

**BIG LAKE CITY COUNCIL
WORKSHOP MINUTES**

JUNE 24, 2020

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Wallen called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL

Council Members present: Seth Hansen, Rose Johnson, Paul Knier, Mike Wallen, and Scott Zettervall. Also present: City Administrator Clay Wilfahrt, Finance Director Deb Wegeleben, Community Development Director Hanna Klimmek, City Engineer Layne Otteson, Water/Wastewater Superintendent Dan Childs, Police Chief Joel Scharf, Deputy Chief Matt Hayen, City Clerk Gina Wolbeck, and Liquor Store Manager Greg Zurbey.

3. PROPOSED AGENDA

Council Member Knier motioned to adopt the proposed Agenda as presented. Seconded by Council Member Johnson, unanimous ayes, Agenda adopted.

4. BUSINESS

4A. CARES Act Funding – COVID-19 Emergency Grant Program Policy Discussion

Hanna Klimmek reviewed the proposed Bill being considered by the MN Legislature to distribute funding from the Federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act. The Bill distributes money to local governments to assist with the financial strain caused by plummeting tax revenues. Klimmek noted that if approved, the City could potentially receive approximately \$800,000 in funds. Federal guidance indicates that a City would have discretion to determine what payments are necessary. A program that is aimed at assisting small businesses with the costs of business interruption caused by required closures should be tailored to assist those businesses in need. It is also understood that fund payments may be used for economic support in the absence of the stay-at-home order if expenditures are determined by the City to be necessary. This could include a grant program to benefit small businesses that close voluntarily to promote social distancing measures or that are affected by decreased customer demand as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. If the CARES Act funding is approved, the City would be able to provide funding to businesses to cover business interruption. Staff presented a draft of a COVID-19 Emergency Grant Program Policy and asked for Council feedback.

Council Member Johnson questioned if we can include other types of businesses beyond small businesses, maybe to include schools and non-profits, and stressed the need to ensure that we aren't duplicating funding efforts. Johnson discussed the need to have a strong policy in place so there isn't concern about the possible perception of the City picking favorites amongst businesses. Johnson also noted that she is not sure if a first-come first-serve approach is the way to go, but would rather like to see the application have a deadline and then a review

process. Johnson also discussed the need for the City to set aside funds for reimbursement of City expenses we have experienced due to COVID.

Council Member Knier questioned residency requirements. Klimmek indicated that specifics of the policy will be reviewed prior to adoption. Council discussed the possibility of some dissatisfaction amongst businesses.

Mayor Wallen reviewed that there will be longer conversations at the EDA level on the layout of the policy.

Clay Wilfahrt reviewed the upcoming special session and the Governor's review of the potential grant funds.

Council directed Staff to further refine the COVID-19 Emergency Grant Program Policy and bring to BLEDA for further review.

4B. Lakeside Park Discussion

Clay Wilfahrt informed Council that the City was contacted by the property owner of the vacant lot across Lakeshore Drive from Lakeside Park. They have indicated that they will no longer allow parking on that lot until the City enters into an agreement to compensate them for parking on their land. Wilfahrt reviewed various options available to the City and asked for feedback from the Council.

Council Member Hansen stated that he does not want to touch it, expressing that we should walk away from it. Council Member Knier expressed that there are other options available including shutting down one side of Sherburne Avenue during big events to allow for parking on one side of the road.

Council Member Johnson stated that she would like to know what they are proposing for lease terms and a purchase price. Johnson also discussed liability concerns with leasing and questioned if we will be opening ourselves up to risk. Johnson suggested we do an analysis to see if it is worth purchasing or leasing. Johnson also expressed that area residents would not be happy if we allow parking on Lakeshore Drive. Council Member Knier discussed the option of offering shuttle services, and Council Member Hansen questioned who would pay for that service.

Council Member Knier asked when the restriping is scheduled. Otteson noted that restriping is years out. Knier stated that would like to find out what a lease agreement rate would look like, and whether a daily rate would be possible. Wilfahrt noted that Staff has requested possible terms from the owner, but that the owner has indicated that they would prefer to respond to an offer. Knier stated that he would be open to leasing but not open to purchasing as he feels that would not be a good use of taxpayer dollars.

Council Member Zettervall discussed park dedication fees and what those can be used for. Zettervall stated that he doesn't feel there would be a return on investment by leasing the parcel. Zettervall stated that he would like to see what our options are for purchasing, leasing, and any

other options that make sense. Zettervall stressed that the opportunity for site control goes away if someone else buys it.

Mayor Wallen stated that he agrees that we need to get pricing from the owner.

The general consensus of the Council was to direct Staff to comprise a comprehensive financial analysis on lease and purchase options.

4C. Student Liaison to the City Council Discussion

Clay Wilfahrt discussed that the Mayor was approached by Big Lake High School student Ella Dotzler, who has expressed interest in getting involved in local government. Himself, and Mayor Wallen met with Ms. Dotzler and she indicated she is interested in attending Council meetings as a student liaison noting that she will also be serving in this capacity for the school board as well. Wilfahrt asked for Council feedback on either designating Ms. Dotzler as its student liaison, or opening up the position for applications. Council Members discussed that a student's voice is a voice that often times goes unheard.

