

**BIG LAKE CITY COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
MAY 20, 2026**

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Paul Knier called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Pastor Kevin Drehml from Harvest Church provided an invocation.

3. ROLL CALL

Council Members present: Ken Geroux, Paul Knier, Kim Noding, and Paul Seefeld. Council Member absent: Ken Halverson. Also present: City Administrator Hanna Klimmek, City Clerk Gina Wolbeck, Finance Director Deb Wegeleben, City Engineer Layne Otteson, Community Development Director Marie Popp, Police Chief Sam Olson, Streets/Parks/Fleet Superintendent Norm Michels, Water/Wastewater Superintendent Dan Childs, and Big Lake Student Liaison Adelyn Gosewisch.

4. OPEN FORUM

Mayor Knier opened the Open Forum at 6:31 p.m.

Gloria Vande Brake, 271 Shore View Estates – announced Memorial Day services hosted by the Big Lake American Legion and Auxiliary at 10:00 a.m. on May 25, 2026 at Big Lake Cemetery, followed by a free lunch at Big Lake Township Lions Park. She also thanked the community for its support of Poppy Days, which raised \$6,457.57 for veterans, service members, and their families. In addition, Vande Brake announced Big Lake Spud Fest will be held June 24–29, 2026, and encouraged community support through volunteering, donations, and sponsorships.

Mayor Knier closed the Open Forum at 6:34 p.m.

5. PROPOSED AGENDA

Council Member Seefeld motioned to adopt the proposed Agenda with the addition of item no. 7F. Appointment of Engineering Intern. Seconded by Council Member Noding, unanimous ayes, Agenda adopted.

6. CONSENT AGENDA

Council Member Geroux motioned to approve the Consent agenda as presented. Seconded by Council Member Seefeld, unanimous ayes, Consent Agenda approved. The Consent Agenda consisted of: 6A. Approve List of Claims, 6B. Approve Council Workshop Minutes of April 15, 2026, 6C. Approve Regular Council Meeting Minutes of April 15, 2026, 6D. Approve Proclamation Proclaiming May 17-23, 2026 as National Public Works Week, 6E. Approve Termination of Floaters Recreational Rental LLC Lease Agreement, 6F. Approve Legal Services Contract Amendment with Campbell Knutson Professional Services, 6G. Approve Employment Status Change of Tara Kohl to the Community Development Coordinator Position, and the Appointment of Martha Dougherty to the Community Development Technician - Planning Position, 6H. Accept Resignation of Part-time Liquor Clerks Debra Atkinson and Jennifer Fingarson, 6I. Approve 2026 Compeer Financial Grant for the Big Lake Farmers Market Program, 6J. Approve Cooperative Agreement with Big Lake Township related to Annexation and Environmental Review, 6K. Approve Resolution No. 2026-24 Approving a Massage Therapist License to Ashley Zeiszler under the Muscle Revive, LLC Massage Enterprise License at 29 Lake Street South, 6L. Approve Public Works Equipment Purchase of a Bobcat Hydraulic Breaker from Farm-Rite Equipment of St. Cloud, and authorize the Trade-in of a 2019 Virnig Brush Mower, 6M. Approve Resolution No. 2026-25 approving Plans and Specifications and Authorize Advertisement for Bid for the 2026 Street Maintenance Project No. ST2026-2, 6N. Approve AIS Lake Treatment Reimbursement Agreement with the Big Lake Community Lakes Association, 6O. Authorize Sale of a 2018 Ford Explorer at I-Ray Public Auction, and approve the transfer of a 2004 Ford Sport Track SUV Pickup from the Public Works Fleet to the City Hall Fleet, 6P. Approve Appointment of Part-time Seasonal Parks Employees and Accept Non-Returning Status of Prior Seasonal Employees and Engineering Intern, and 6Q. Approve Employment Status Change for William Saliterman to Police Investigator.

