

**BIG LAKE CITY COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
AUGUST 12, 2020**

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Mike 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 Mayor, City Council, Staff, and those in attendance recognized late Council Member Rose Johnson for her years of service to the City of Big Lake, and Mayor Wallen respectfully asked for a moment of silence in memory of Rose.

Council Members present: Seth Hansen, Paul Knier, Mike Wallen, and Scott Zettervall. Also present: City Administrator Clay Wilfahrt, Finance Director Deb Wegeleben, City Engineer Layne Otteson, Police Chief Joel Scharf, City Clerk Gina Wolbeck, Liquor Store Manager Greg Zurbey, Assistant Fire Chief Mark Hedstrom, and Big Lake School Liaison Ella Dotzler.

4. OPEN FORUM

Mayor Wallen opened the Open Forum at 6:02 p.m. No one came forward. Mayor Wallen closed the Open Forum at 6:03 p.m.

5. PROPOSED AGENDA

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

6. CONSENT AGENDA

Mayor Wallen noted that Council Member Zettervall is scheduled out of town on August 19 and asked that Council pull item 6K. There were no Council Members opposed to holding budget discussions during the regularly scheduled August 26 Council Workshop instead of holding a special workshop.

Council Member Knier motioned to approve the Consent Agenda with the removal of item 6K. Seconded by Council Member Zettervall, unanimous ayes, Consent Agenda approved. The Consent Agenda consists of: 6A. Approve List of Claims, 6B. Approve Council Workshop Minutes of July 22, 2020, 6C. Approve Council Meeting Minutes of July 22, 2020, 6D. Approve Special Council Workshop Minutes of August 4, 2020, 6E. Accept Resignation of Part-time Liquor Clerk Maarja Dahl, 6F. Accept Resignation of Part-time Lead Liquor Clerk Jodie Audette, 6G. Approve Purchase of Public Works Trackless Sidewalk Machine Equipment, 6H. Approve Employment Status Change for Streets/Parks Operator II Employees Brandon Greenwald and Brett Johnson, 6I. Approve Hunger Solutions Farmers Market Administrative Grants Agreement, 6J. Accept Resignation of Code Enforcement Intern John Johansen, ~~6K. Set Special Council Workshop for Wednesday, August 19, 2020 to Discuss the 2021 Budget,~~ 6L. Approve Final Plat Resolution No. 2020-63 approving the Big Lake Marketplace Ninth Addition Final Plat, and 6M. Approve Wastewater Treatment Facility Improvement Project Change Order No. 2.

7. BUSINESS

7A. County Road 5 Historic Bridge Project Resolution and Letter of Support

Layne Otteson reviewed that Sherburne County is seeking City approval on a Letter and Resolution of Support to pursue funding to move, restore and resurrect the historic Kern Bridge to be placed over the Elk River at Lion's Park on the west side of the County Road 5 bridge. The historic bridge is being made available by MnDOT through a solicitation process. The County sees this as a tremendous opportunity that would benefit trail connectivity, pedestrian safety and historic preservation. Otteson explained that no City costs have been identified or expected as this would be a County project located in Big Lake Township.

Council Member Hansen motioned to approve a Letter of Support and Resolution No. 2020-64 in support of Sherburne County's acquisition and placement of the historic Kern Bridge over the Elk River adjacent to County State Aid Highway 5 in the Township of Big Lake. Seconded by Council Member Knier, unanimous ayes, motion carried.

7B. Donation to the Big Lake Police Department from Fanberg Auctions

Joel Scharf reviewed the \$500 cash donation submitted by Fanberg Auctions that will be utilized towards non-budgeted expenses within the Department.

Council Member Zettervall motioned to approve Resolution No. 2020-65 accepting a \$500 cash donation to the Big Lake Police Department from Fanberg Auctions towards non-budgeted expenses within the Department. Seconded by Council Member Hansen, unanimous ayes, motion carried.

