax dollars.

Q: How does the city – or any local government – decide what services to provide?

A: City Council reviews the services they currently provide and think about what local preferences are and what population trends suggest about the kinds of services people will need. For example, one community might favor running its own pool while another doesn't see the need. Communities with lots of young families need to offer different kinds of services than communities seeing increases in the number of senior residents. Sometimes cities have to provide certain services in order to comply with State or Federal laws. Some common examples include requirements for testing drinking water and making public buildings accessible to people with disabilities.

Q: How does the city decide how much to collect in property taxes?

A: Cities look at their costs – like gasoline, road salt, salaries, and building repairs. They also determine the amount of money the city needs to provide the services residents expect and depend on. Councils then examine the dollars coming into the city from other sources – like fees people pay for building permits or to license their dogs, grants from State and Federal governments, and State revenue sharing. Property taxes make up the gap between money coming in from non-tax sources and the money needed to run the city. Other local governments (e.g., counties, schools) go through a similar process to set their property tax amount.

Q: Are property taxes the only way that the city takes in money?

A: Cities have several sources of revenue, but the two largest are property taxes and State revenue sharing. Property taxes are collected from the owners of homes, businesses, and farms within the city. The sales taxes, income taxes, and gas taxes that we all pay to the state actually fund state aid dollars, such as local government aid and Municipal state aid for roads. Some of these dollars are redistributed to cities through revenue sharing. Another source of revenue for cities is fees. Some examples of common fees people pay to cities are for: dog licenses, building permits, use of the city park facilities, fines for failure to remove snow from sidewalks, and water and sewer services. Cities also get some money from grants, which come from the State or Federal government, and are used for very specific purposes such as a building or equipment improvement.

2025 Proposed General Fund Budget for the City of Big Lake

	<u>2024 - 2025</u>			
	<u>2024 Budget</u>	<u>2025 Proposed Budget</u>	<u>\$ Change</u>	<u>% Change</u>
REVENUE				
Taxes	\$ 4,415,208	\$ 4,888,196	\$ 472,988	10.71%
Special assessments	3,000	1,000	(2,000)	-66.67%
Licenses and permits	644,497	713,445	68,948	10.70%
Intergovernmental revenues	477,790	497,579	19,789	4.14%
Franchise Fees	450,303	451,263	960	0.21%
Charges for services	246,411	248,078	1,667	0.68%
Fines and forfeitures	47,100	49,250	2,150	4.56%
Interest earnings	37,000	64,150	27,150	73.38%
Contributions/Donations	1,500	1,500	-	0.00%
Miscellaneous revenue	2,500	2,500	-	0.00%
Transfer In from Other Funds	450,000	450,000	-	0.00%
Total Current year revenues	<u>6,775,309</u>	<u>7,366,961</u>	<u>591,652</u>	<u>8.73%</u>
Prior year Donations - Designed Fund Balance	<u>3,566</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>(3,566)</u>	<u>-100.00%</u>
TOTAL GENERAL FUND REVENUES BUDGET	<u>\$ 6,778,875</u>	<u>\$ 7,366,961</u>	<u>\$ 588,086</u>	<u>8.68%</u>
	<u>2024 - 2025</u>			
	<u>2024 Budget</u>	<u>2025 Proposed Budget</u>	<u>\$ Change</u>	<u>% Change</u>
EXPENDITURES				
Mayor/Council	\$ 33,426	\$ 33,681	\$ 255	0.76%
Planning and Zoning	223,568	236,829	13,261	5.93%
Elections	36,100	2,000	(34,100)	-94.46%
Administration and Finance	558,845	588,042	29,197	5.22%
IT - Computer/Software/Maintenance	139,399	160,155	20,756	14.89%
BLCSC	72,966	73,661	695	0.95%
EDA	172,166	182,629	10,463	6.08%
Building Inspection	238,921	224,387	(14,534)	-6.08%
Engineering	110,854	137,531	26,677	24.07%
Fleet Maintenance	216,396	230,982	14,586	6.74%
Streets	680,547	762,834	82,287	12.09%
Parks	688,855	690,030	1,175	0.17%
Police	2,693,421	3,113,112	419,691	15.58%
Fire	337,478	348,918	11,440	3.39%
Community - Recreation	120,322	121,309	987	0.82%
Transfers out	455,611	460,861	5,250	1.15%
TOTAL GENERAL FUND EXPENDITURES	<u>6,778,875</u>	<u>7,366,961</u>	<u>588,086</u>	<u>8.68%</u>
NET REVENUE OVER (UNDER) EXPENSE	<u>\$ 0</u>	<u>\$ (0)</u>	<u>\$ (0)</u>	
Unassigned Fund Balance - Projected	\$ 4,117,294	\$ 4,117,294		
Percentage of Expenditures:				
Unassigned Fund Balance - between 42% - 50%	55.89%	51.85%		

