

**BIG LAKE CITY COUNCIL  
WORKSHOP MEETING MINUTES**

**APRIL 4, 2007**

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

Mayor Orrock called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

**2. ROLL CALL**

Council Members present: Dick Backlund, Chuck Heitz, Lori Kampa, Patricia May, and Donald Orrock. Also present: City Administrator Scott Johnson, Finance Director Corey Boyer, Community Economic Development Director Jim Thares, Public Works Director Mike Goebel, City Clerk Gina Wolbeck, and City Engineer Brad DeWolf from Bolton and Menk.

Also in attendance from various Boards: Mark Kolbinger and Gregg Nelson from the Becker City Council; Jim Sanford from Big Lake Township; Chris Stalpes, Kent Vickerman, and Dave Kuenstler from the Becker/Big Lake Ice Association, and Paul Erickson from the Minnesota Sports Commission. County Administrator Brian Benson arrived at 7:05 p.m.

**3. PROPOSED AGENDA**

Council Member Heitz motioned to adopt the proposed Agenda. Seconded by Council Member Kampa, unanimous ayes, agenda adopted.

**4. BUSINESS**

**4A. PRESENTATION – Becker/Big Lake Ice Association**

Chris Stalpes reviewed the status of the Becker/Big Lake Ice Association's endeavor to construct an ice arena in the area. Representatives from the City of Becker, the Ice Association and the Minnesota Sports Commission were also in attendance at the Workshop. Mr. Stalpes reviewed proposed operations of the arena, finances, liability, ownership, insurance, and the establishment of a Joint Powers Agreement. The Ice Association's goal is to build a single sheet, 500 – 700 person seating capacity arena either in Big Lake or Becker and that the arena would be an official affiliate of the National Sports Center (NSC) in Blaine. Paul Erickson informed the Boards that his agency is prepared to assist the Ice Association in providing their management expertise for the first two years until the arena can support, train, and hire a full time manager, and that they will provide and train Ice Technicians to ensure ice is maintained for optimum efficiency. Potential costs for the arena were discussed with \$1 million in debt service to be assumed by the Ice Association, \$1 million to be raised from area businesses and personal contributions, and \$3 million proposed to be contributed from state and local governments. Mr. Erickson also discussed the State funded Mighty Ducks grant program that could be reenacted in 2008. Mr. Stalpes reviewed their proposed timeline for funding and construction and identified a startup date goal of October 2009.

Board Members discussed the need for the Becker and Big Lake communities to provide opportunities to engage the area youth in meaningful activities and that an ice arena would be a beneficial element to that goal. Board Members also discussed that the Ice Association needs to establish a location, and asked the Association what their options are. Members indicated that they currently own a site in the Marketplace Development which fronts Highway 10, a potential site by the airport, and also have the possibility of locating at the potential new fairgrounds in Becker. Board Members discussed the option of locating the arena adjacent to the Becker Community Center. Discussion was also held on why the School Districts don't take the lead on a new ice arena. Mr. Erickson reviewed various other communities and indicated that approximately 75% of arenas in the State of Minnesota are funded by local units of government and that what schools can offer is a guarantee of ice time commitments, which is a financial contribution. Discussion was also held on uses of the arena during the summer months. Members explained that the arena will be used year round and could potentially host car shows, craft shows, and indoor tournaments. Jim Sanford discussed the Townships concern with funding the arena as they have a number of school districts in their jurisdiction. Ice Association members indicated that the arena would be open to all school districts in the area for rental of ice time.

Board Members discussed the option of asking Sherburne County to incur the debt for this type of facility and that the local government entities could provide pledge agreements to pay the debt off over time. Brian Benson informed the Boards that he would present this concept to the County Board for their feedback and will report back to Big Lake City Administrator Scott Johnson with their comments.

Mayor Orrock thanked all the Boards and the Ice Association for cooperatively working together on this proposal.

#### **4B. Towing Services Discussion**

Sean Rifenberick reviewed concerns brought up by Council Members after the Meeting on March 14<sup>th</sup>, and clarified that when officers call Sherburne County dispatch and request "next available" for towing service, it is not code for "Peterson's Amoco", but means, "next available". Chief Rifenberick also informed Council that staff does not solicit or promote business for any one company. Chief Rifenberick also informed Council that staff received a letter from Bob's Towing indicating that they have located their storage facility at JC's Body Shop which is surrounded by City limits. Council direction at the March 14, 2007 meeting was to continue with our current towing services and look at other alternatives when another towing vendor locates their storage facility legally within the City limits. Council also directed staff to look for examples of City service policies from other municipalities. As other cities tend to use an RFP process and professional services contracts, staff is looking for Council feedback on implementing a Request for Proposal process for specific services and entering into professional services contracts.

Council Member Kampa indicated that she is not in favor of any contractual agreement for towing services. Mayor Orrock explained that this item was brought back to Council to ensure that the City isn't imposing on private enterprise. Council directed staff to provide an updated towing list from Sherburne County showing Bob's Towing listed under Peterson's Amoco.

#### **4C. Consultant Review**

Corey Boyer reviewed the results of the survey conducted on consulting firms used by surrounding communities for comparison to the consultants used by the City of Big Lake. Discussion was also held on the City's process for outsourcing utility billing payments. Council directed staff to provide an updated survey annually prior to year-end.

#### **5. OTHER**

Corey Boyer discussed the letter received from Tim Yantos from the Northstar Corridor Development Authority following up on Council discussion at the February 1, 2007 Workshop on City costs related to the Northstar Commuter Rail project. Mr. Yantos provided some clarification on various stages of engineering on the maintenance facility and what fees he feels the NCDA should be charged. The NCDA is asking the City to waive any costs associated with the rail station and that the NCDA would only be responsible for preliminary engineering costs for the maintenance facility. Mr. Boyer explained that the City has not budgeted anything in the 2007 general fund budget to account for this activity and is looking for Council direction on handling expenses for these projects. Council discussed consideration of waiving engineering review costs, but would not consider waiving any other fees including infrastructure costs, and permit fees. Council directed staff to meet with Mr. Yanto's and representatives from NorthStar to further discuss potential costs.

Administrator Johnson discussed items Council would and wouldn't like to see placed in the yellow folders in the future. Council indicated that they understand the need to place updates to agenda items and informational items in the yellow folders, but that other items should wait until the next Council Meeting so that Council has time to educate themselves on the issue. Council Members also clarified that if a Council Member wants to bring up specific items at a meeting that are not listed on the Agenda, they have the right to do so during the Mayor/Council Report portion of the meeting.

Council and staff discussed the process for delivering Council Packets to Council Members.

#### **6. ADJOURN**

Council Member May motioned to adjourn at 7:42 p.m. Seconded by Council Member Kampa, unanimous ayes, motion carried.

Gina Wibeck  
City Clerk

04-11-07  
Date Approved By Council