

**JOINT MEETING OF THE
CITY OF BIG LAKE, BIG LAKE TOWNSHIP, ORROCK TOWNSHIP, BIG LAKE
SCHOOL DISTRICT, AND THE SHERBURNE COUNTY BOARD OF
COMMISSIONERS**

JANUARY 16, 2020

1. CALL TO ORDER

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

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

3. ROLL CALL

Big Lake City Council Members present: Mayor Mike Wallen, Council Members Seth Hansen, Rose Johnson, and Paul Knier.

Big Lake Township Board Members present: Chair Bruce Aubol, Dean Brenteson, and Norm Leslie.

Orrock Township Board Members present: Supervisors Bryan Adams, Paul Ettinger, and Brenda Kimberly-Maas.

Big Lake School Board Members present: Chair Tonya Reasoner, Lenette Brown, Mark Hedstrom, Dan Nygaard, Tony Scales, and Amber Sixberry.

Sherburne County Commissioner present: Commissioner Raeanne Danielowski.

Staff present: City Administrator Clay Wilfahrt, City Clerk Gina Wolbeck, Finance Director Deb Wegeleben, Community Development Director Hanna Klimmek, City Engineer Layne Otteson, and Big Lake School District Superintendent Steve Westerberg. Sherburne County Administrator Bruce Messelt arrived at 6:09 p.m.

4. PROPOSED AGENDA

Council Member Knier motioned to adopt the proposed Agenda. Seconded by Superintendent Westerberg, unanimous ayes, Agenda adopted.

5. BUSINESS

5A. County Topics

Bruce Messelt discussed the completion of the government center/courthouse renovation, appointment of new Parks Director Gina Hugo, Assessor Michele Moen, and himself as County Administrator, reviewed the County's Levy, decreasing tax rate, ongoing discussions regarding the County Jail/ICE Contract, public utilities sector activities, and community/social efforts of the County. Messelt noted that there was 441 new home permits issued in 2019 stressing that the County continues to grow at a nice, level pace. Messelt discussed the County's Revolving Loan Fund which funded 7 loans totaling \$412,600 since approved in 2016. Discussion was held on Broadband efforts of the County, the 2018 Rail Impact Study, Business Park employment estimates, recent development projects in the County, the Sherco transition, transportation and planning partnerships, the County's 5-year Strategic Plan, legal refugee resettlement discussions, T21 enforcement, the 2020 Census, elections/Real ID, and the cannabis debate. Messelt reviewed the County's top 2020 Legislative priorities which include securing State Bonding for the Becker Business Park infrastructure, securing funds to initiate the TH 169/CSAH 4 Interchange Project in Zimmerman, and seeking legislation for supervisory overrides for child Protection 24-hour response. Commissioner Danielowski discussed the Northstar Commuter Rail and the status of a possible extension to St. Cloud.

Council Member Knier questioned refugee resettlement and his understanding is that for the County to accept refugees, the County Board must affirmatively vote to continue the practice. Messelt discussed the Congressional Act that regulates legal refugee resettlement. Discussion was held that there is a requirement that the County weigh in and the County Board vote affirmatively to continue to allow refugee resettlement in Sherburne County. Messelt stressed that this discussion is on legal refugee resettlement, not illegal immigration. Messelt also noted that Sherburne County has less than 3 placements of this type per year. Council Member Johnson discussed that standards are set very high for persons being resettled under this policy.

5B. Big Lake Township Topics

Bruce Aubol discussed new home construction in the Township and reviewed the Township Levy noting that the largest expense in the Township budget is road

maintenance. Aubol reviewed that Township elections will now coincide with General Election dates beginning in 2020 but that the Township will continue to hold their annual Meeting in March each year. Aubol also reviewed the annual Recycling Day event held in May, and discussed recent improvements to the Big Lake Township Park fire pit area that were completed by Eagle Scout pledge Noah Hart. Aubol also discussed amenities at the Lion's Park that continue to be popular attractions.

5C. Orrock Township Topics

Bryan Adams discussed new home construction in Orrock Township, reviewed Levy information, recapped activities at the annual Recycling Day event held in May, and discussed road maintenance expenses which amount to 77% of the Townships Levy. Brenda Kimberly-Maas discussed finalization of easement issues on 233rd Avenue and 168th Street. Maas also discussed the hiring of a Deputy City Clerk that has been hired and will be running for the Clerk position in November.

5D. School Topics

Superintendent Westerberg discussed literature the district sends out to new residents, and noted communication issues the District has been facing since the West Sherburne Tribune ceased operation. The District has plans to re-establish mailing of a quarterly newsletter, discussed social media tools they use to send out academic and activity information, noted that they have completed a refresh of their school website, and have started holding quarterly Town Hall meetings. Westerberg also discussed various facility and parking lot upgrades, noted that District finances have significantly improved through increased enrollment, state aid increases, and increased programming. Westerberg discussed concerns with cross subsidy issues they are facing relating to special education costs, discussed the STEAM technology implementation, the District's effort to continue expanding advanced courses, continued growth of the Apprenticeship Program which offers work based learning opportunities, and expanding the use of technology in the classroom. Discussion was held on vaping issues that the schools have experienced. Dan Nygaard noted that Superintendent Westerberg has announced his plan for retirement at the end of the school year and thanked him for his years of service. Commissioner Danielowski expressed that enrollment is rebounding, and the positive effects of housing growth in the Big Lake area. Discussion was held on the need to attract more developers as the City's platted lot supply has been greatly reduced in the past few years.

5E. City of Big Lake Topics

Clay Wilfahrt reviewed the recent staffing reorganization, discussed activities of the CMRRPP partnership group which is currently completing a regional land use plan,

reviewed the Wastewater Treatment Facility expansion project that will add new filtration equipment and oxidation ditch improvements. The plant currently is operating at 120% capacity and the projected expansion costs are expected to be \$3M. Wilfahrt also reviewed the completion of the 2019 Street Resurfacing Project, the upcoming 2020 Street and Utility Improvement Project, discussed area newspaper options, recent and upcoming commercial and residential development projects, reviewed the City's Levy and Tax Rate noting that Big Lake is becoming more competitive with our neighbors, and discussed the City of Big Lake's "Safest City" designation reached in 2019. Commissioner Danielowski asked if we are back to pre-recession market values, with Wilfahrt expressing that we are very close to pre-recession market values. Mayor Wallen stressed his appreciation for the collaboration of all entities, stating the benefits of continuing to meet in this format.

6. OTHER – No other.

7. ADJOURN

Supervisor Leslie motioned to adjourn the meeting at 7:31 p.m. Seconded by Commissioner Danielowski, unanimous ayes, motion carried.

Gina Wolbeck
Clerk

01/22/2020
Date Approved by the Big Lake City Council