Big Lake City Staff & Elected Officials

City Council
Mayor: Mike Wallen
Council Members:
Seth Hansen
Paul Knier
Scott Zettervall
Vacant Seat

City Staff
Administration:
City Administrator Clay Wilfahrt
City Clerk Gina Wolbeck

Community Development:
Community Development Director Hanna Klimmek
Building Official Lenny Rutledge
City Planner Lucinda Meyers
Administrative Assistant Sandy Petrowski
Administrative Assistant Kati Peterson
Recreation & Communication Coordinator Corrie Scott

Finance:
Finance Director Deb Wegeleben
Utility Billing Clerk Julie Rathmanner
Accounts Payable Stacey Fox
Payroll/Deputy City Clerk Janette Rust

Engineering/Public Works Department:
City Engineer/Public Works Director Layne Otteson
Streets and Parks Superintendent Nick Abel
Water and Wastewater Superintendent Dan Childs
Administrative Assistant Cathy Lindberg

Police Department:
Chief of Police Joel Scharf
Deputy Chief Matt Hayen
Sergeant Sam Olson
Sergeant Tom Kucala

Fire Department:
Fire Chief Seth Hansen
Assistant Chief Mark Hedstrom

City Hall Office Hours
Monday - Thursday: 7:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
Friday: 7:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

Connect with City of Big Lake
Phone: 763-263-2107
www.biglakemn.org
facebook.com/BigLakeMN/
Police Dept. on Twitter @BigLakePolice

Frequently Requested Numbers
Big Lake Post Office 763-263-2642
Big Lake Food Shelf 763-263-2432
Great River Regional Library 763-263-6445
Chamber of Commerce 763-263-7800
Public Works Department 763-263-2268
Lake Liquors 763-263-3673
Fire Department Non-Emergency 763-263-3456
Police Department Non-Emergency 763-251-2996
Big Lake Township Hall 763-263-8111
Orrock Township Hall 763-263-6411
Metro Transit/Northstar Rail 612-373-3333

Big Lake Schools (District 727):
District Office: 763-262-2536
Community Education 763-262-2523
High School 763-262-2547
Middle School 763-262-2567
Independence Elementary 763-262-2537
Liberty Elementary 763-262-8100

New Resident Guide
Updated October 2020

Welcome to Big Lake!

Located a short drive northwest of Minneapolis/St. Paul, Big Lake was originally called Humboldt until year 1867. Big Lake was established to harvest ice in both of the area lakes. Due to the immense amount of ice Big Lake produced, timely transportation became a necessity which lead to the creation of a railway station in 1871.

Big Lake is also known for its annual summer festival, Spud Fest, and has been a popular destination for quick escapes from the cities for summer recreation. That same proximity now allows residents to commute to the Minneapolis/St. Paul urban area for work while enjoying the natural beauty of a “beyond the suburbs” community. Big Lake’s population is an ideal workforce—prosperous, family-oriented, and highly educated.

Big Lake is populated primarily by young families with a median age of 31 years. Big Lake prioritizes quality of life by actively enhancing community cohesiveness, cultural events, parks and natural resources, technology advancements, and financial transparency. It also supports a robust partnership with the Big Lake School District.

Choosing a school district is one of the most important decisions parents will ever make. We believe the decision to enroll in Big Lake Schools is one that will benefit your children for a lifetime.

⇒ Comprised of a high school (9-12), middle school (6-8), intermediate school (3-5), and primary school (early childhood-2).
⇒ Total student population averages around 3,200.
⇒ District has a campus feel with three of the four buildings within walking distance of each other.
⇒ Student activities compete in the Mississippi 8 Conference.
⇒ Founded in 1900.
⇒ Pride colors are blue and gold.
⇒ Mascot is Buzz, the hornet.

City Hall Meetings

City Council
Consists of a Mayor and four (4) Council Members that meet on the 2nd & 4th Wednesday of each month at 6:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers.

Planning Commission (acts in a purely advisory manner to the City Council in all zoning issues and applications except for administrative permits)
Consists of seven (7) members that meet on the 1st Wednesday of each month, and the 1st and 3rd Wednesday in the months of May through August at 6:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers.

Big Lake Economic Development Authority (advises City Council on matters related to Economic Development within the city)
Consists of seven (7) members that meet on the 2nd Monday of each month at 6:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers.

Parks Advisory Committee
Consists of seven (7) members that meet on the 4th Monday of each month at 6:30 p.m. in the Council Chambers.
Community Gardens
Do you love gardening, but don't have a space to grow at home? Community Garden plots can be leased for $30 from May to October. Plots are 10’ x 20’. The Community Gardens are located by Public Works at 18041 198th Avenue, Big Lake, MN.

If you have questions about the garden, please contact Recreation & Communication Coordinator, Corrie Scott, at 763-463-9320 or cscott@biglakemn.org.