7. BUSINESS

7A. 2026 Outstanding Citizen of the Year Award to Shelley Klein

Mayor Knier presented Big Lake resident Shelley Klein with the 2026 Outstanding Citizen of the Year Award, recognizing Klein for her volunteerism and commitment to the city. Knier noted the Outstanding Citizen of the Year program was established in 2021 as a way to recognize and encourage volunteerism in our community. The city created this program to thank local volunteers and bring to light the vast amount of time and resources given each year to the community. Klein, a longtime Big Lake resident, was honored for her extensive volunteer service, including work with the Big Lake Friends of the Library, Options, God's Grub at Saron Lutheran Church, and local food distribution efforts. Mayor Knier thanked Shelley for her service to the community, noting her contributions truly make Big Lake a better place. Klein thanked the city for the recognition.

7B. 2025 Audit Report Presentation from BerganKDV

Caroline Stutsman from BerganKDV presented the 2025 management letter and the audited Annual Comprehensive Financial Report (ACFR). Stutsman discussed cash, investments, fund balances, general fund revenues and expenditures, and provided a budgetary comparison of final budget numbers compared to actual amounts. Stutsman reviewed the liquor fund, storm sewer fund, water fund, sewer fund, tax capacity, levy, and rates. Stutsman also reviewed annual debt service principal and interest payments.

Mayor Knier asked if the water meter project created the loss in the water operation fund for 2025. Stutsman reviewed there were additional operating expenses and staffing expenses that caused the loss, which included the additional investment in the water meter software to read the new meters. Knier asked if it is anticipated there won't be a loss next year, or will it be a loss going forward. Deb Wegeleben responded our budget goal is to break even next year. Wegeleben discussed we also had a reduction in the rates last year which means our revenue is less, noting that is again planned for in 2026. Stutsman reviewed the data is strictly operational so any of the debt activity or payment the city has falls outside of this as well. Stutsman reiterated the importance of the data noting we are still seeing an increase in cash investments and the unrestricted net position component.

Council Member Noding motioned to motioned to accept the 2025 Audit report as presented. Seconded by Council Member Geroux, unanimous ayes, motion carried.

7C. PUBLIC HEARING – Consider Vacating Drainage and Utility Easement between Lots 6 and 7, Block 2, Mitch K Farms First Addition to facilitate a lot combination at 18991 Earl Road

Kendra Lindahl reviewed the planners report for the petition to vacate drainage and utility easements submitted by the applicant, Mark Wasmund. The Council held a public hearing on a request to vacate drainage and utility easements located on the common lot line between Lots 6 and 7, Block 2, Mitch K Farms First Addition, in conjunction with a proposed lot combination; staff noted that while lot combinations are typically reviewed administratively, Council action is required for the easement vacation. Lindahl reviewed the applicant owns both parcels, and the lots were previously split through administrative approval of a simple subdivision on March 12, 2025. Existing drainage and utility easements from the original plat remained in place, which made the subdivision straightforward.

Mayor Knier opened the public hearing at 7:03 p.m. No one came forward. Mayor Knier closed the public hearing at 7:03 p.m.

Council Member Seefeld motioned to approve Resolution No. 2026-26 approving a petition to vacate easements between Lot 6 and Lot 7, Block 2, Mitch K Farms First Addition and a lot combination, subject to the conditions identified therein. Seconded by Council Member Noding, unanimous ayes, motion carried.

7D. Ordinance Amending Big Lake City Code Sections 1003.11 (R-5 Residential Redevelopment District) and 1004.03 (Shoreland Management Overlay District)

Kendra Lindahl reviewed the planner's report for the proposed ordinance amending Big Lake City Code Sections 1003.11 (R-5 Residential Redevelopment District) and 1004.03 (Shoreland Management Overlay District). Lindahl stated the intent of the ordinance update is to improve clarity and reduce conflicts while retaining flexibility in the current Shoreland Ordinance. She noted this is a complex update because the adopted ordinance has not been revised in several years and differs in many ways from the MnDNR's Model Shoreland Ordinance, including unique standards for the R-5 Zoning District. These changes were not included in the 2023 rewrite of the Zoning Ordinance due to the complex nature of shoreland regulations, which require review and approval by the MnDNR. Since beginning the project in January, Landform has reviewed applicable ordinances and City data, met with City and DNR staff, and prepared several drafts of the code for review. Lindahl also reviewed the Planning Commission held a public hearing on May 4, 2026. No one from the public spoke on the issue, and the Planning Commission unanimously recommended approval of the amendments as presented.

