

**CITY OF BIG LAKE
ELECTED OFFICIALS' DUTIES & RESPONSIBILITIES**

The following criteria is identified by the League of MN Cities to help guide elected officials in their duties/responsibilities/roles:

1. **Duties and Responsibilities:** It is the duty of the Mayor, City Council Members, and the City Administrator to ensure the City fulfills its duties under the law and lawfully exercises its powers.

City Officials can sometimes be held personally liable for failing to act or for taking unauthorized actions on the part of the City. To avoid personal-liability lawsuits, City Officials should gain a working knowledge of the laws that regulate City government. Whenever there is any doubt about the validity of an action or procedure, City Officials should consult their City Attorney.

2. **Role of the Individual Council Member:** Council Members' statutory duties are to be preformed, almost without exception, by the Council as a whole. For example, the Council, not individual members, must supervise administrative officers, formulate policies, and exercise City powers.

Council Members should devote their official time to problems of basic policy and act as liaisons between the City and the general public. Council Members should be concerned, not only with the conduct of daily affairs, but also with the future development of the City.

The most important single responsibility of a Council Member is participation at Council Meetings. In Statutory cities, each Council Member, including the Mayor, has full authority to make and second motions, participate in discussions, and vote on every matter before the Council.

In a Statutory City, any two Council Members of a five-member Council may call a Special Meeting. Care should be exercised to give proper notice.

3. **Role of the Mayor:** As the head of the City, the Mayor officially speaks for both the government and the community as a whole. In all Statutory cities and in most Charter cities, the Mayor is the presiding officer and a regular member of the Council. The Mayor has all the powers and duties for the office of Council Members in addition to those of Mayor.

In a home rule Charter City, the Charter spells out duties and responsibilities of the Mayor. Mayors of Statutory cities have the following roles:

- a. Official Head of the City of Big Lake
 - i. The Mayor usually serves as the City's representative before the Minnesota Legislature, federal agencies, and other local governments.

- ii. The Mayor usually greets important visitors, gives formal and informal talks, and takes part in public events.
 - iii. The Mayor often exerts leadership in City affairs. Because the mayors of statutory cities lack significant authority, this responsibility frequently calls for tact rather than overt acts of direction or supervisory control.
 - iv. The Mayor often performs ceremonial duties on behalf of the community and should be prepared to explain or defend City problems and programs.
 - b. Executing official documents authorized by the full Council.
 - i. Resolutions.
 - ii. Ordinances.
 - iii. Claims for Payment.
 - iv. Contracts
 - c. Power to make some appointments.
 - d. Presiding Officer at Council Meetings.
 - e. Weed Inspector.
 - i. The City may also appoint assistant weed inspectors, who have the same power, authority, and responsibility of the Mayor in capacity of weed inspector duties.
 - f. Election duties.
 - g. Perform or delegate fire investigation duties as required by statute.
 - h. Declaring local emergencies.
4. **Role of the Council:** As individuals, Council Members have no administrative authority. They cannot give orders or otherwise supervise City employees unless specifically directed to do so by the full Council. The Council, however, has complete authority over all administrative affairs in the City. The Council, not individual members, must supervise administrative officers, formulate policies, and exercise City powers. The City Council has ultimate authority of the hiring and termination of all City employees.

The major areas of Council authority and responsibility are:

- a. Act as liaisons between the City and the public.
- b. Judging the qualification and election of its own members.
- c. Setting and interpreting rules governing its own proceedings.
- d. Exercising all the powers of cities that the law does not delegate to others.
- e. Legislating for the City.
- f. Directing the enforcement of City Ordinances.
- g. Appointing Administrative Personnel.
- h. Transacting City business.
- i. Managing the City's financial operations.
- j. Appointing members of the Boards.
- k. Conducting the City's Intergovernmental Affairs.
- l. Protecting the welfare of the City and its inhabitants.
- m. Providing community leadership.