Big Lake Community Food Shelf
The Big Lake Community Food Shelf exists to provide food supplies for families in need residing in the Big Lake community and to direct them to other services that may be helpful.

Serving Hours:
- Mondays & Thursdays: 5:30 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.
- Wednesdays: 9:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.
- 2nd Saturday of each month: 9:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.

Visit blcfs.org for more information on news and events such as: food assistance, Project H.E.A.L., Cooking Matters, Freebie Fridays, seasonal extras, local resources, volunteer positions and how to donate.

Contact the Big Lake Community Food Shelf with any questions at 763-263-2432 or director@blcfs.org.

Lake Liquors Hours of Operation:
- Monday - Saturday: 9:00 a.m. - 10:00 p.m.
- Sunday: 11:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Lake Liquors is a municipal liquor store owned and operated by the City of Big Lake. Check out the Lake Liquors Facebook page and webpage at biglakemn.org to stay up to date on specials and events.

Big Lake Police Department
The 16 members of the Big Lake Police Department are proud to provide a full range of professional and modern police services to the nearly 12,000 residents of the City of Big Lake as well as Big Lake’s visitors. Contact their non-emergency line at 763-251-2996 or visit their offices at 790 Minnesota Ave, Suite 100, Big Lake, MN 55309.

The Police Department is a Prescription Drug Drop Box Location. Syringes, fluids, drug paraphernalia, or medications being disposed of by commercial medical facilities NOT accepted.

Big Lake Fire Department
The Big Lake Fire Department proudly serves the people of Big Lake, Big Lake Township and Ottertail, Minnesota. Their office hours vary, but firefighters are always on call. You can reach the Big Lake Fire Department at 763-263-3456 or biglakefire@biglakefd.org.
Big Lake Community Annual Recycling Day Event

The City of Big Lake, Big Lake Township, and Orrock Township jointly host an annual Recycling Day Event. The event is held on the third Saturday each May from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Big Lake Township Maintenance Facility located at 20150 166th Street, Big Lake, MN 55309. Questions? Call Metro Appliance Recycling at 763-241-8787 or Town of Big Lake at 763-263-8111.

Big Lake Farmers Market

**Summer Farmers Market:**
- Lakeside Park
- Wednesdays | June - August | 3:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.
- Wednesdays | September | 3:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.

**Winter Farmers Market:**
- November - April at Big Lake City Hall
- Third Saturday of each month | 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Follow Big Lake Farmers Market on Facebook and Instagram for updates on market vendors and activities. Interested in becoming a vendor? Contact Corrie Scott at 763-463-9320 or cscott@biglakemn.org.

Music in the Park

- Lakeside Park
- Thursdays | June - July
- 7:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

Questions can be directed to the Legacy Foundation of Big Lake. Check out their Facebook page or contact doughayes@callblackdiamond.com.

Movie in the Park

- Lakeside Park
- Fridays in June & September*
- Movie begins at dusk
- Free admission and activities

*Note: Check out the City website at biglakemn.org for information on specific dates and activities.

Big Lake Spud Fest

Big Lake Spud Fest was established in 1972. The founders of the festival were looking for a means to provide funds for summer youth recreation programs and an event for Big Lake and surrounding areas that promoted a strong sense of community and sharing.

- Takes place annually over the last full weekend in June (Thursday to Sunday).
- Featured events include carnival rides, bingo, pork chop dinner by the Big Lake Knights of Columbus, potato pancake breakfast by the Big Lake Lions Club, softball tournament, lakes run, fireworks, parade, fiddlers contest, kids power pedal pull, live music, beer gardens, and so much more!
- Great way to get involved in the community! Visit biglakespudfest.com to view the event schedule and sign up for volunteer opportunities.

City Ordinances

**Long Weeds and Grass Ordinance: Section 510**

510.02 A Nuisance. Any weeds or grass growing upon any lot or parcel of land, including the lands between the curb line of the street or alley and the property line of private properties to a height greater than one foot, or which are about to go to seed, are hereby declared to be a nuisance and dangerous to the health, safety, and good order of the City; excluding storm sewer holding ponds, storm sewer drainage areas, surface water drainage areas, wet lands, shoreline vegetation, nature preserve and other unplatted property.

Snow Season Reminders:

- Please keep in mind that property owners are responsible to clear snow around their mailbox. The City will consider making repairs to mailboxes only if the snow-plow equipment physically hits the mailbox or post, and only if the mailbox conforms to City Ordinance installation requirements. Contact Big Lake Public Works Department at 763-263-2268 with mailbox complaints.
- To prevent damage to lawns, landscape, irrigation heads or other items that will be buried under the snow along the curb or edge of the road, it is recommended that residents clearly mark these areas with reflective stakes.
- It is illegal to deposit snow on any City street.
- If you have a fire hydrant on/from your property, help the local Fire Department by shoveling a clear path and 3 feet around the hydrant.