7C. Council Vacancy Discussion

Clay Wilfahrt brought forward information from City Attorney Soren Mattick relating to the Council Vacancy created with the passing of Council Member Rose Johnson. Mattick has indicated to Staff that when the seat was originally vacated by newly appointed Mayor Mike Wallen in January 2019, the Council at that time declared the Vacancy and appointed Rose Johnson to fill the seat until a Special Election could be held during the next General Election. A Special Election will be held on November 3, 2020 and upon certification of the results of the Special Election, the winning candidate will be sworn into office immediately. Wilfahrt asked for Council feedback on how they would like to proceed with the vacancy.

The Council came to a unanimous consensus to leave the seat vacant until the November General Election.

7D. Monthly Department Reports

Fire Department – Assistant Fire Chief Mark Hedstrom provided statistical information on calls for service for the month of July. Hedstrom also reviewed small group training activities in July, provided an update on the hiring status of new firefighters, and discussed recent improvements to the Fire Hall.

Police Department – Joel Scharf updated Council on police statistics, calls for service, significant arrests, and self-initiated policing activities for the month of July. Scharf discussed the substantial increase in critical incidents that have occurred in the past month, reviewed recent community events the Department participated in, welcomed new Police Administrative Assistant Nicole Pearson, discussed the July 23rd event held to recognize law enforcement, and thanked Council and community members for their ongoing support shown to our Officers and Department. Scharf also presented information on the new memorial at the Police Department recognizing late Council Member Rose Johnson.

Mayor Wallen discussed mental health issues the department has been responding to which have vastly increased since COVID-19 began. Council thanked the Department for their dedication to the community. Council Member Knier inquired how activity has been at the beach. Scharf indicated that the last couple of weeks has slowed down a little, but is still busier than previous years. Scharf stated that he feels the changes the City implemented at the Lakeside Park have gone extremely well, stressing that Big Lake Officers are far more present in the area than other departments would be.

Engineering/Public Works Department – Layne Otteson provided an update on engineering projects underway in the City and activities in the Utilities Department. Otteson reviewed the Wastewater Treatment Plant expansion project, operations at the Wastewater Plant, and activities in the water division. Otteson also reviewed the Street and the Utility Improvement Project No. ST2020-2, the ADA Transition Plan, lakeshore stabilization and upgrades, reviews and permitting, education and enforcement relating to the Lake Mitchell Boat Launch, and outlet evaluation.

Council Member Knier inquired what the penalty is for Lake Mitchell Boat Launch violations. Otteson stated that the City will be taking the key back for violators noting that the area is under video surveillance which is being reviewed.

Student Liaison – Ella Dotzler provided an update on plans the school district has for classes resuming and/or distance learning strategies for this fall during the COVID-19 pandemic. Dotzler reviewed proposed start times for specific grades/schools, transportation concerns, scoring requirements, and preventative measures the school will be taking. Dotzler also discussed the Civic Engagement Project noting that communication has been sent to social studies teachers in regards to efforts to increase civic engagement among youth, and the introduction of student opinion polls on local, state, and federal issues.

Council thanked Dotzler for her interest in local government and for providing an update on the schools plans for reopening this fall, and asked if there will be an opportunity for Council to come into the school to talk to students about local government.

8. ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

Clay Wilfahrt discussed the candidate filing period which ended on Tuesday, and identified candidates who have filed for City Council seats. Wilfahrt expressed that he is happy to see people stepping up and being willing to serve. Wilfahrt also commended Chief Scharf for leading the Police Department during these very trying times. Scharf had the foresight to build the Department up to be able to handle these types of difficult periods, noting that July was the most difficult month our Police Department has ever had, and Scharf has shown an enormous amount of grace and resilience during this time. Wilfahrt acknowledged that Chief Scharf's focus is always not on himself, but for his staff.

9. MAYOR & COUNCIL REPORTS and QUESTIONS/COMMENTS

Mayor Wallen: Discussed the August BLEDA Meeting.

Council Member Hansen: Reviewed the recent CMRRPP meeting.

Council Member Zettervall: Discussed the July Parks Advisory Committee Meeting and the August Planning Commission.

10. OTHER - No other.

11. ADJOURN

Council Member Knier motioned to adjourn at 6:49 p.m. Seconded by Council Member Hansen, unanimous ayes, motion carried.

Gina Wolbeck
Clerk

Date Approved By Council 08/26/2020