

**BIG LAKE CITY COUNCIL  
WORKSHOP MEETING MINUTES**

**OCTOBER 15, 2008**

**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, City Clerk Gina Wolbeck, Public Works Director Mike Goebel, Police Chief Sean Rifenberick, City Engineer Brad DeWolf of Bolton & Menk, Inc., and Jim Ridgeway from the Big Lake Community Lakes Association Board.

**3. PROPOSED AGENDA**

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

**4. BUSINESS**

**4A. Lake Association Recommendations**

Jim Ridgeway discussed the recommendations submitted by the Big Lake Community Lakes Association. The recommendations include closing greenway areas to snowmobiles, restricting greenway accesses if any greenways are left open, limiting mowing areas within greenways, and banning the feeding of waterfowl. Mr. Ridgeway requested that snowmobile traffic be routed through the Lakeside Park Access and the Mitchell Landing Access. Council discussed their concern with routing snowmobile traffic through town to get to the accesses. Discussion was also held on installing some type of steps at the Washington Avenue Greenway, which could be built with timbers or regular lumber. Mr. Ridgeway thanked Council for the City's interest in conducting the Tour of the Lakes and for their spirit of cooperation.

**4B. Outside Holiday Decoration Discussion**

Mike Goebel discussed the Council's previous interest in obtaining new outdoor holiday decorations. Mr. Goebel noted that he has had discussions with the Big Lake Chamber of Commerce relating to potential funding for holiday decorations for the City. The Chamber

of Commerce has indicated that there are no funding sources available at this time. Staff is looking for Council direction on if this item should be budgeted for next year, or if staff should continue to use the decorations that we currently have. Council discussed potential business sponsorship of holiday banners and contacting local organizations about assisting with funding the new decorations. Council directed staff to obtain quotes on decorations and banners and to survey surrounding communities on the annual costs for hanging baskets. Council also indicated that they are interested in decorating Brown's Park in the future.

#### **4C. Budget Update**

Corey Boyer provided Council with tax rate estimates for 2009. The Total Net Tax Capacity submitted by Sherburne County for 2009 is \$8,031,813.00. Staff asked for clarification on what tax rate Council would like to see for 2009. In order to obtain the same tax rate as 2008, another \$100,000 would need to be cut from the budget. Staff discussed implementing a hiring freeze which would currently affect one full-time police officer position, and a part-time public works position which would cut approximately \$30,000.00 from the budget. Staff discussed staffing for public safety and public works and noted that things happen that affect the need for additional hours in these types of departments. Council discussed terminating the Building Inspector position effective January 1, 2009 due to the housing shortfall. Council Members noted that they would not be in favor of terminating this position if the hours would need to be filled by Northwest Inspection Services. Staff discussed various other options in place of terminating a position and asked that the Building Department be allowed to present information at the November Workshop before a final decision is made. Council directed staff to place this item on the November 19, 2008 Workshop. Council also directed staff to find out why the liquor store wages have increased this year.

#### **4D. 429 Bonding and Assessment of Fees Discussion**

Corey Boyer reviewed the 429 Bonding process and assessment of fees. The City has historically considered these types of developer requests to provide flexibility to developers to help encourage commercial development. The City has approved two 429 bonding requests where the City bonds for a project, completes the project, and then assesses 100% of the cost back to the developer. This type of assistance works well as long as all assessments are paid when due. If assessments are not paid on time, the City is then required to cash flow bond payments until the delinquent assessments are paid. The same type of assistant has been considered and approved to assess development related fees which fund infrastructure improvements, WAC/SAC or trunk fees for developers. With the current turmoil in the financial and housing markets, staff is recommending Council carefully consider future requests for 429 bonding or assessment of developer related fees.

#### **4E. Delinquent Utility Certification Update**

Corey Boyer reviewed the process for certification of delinquent utilities. Preliminary numbers indicate we will see a sizeable increase in the amount we certify for collection in 2009. Mr. Boyer reviewed the ordinance as it pertains to the assessment of these types of charges and noted that staff has taken quite a few calls from new homeowners that are being noticed on the previous owners utility bills, and also from tenants of rental units. Council directed staff to contact the League of MN Cities for possible assistance in correcting this problem and to check with other cities to see what their processes are for collecting past due utility bills.

#### **4F. Recording of Future Council Workshop Discussions**

Scott Johnson discussed a previous request from Council Member Heitz to televise all Council Meetings including Workshops. Staff is looking for feedback from the full Council if it would be appropriate and beneficial to televise Workshops. Council directed staff to bring this item back to the January 2009 Workshop.

### **5. OTHER**

Corey Boyer reviewed the City's Financial Consultant's history with the City and asked Council if they want to see a Request for Qualification (RFQ) be done on this contracted service. Council directed staff to do an RFQ for financial services.

Corey Boyer updated Council on the recent St. Cloud Library On-Line Auction.

Jim Thares and Gina Wolbeck informed Council that staff has been receiving correspondence relating to the potential race track and asked Council if they would like to see all the comments as they are submitted, or if they would like them all compiled and included with the packet when and if it comes to the City Council. Council indicated that they would like to see the correspondence as it is received.

Gina Wolbeck and Mike Goebel discussed potential signage to help voters locate their correct precinct. Due to the potential cost of this signage, staff is seeking Council feedback on what type of signage they would prefer. Brad DeWolf offered to print up and laminate large signs for this use.

Chief Sean Rifenberick discussed an e-mail that was sent by Council Member Backlund regarding the police department. Mr. Rifenberick asked for full Council feedback on the concerns of Council Member Backlund. Staff reviewed City and Police Department Policies relating to Council Member conversations with staff. Discussion was also held on staffing on weekends, K-9 training locations and certifications, fuel consumption, the new squad car status, police department facility improvements, and civil tickets.

**6. ADJOURN**

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

Gina Wolbeck  
City Clerk

Date Approved By Council 10/22/08