Winter Farmers Market Returns

Join us on the third Saturday of the month from November to April from 10 a.m. - 1 p.m. at City Hall for the eighth annual indoor Big Lake Winter Farmers Market! Our vendors only offer homemade and homegrown products including seasonal produce, baked goods, meat, eggs, syrup, honey, mushrooms, salsa, pickles, jam, sauces, crafts and more! Debit-Credit and SNAP-EBT are accepted, as well as the Market Bucks Match Program. Every month will feature live music, free parking, and the Frequent Shopper Program. Senior Day takes place in the months of December, February, and April where seniors 55+ receive \$3 in tokens to use on any vendor item. Stop by the information booth to see how all of these programs work! Follow us on Facebook and Instagram or visit the City website for more details. See you at the market!

Third Saturday from November to April from 10 a.m. - 1 p.m.

November 16 | December 21 | January 18 | February 15 | *March 15 | April 19

Big Lake City Hall | 160 Lake Street N, Big Lake, MN 55309

***March Market will take place at BLHS from 10 a.m. - 2 p.m. with the Chamber Community Fair**



Holiday Lighting Contest

Enter your outdoor lighting displays into the Holiday Lighting Contest and get added to our online map! Let the public see your beautiful décor and decide the winners! Below are details on this year's event.

1st Place: \$50 Gift Card to Lake Liquors | 2nd Place: City of Big Lake Beach Towel, Mug, and swag bag

Area residents can vote for their favorite lighting display online between December 10 - 15, 2024 and winners will be announced on December 16, 2024 on the City Facebook Page and at biglakemn.org.

- ⇒ Outdoor displays only.
- ⇒ Open to any residential address located within the City of Big Lake.
- ⇒ First place winners cannot win a prize more than one consecutive year in a row.
- ⇒ Register for the contest by Monday, December 9, 2024. Registration forms can be found at City Hall or online at biglakemn.org starting in mid-November.



Municipal Liquor Store



Lake Liquors would like to welcome Gary Stoltz as the new Assistant Manager. Gary started on August 12th and will be a valuable asset to the team! He has extensive product knowledge and over 20 years of experience in the liquor industry. Gary will be taking keg orders and running the beer category in the store.

Mark your calendars for the Fall Wine Sale from November 17th -23rd. This year will feature 25% off all regularly priced wines as well as other in store specials. This is a good time to plan ahead for your holiday gatherings!

Discount Days:

- ⇒ Monday: Senior Discount (age 62+) - 10% off regular priced items
- ⇒ Tuesday: Wine Day - 10% off regular priced wines

Holiday Hours:

- ⇒ Thursday, November 28: Closed
- ⇒ Tuesday, December 24: 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.
- ⇒ Wednesday, December 25: Closed
- ⇒ Wednesday, January 1: 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Regular Store Hours:

- ⇒ Monday - Saturday: 9:00 a.m. - 10:00 p.m.
- ⇒ Sunday: 11:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.



Sidewalk Snow Removal



Winter is quickly approaching and the City wants to make sure you have ample time to plan for keeping your sidewalk free of ice and snow. If you are not able to shovel or snow blow your own sidewalk this winter, you will need to contract with a snow removal service, work out an agreement with a neighbor, or find some other way to ensure compliance with the City's sidewalk ordinance. Big Lake is a walkable community and many residents, especially children and those with physical

handicaps, rely on the sidewalk system to safely navigate their neighborhoods and access community resources. It only takes one icy sidewalk section to force pedestrians into the road where their safety is compromised.