Council Member Hansen stated that he feels this program is a great idea, and would like to see it as a permanent position.

Council Member Johnson stated that she would like a student representative program to be established as an ongoing program each year.

Council Member Knier noted that the position doesn't have to be filled if no one applies.

Council Member Zettervall stated that we could treat this first year as a trial year, and that moving forward if multiple people have an interest in serving, we could do an interview process.

Mayor Wallen stated that Ella took the initiative to contact the City, and feels we should choose her. Wallen also suggested that Ella could be a terrific resource to set up a policy for an on-going program.

The general consensus of the Council was to proceed with designating Ella Dotzler as the City Council Student Liaison and to direct Staff to assemble policy/procedure for this role for Council consideration.

4D. Water Use Discussion

Layne Otteson discussed water use trends during this very dry and warm summer. Currently, we have all well operating at approximately 3 million gallons per day which is about 85% of our pumping capacity. Otteson noted that Staff is expecting water use trending will increase as we get further into the summer season. The City needs to maintain minimum levels necessary to adequately provide fire protection and potable water for drinking and sanitary needs. Otteson explained that when we exceed 3 million gallons per day, Staff's comfort level decreases due to the concern that if we lose a well, we would not be able to meet water demands for property

owners as well as for municipal services. Staff has already reduced park irrigation with the exception of Lakeside Park and Browns Park due to heavy use and visibility. Otteson reviewed the City's water use restrictions identified in City Code, Section 800.27. These rules were adopted in 2010 and allows for flexibility with water use restrictions. The code allows for the Council or the Administrator to determine there is a water shortage and then to place appropriate limitations to water use. The code also identifies notification requirements and fees/penalties for violations. Limitations on water use would be an emergency response to worst case scenario as it would significantly impact residents. Otteson informed Council that Staff will continue to monitor water use and be prepared to act. The City's strategy to meet the water demands includes education/outreach, conservation and future planning. Water conservation information will be advertised to the public and Staff will examine ways to reduce treated water use at City parks. Otteson also noted that a new well is planned for 2021 and should be a priority as it will provide needed capacity and redundancy. Otteson stressed that in an emergency situation, we will respond with turning off park irrigation and issuing water use limitations, similar to what other surrounding communities have done already.

Council Member Johnson discussed issues we could experience with a well going down. Dan Childs explained that the first step we should take is to limit City irrigation and provide education to our residents.

Council Member Knier asked what citizen preference has been in past years when there was a need for water restrictions. Otteson reviewed that prior to 2010, the City was on an odd/even irrigation schedule. Since the regulation was changed back in 2010, there has been no discussion since. Otteson stated that he feels we can offer education to residents before we implement water restrictions. Childs reviewed that the average water use per person/per day is 100 gallons, noting that right now we are at 400 gallons of water use per person/per day.

Mayor Wallen confirmed that at this point, we are not planning to implement water restrictions, but that the focus will be on limiting park irrigation and educating citizens on water use.

4E. Police Officer Wellness Programs Discussion

Joel Scharf and Matt Hayen discussed the Police Officer position, which continues to become significantly more complicated and difficult each day. Scharf stressed that while recent events that occurred in Minneapolis have brought a wave of negativity to the profession nationwide, he is thankful to serve in a community that heavily supports their police department, and in turn our officers. The department has incredibly high standards, which translates to a professional image and successful community bonds. Scharf explained that departments that build strong support for their staff from within, produce officers who are healthy, happy, and engaged. This translates into reduced sick leave utilized, reduced injuries, and stronger decision making skills. A significant portion of an officer's lifestyle needs to be dedicated to physical and emotional wellness. Hayen recommended Council authorize a paid fitness membership for each officer who agrees to participate and meet department standards for use. Scharf also recommended the City undertake an employee assistance program for all sworn staff utilizing Dr. Michael Keller, a psychologist specializing in the stress our police officers face. The program would consist of an officer being able to utilize Dr. Keller's services anonymously for up to 5 visits, for which the department would pay an hourly rate of \$125. After 5 visits, the officer would be

responsible for assuming the cost. Scharf acknowledged that our officers are serving in unprecedented times which can have a devastating impact on their emotional wellbeing. Scharf also noted that the cost for these programs will be funded through the reallocation of Community Service Officer (CSO) dollars.

Council Member Johnson stated that she feels that we should be offering these same services to all City employees.

Council Member Knier questioned how many Big Lake Police Officers live in Big Lake, and asked if the Department can utilize the exercise room at the Fire Department. Discussion was held on the Importance for firefighters to have access to the exercise equipment.

Council discussed that the cost of these services would be funded through a reallocation of the CSO program funds.

The general consensus of the Council was to implement a Fitness Membership Program, and to move forward with an Employee Assistance Program through Dr. Michael Keller for all sworn police staff.

4F. New Ideas Discussion – None presented.

5. OTHER

6. ADJOURN

Council Member Knier motioned to adjourn at 5:59 p.m. Seconded by Council Member Johnson unanimous ayes, motion carried.

Gina Wolbeck
City Clerk

07/08/2020
Date Approved By Council