

**BIG LAKE CITY COUNCIL  
WORKSHOP MINUTES  
OCTOBER 16, 2013**

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

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

**2. ROLL CALL**

Council Members present: Dick Backlund, Raeanne Danielowski, and Mike Wallen. Council Members Nick Christenson and Seth Hansen were absent. Also present: City Administrator Todd Bodem, Finance Director Jessica Green, City Clerk Gina Wolbeck, Public Works Director Mike Goebel, Police Chief Joel Scharf, and Liquor Store Manager Jan Muehlbauer.

**3. PROPOSED AGENDA**

Council Member Wallen motioned to adopt the proposed Agenda as presented. Seconded by Council Member Backlund, unanimous ayes, agenda adopted.

**4. BUSINESS**

**4A. River Rider Discussion**

Chad Gessel reviewed the current River Rider transportation schedule and informed Council that no one from the Big Lake area has scheduled a ride in the last month. Council discussed the limited ride options available and that riders have a four hour wait from the time they are dropped off to when they are picked up. Gessel discussed the possibility of implementing a 5 hour circle route that would provide 250 service hours per year. Gessel noted that the local share would be 15% of the costs and explained that ridership revenue should cover the 15% local share. Gessel clarified that if ridership falls short, the City would be responsible to cover the shortfall. Gessel also discussed the Contract that would need to be approved by the City and the River Rider Joint Powers Board. Mayor Danielowski reviewed discussions she has had members of the Big Lake Lion's Club Organization regarding their potential interest in assisting with the costs for this additional service. Mayor Danielowski and Gessel will attend a Lion's Club Meeting to discuss what their level of support would be.

**4B. Review of Utility Rate Analysis**

Jessica Green reviewed comments posted on a social media site in relation to the City's utility rates. Staff provided a water, sewer, and storm sewer analysis produced by a former

Finance Director that was used in determining the current utility rates. Jessica Green discussed her review of the analysis and agreed with the findings. Staff questioned if Council wants to hire an outside consultant to conduct another utility rate analysis. Council Member Wallen discussed his concern with spending approximately \$10,000 on a rate study to address concerns of a very small group of residents. Council Members suggested creating in-house educational materials explaining our rate structure. Council also discussed the need to start shutting off water service on delinquent accounts. Mike Goebel informed Council that the plan is to start with shutoffs again this spring. Council also discussed the need to give Public Works the staff resources they need to be successful with the collections. Council also reviewed the conservation tiered system that we currently use and noted that the tiered system was enacted due to pending legislation. Staff recommended that the tier system stay in effect, but that we could look at the tier rate amounts. Council also discussed the late fee structure. Staff noted that the 10% late fee was put in place as a deterrent to high delinquencies. Council discussed the need to bring on a collections/shut-off type of position and that this position could also potentially be responsible for blight control.

#### **4C. Wage Study Discussion**

Todd Bodem discussed the possibility of the City conducting an employee compensation study. Bodem noted that the last study was conducted in 2005, at which time the City completed a full compensation study for each city position that included updated job descriptions, assigned evaluation points to retain pay equity and comparable worth, and established a salary step compensation schedule. In recent years, City staff has had to find ways to make assumptions on changing positions which might not reflect an accurate portrayal of points and pay. Staff has obtained three quotes for services to conduct this type of survey. Staff suggested Council consider the quote submitted by Springsted, Inc. at an approximate cost of \$9,950. Bodem also noted that based on outcomes of this study, the City may need to reclassify positions and possibly implement adjustments in salary grade which would result in a wage adjustment for certain positions. Council discussed that this type of study should be updated every 5 years.

5. **OTHER** – No other.

6. **ADJOURN**

Council Member Wallen motioned to adjourn at 7:23 p.m. Seconded by Council Member Backlund, unanimous ayes, motion carried.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Gina Wolbeck  
Recorder

\_\_\_\_\_  
10-23-13  
Date Approved By Council