The City will be sending out Public Works staff after each snowfall this winter to ensure that all sidewalks are being cleared in accordance with the ordinance. Public Works will clear all sidewalks that are not in compliance with the ordinance, and the property owners will be billed for the service per the adopted City Fee Schedule. The City will always wait at least 24 hours after a snowfall of two inches or more before a sidewalk sweep.

The day before Public Works is sent out to "sweep" the City and clear the non-compliant sidewalks, the City will make a public announcement via Facebook. In addition to this, you can sign up to receive a text message or email alert prior to a scheduled sweep. Sign up for alerts by scanning the QR code or visiting the City website.

Questions? Contact Streets, Parks, and Fleet Superintendent Norm Michels at 763-251-8011 or nmichels@biglakemn.org.



City Staff Length of Service Recognition



We would like to thank the following staff for their years of services to the community:

- ⇒ **Tammy Bergstrom:** 5 years with Lake Liquors
- ⇒ **Darcy Miller:** 5 years with Lake Liquors
- ⇒ **Stacey Fox:** Retiring in 2024 with 24 years in the Finance Department. You will be missed greatly, Stacey!

Coffee with the Mayor

Enjoy free coffee and conversation with your Mayor Paul Knier about happenings in the City of Big Lake. This series takes place on select Saturdays throughout the year at Ember Coffee Company (450 Jefferson Blvd, Suite 1, Big Lake, MN) between 9 a.m. - 10 a.m.

Upcoming Dates:

November 9 | January 11



Coffee with the Chief

Enjoy free coffee and conversation with Police Chief John Kaczmarek about happenings in the City of Big Lake. This series takes place on select Wednesdays throughout the year at Ember Coffee Company (450 Jefferson Blvd, Suite 1, Big Lake, MN) between 9 a.m. - 10 a.m.

Upcoming Dates:

October 2 | December 4

Fall Photo Contest



Calling all photographers; amateur or professional! The City of Big Lake is inviting you to submit photographs that capture what you love the most about the community this fall season in the 2024 Fall Photo Contest! The winner will receive a Big Lake beach towel and swag bag.

Submission of a photo will release the photo to the City of Big Lake. The photo may be used on the City website, Facebook page, and any other marketing material. Photos can be submitted to cscott@biglakemn.org by November 30, 2024.

Minnesota Department of Health Service Line Inventory



The City of Big Lake recently submitted the required service line materials inventory to the Minnesota Department of Health. In order to complete the service line inventory our system reviewed building documents, street improvement documents, and resident pictures of service lines under the water meter. As of June 28, 2024, our inventory contains no lead, no galvanized requiring replacement, no unknown material, and all non-lead service lines.

You can view the Service Line Inventory by visiting the Lead Inventory Tracking Tool (LITT) at <https://maps.umn.edu/LSL/>. Feel free to contact Water/Wastewater Superintendent Dan Childs at 763-251-8010 or dchilds@biglakemn.org with any further questions.

Big Lake Chamber of Commerce

If you own or work for a local business, the Big Lake Chamber is a great organization to get involved in! They are always expanding membership, hosting networking activities, community outreach events, and trainings. For more information visit their website at biglakechamber.com or visit their office located inside of City Hall.



Snow Season Reminders

- ⇒ Please keep in mind property owners are responsible to clear snow around their mailbox. The City will consider making repairs only if the snowplow equipment *physically* hits the mailbox or post, and only if the mailbox conforms to City Ordinance installation requirements. Contact Big Lake Public Works at 763-263-2268 with mailbox complaints.
- ⇒ To prevent damage to lawns, landscape, irrigation heads or other items that will get buried under the snow along the curb or edge of the road, it is recommended that residents clearly mark these areas with reflective stakes.