Council Member Seefeld motioned to adopt Ordinance No. 2026-04 amending Big Lake City Code Sections 1003.11 (R-5 Residential Redevelopment District) and 1004.03 (Shoreland Management Overlay District). Seconded by Council Member Geroux, unanimous ayes, motion carried.

Council Member Noding motioned to approve Resolution No. 2026-27 approving Summary Publication of the Ordinance Amendments to City Code Chapter 10 (Zoning) Subsections 1003.11 (R-5, Residential Redevelopment District) and 1004.03 (Shoreland Management Overlay District). Seconded by Council Member Seefeld, unanimous ayes, motion carried.

7E. Student Liaison Report

Student Liaison Adelyn Gosewisch provided an update on Big Lake Schools. Gosewisch provided an update on enrollment statistics, activities of the Student Council, and reviewed events happening district wide including senior breakfast, teacher appreciation, chalk it up, homecoming and freshman first day planning, Paramount art competition, final band choir concerts, STEM night, and the fine arts award ceremony. Gosewisch also reviewed members of the 2026/2027 Student Council Executive Council.

7F. Appointment of Engineering Intern

Deb Wegeleben reviewed the status of the budgeted Engineering Intern position, which has not been filled. At this time, staff believes it is prudent to move forward with hiring an Engineering Intern for the summer months to assist with the 2026 Street Project. City Engineer Layne Otteson interviewed Jayden Wilson to fill the seasonal position, who will start employment with the City on May 26, 2026.

Council Member Noding motioned to approve the appointment of Jayden Wilson to the Engineering Intern position, contingent upon a satisfactory background. Seconded by Council Member Geroux, unanimous ayes, motion carried.

8. ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

Hanna Klimmek reported the Minnesota bonding bill includes \$3.5 million for final design and engineering of the City's Wastewater Treatment Facility Expansion Project. Combined with \$2 million in previously awarded federal funding, the project's final design and engineering costs are now fully funded through grants. Klimmek also reported Pizza Factory has closed on a new location next to Lake Liquors and has six months to complete the build-out and vacate its current space. She noted Cargill donated 20 oak trees, which have been planted in Norland Park, Sanford Select Acres Park, and Kellerwood Park. Klimmek also provided updates on playground and site improvement projects at Lakeside, Lake Ridge, and Shores of Lake Mitchell parks, including progress on assembly, surfacing, sidewalks, grading, seeding, and irrigation.

9. MAYOR & COUNCIL REPORTS and QUESTIONS/COMMENTS

Mayor Knier: reviewed the May Fire Board meeting, the recent BLEDA meeting, and numerous Finance/Public Building Facility committee meetings.

Layne Otteson noted completion of the MN Avenue project will be in October 2026.

Council Member Geroux: discussed the May BLEDA Meeting and various committee meetings.

Council Member Noding: discussed the May Fire Board meeting, and the April Parks Advisory Committee (PAC) meeting, noting the May PAC was cancelled due to lack of a quorum. Noding discussed the future of the Big Lake Skate Park, and Mayor Knier clarified the council has not yet committed to construction of a skate park. Council Member Noding noted the city has applied for grant funding for the project, and Hanna Klimmek confirmed the city has submitted a MNDNR Recreational Grant application. Council Member Seefeld also noted there is an open seat on the Parks Advisory Committee.

Council Member Seefeld: reviewed the May Planning Commission meeting and recent Personnel committee meeting. Council Member Seefeld also discussed Memorial Day events scheduled, noting there is an event planned at the Veterans Memorial starting at 9:00 a.m., and at the Big Lake Cemetery starting at 10:00 a.m. Gloria Vande Brake responded there isn't ample public parking at the Veteran's Memorial site so that event hasn't been advertised.

10. OTHER – No other.

11. ADJOURN

Council Member Seefeld motioned to adjourn at 7:24 p.m. Seconded by Council Member Noding, unanimous ayes, motion carried.

Gina Wolbeck
Clerk

Date Approved by Council 06.17.26