Recreational Fires:

- **Section 540 Open Burning.** The burning of dried leaves and other yard waste is hereby prohibited within the City. Recreational fires shall be permitted without a permit but must follow the guidelines set forth by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR).
  - Burn only natural wood
  - Shall not exceed 3 feet in diameter by 3 feet in height

Winter Parking Restrictions:

Parking is not allowed on any City street or roadway between November 1 and April 1 of every year, during the hours of 12:01 a.m. and 8:00 a.m. After a snowfall of two (2) inches or more, all street in the City will be cleared of all motor vehicles for the purpose of snowplowing and/or 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 you to avoid a citation and/or your vehicle being impounded.

Sidewalk Ordinance: Section 550

550.01 Clean Walks Required. The owner or occupant of any premises in the City shall clear the sidewalk in front of or beside the premises, of snow and loose or melting ice within twenty-four (24) hours after the completion of any snowfall. Learn more about the ordinance and sign up to receive text or email notifications the day before the City’s authorized contractor performs a sweep by visiting biglakemn.org/486/Sidewalk-Snow-Removal. If you have any additional questions regarding the ordinance, please call City Planner Lucinda Meyers at 763-251-2977.
Building Department Facts

In general, a permit is required for most construction projects where something is being built, repaired, replaced or remodeled. You do not need a permit for projects where only painting, wallpapering, and/or carpeting are being done. If you are not sure if you should obtain a permit, please call the inspection line at 763-251-2971. Permit applications are available at City Hall or by visiting our website at biglakemn.org.

**General Building Permits:**
The following building permits are required (residential/commercial):
- Addition/Porch
- Basement Finish
- Deck
- Demolition
- Excavation/Filling
- Garage
- Mechanical (HVAC)
- New Construction
- Plumbing
- Remodel
- Shed (over 200 square feet)

**Same-day Permits:**
The following permits are issued over the counter at City Hall:
- Underground sprinkler systems
- Furnace and/or Air Conditioner replacement
- Roofing and/or siding
- Window and/or door replacement
- Water heater and/or water softener replacement
- Fireplace

**Zoning Permits:**
The following zoning permits are required:
- Shed (200 square feet or under)
- Fence
- Driveway
- Parking Pad
- Pergola
- Swimming Pools/Hot Tubs
- Land Alteration (Engineering Permit)

**Call before you Dig!**
The State of Minnesota and the Big Lake City offices require residents to call before digging. Metro call: 651-454-0002 or 800-252-1166 www.gopherstateonecall.org
Call two (2) business days before you dig—Have the following information ready when you call: Your Name, Phone Number, Street Address, Dig Location, Nearest Intersection, Type of Work, Start Date, Time, “Use the phone before you Dig”.

Rental Housing License

The City of Big Lake requires multi-family and single/two-family rental housing to be licensed. Licenses are issued every one to two years. The purpose of the rental licensing program is to protect the public health, safety and general welfare of the citizens of Big Lake.

**Multi-Family**
Registration is every year and inspections are every two (2) years. Questions regarding the multi-family housing registration? Contact Sandy Petrowski at 763-251-2980.

**Single & Two-Family**
Registration is every two (2) years. There are no inspections required at this time. Questions regarding the single & two-family housing registration? Contact Sandy Petrowski at 763-251-2980.

Utility Providers

Please contact the individual service providers below who provides service in your area.

**Water/Sewer** - The City of Big Lake provides water and sewer.
- Setting up new service - Contact Julie Rathmanner at 763-251-2969
- Change of ownership - Contact Julie Rathmanner at 763-251-2969
- Billing/Customer Service - Contact City Hall at 763-263-2107
- Over the phone payment - Contact PSN at 877-885-7968
- Pay monthly bill online at www.biglakemn.org

If you do not receive your bill by the end of the month, contact City Hall offices at 763-263-2107
Due date is always the 10th of every month

**Electric**
- Connexus Energy - 763-323-2650
- Xcel Energy - 800-895-4999

**Natural Gas**
- Center Point Energy Minnegasco - 800-245-2377
- Xcel Energy - 800-895-4999

**Cable TV/Phone/Internet**
- Charter Communications - 855-488-5417
- Windstream - 844-872-5440
- Frontier Communications - 877-498-3644

**Utilities - How to Save Energy - and Money! - Each Month**

*All of the electric and natural gas providers in Big Lake offer income based energy savings programs to all of their customers*

Home Energy Audits, Energy Rebates, Rebates for Efficient Appliances & Programmable Thermostats, and Low-Cost DIY Energy Efficiency Upgrades are all available for little or no cost to you.

- Xcel Energy: www.xcelenergy.com/programs_and_rebates; 800-895-4999; inquire@xcelenergy.com
- Connexus Energy: www.connexusenergy.com/save-money-and-energy; 763-323-2650; info@connexusenergy.com
- CenterPoint Energy: www.centerpointenergy.com > Residential > Save Energy & Money; 800-245-2377