Winter Parking

- Parking is not allowed on any City street or roadway between November 1 and April 15 of each year during the hours of 12:01 a.m. and 8:00 a.m.
- ⇒ After a snowfall of two inches or more, all streets in the City will be cleared of all motor vehicles for snowplowing and/or snow removal.
 - ⇒ If your vehicle should have mechanical failure and cannot be removed from the street during the required dates/times, please contact the Big Lake Police Department at 763-251-2996 and advise the officer on duty. This may help in avoiding a citation and/or your vehicle being impounded.



Meet Police Specialist Jessica Baker



Jessica Baker started with the Big Lake Police Department as a Police Specialist in June of 2024. Before that she worked for the Big Lake School District 727 for thirteen years as an Emotional Behavioral Disorder (EBD) Paraprofessional. Jessica came to the Big Lake Police Department wanting to serve the community that she has lived in for nearly twenty years. On a day-to-day basis, Jessica works collectively with Office Manager Tina Peterson transcribing officers reports, performing data entry, submitting case files and correspondence to the County Attorney's office as well as neighboring law enforcement agencies. In addition, she juggles a host of many other important responsibilities to assist in keeping the department running smoothly.

Jessica is enjoying learning about the department, meeting new coworkers, and engaging with the community. When not at work, she looks forward to spending time outdoors with her husband and dog. They enjoy visiting their daughter who is attending college in Florida. During the fall and winter seasons, Jessica and her husband travel up north where he spends time hunting. This allows her to lounge while reading a book and relaxing. While there, they also visit Jessica's aunt and uncle and explore while enjoying each others' company. She also has a new nephew that she's excited to spoil! Next time you're at the Police Department, be sure to say hello to Jessica!

Now Recruiting Police Reserves!

The City of Big Lake is currently recruiting Police Reserves! The Police Reserves are an extension of the Police Department. A Police Reserve is a non-sworn volunteer who assists the Police with emergencies, critical events, and community engagement activities. Applicants must be 18 years of age and live within 30 minutes of the City of Big Lake.

Visit the City of Big Lake 's website for the Reserve Officer Application.



October is Manufacturing Month



In recognition of the critical importance of Manufacturing to Minnesota's economy, CareerForce in partnership with the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED), has deemed October Manufacturing Month. October will be a great time to highlight the many career opportunities in the industry. Employers, career seekers, teachers, and students can learn about what Manufacturing Month will feature through the CareerForce website. These events include

tours, hiring events and job fairs for career seekers, career exploration for students, training grant overviews for businesses, and introductions to apprenticeships and youth skills training.



160 Lake Street North
Big Lake, MN 55309

Dated Material

Postmaster: Time Sensitive Mail

The Big Lake City Newsletter is published quarterly to update Big Lake residents and businesses on city government news.

City Council

Paul Knier, Mayor

612-817-6758, pknier@biglakemn.org

Ken Halverson, Council Member

763-286-8152, khalverson@biglakemn.org

Sam Hanson, Council Member

763-567-8335, shanson@biglakemn.org

Kim Noding, Council Member

763-238-1875, knoding@biglakemn.org

Paul Seefeld, Council Member

612-801-7731, pseefeld@biglakemn.org

Notify Me

Looking for updates on events, meetings, jobs, or emergency alerts? Sign up for text or email alerts at: biglakemn.org/list.aspx.

Contact the City

Phone: 763-263-2107

Office Hours: Monday - Thursday: 7:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Friday: 7:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

View Meetings

Live on Channel 180 | On-demand video link at City website

City Council: October 9, 23 | November 13, 25 | December 11
(6:00 p.m. in Council Chambers)

Planning Commission: October 7 | November 4 | December 2
(6:00 p.m. in Council Chambers)

BLEDA: October 14 | November 18 | December 9
(5:30 p.m. in Council Chambers)

Parks Advisory Committee: October 28 | Nov. 26 | Dec. 30
(6:00 p.m. in Council Chambers)

Connect with City of Big Lake

 www.biglakemn.org

 Like us on Facebook, facebook.com/BigLakeMN/

 Follow the Big Lake Police Department on Facebook



Big Lake Winter Farmers Market

Third Saturday
Big Lake City Hall
10 AM - 1 PM

November 16 | December 21
January 18 | February 15

*March 15 | April 19

*March Market at BLHS from 10 AM - 2 PM

