

**BIG LAKE CITY COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
MARCH 18, 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 Steve Royalty from Bridgeview Assembly of God Church gave an invocation.

3. ROLL CALL

Council Members present: Ken Geroux, Paul Knier, Kim Noding, and Paul Seefeld. Council Member Ken Halverson was absent. Also present: City Administrator Hanna Klimmek, City Clerk Gina Wolbeck, Finance Director Deb Wegeleben, Police Chief Sam Olson, Streets/Parks/Fleet Superintendent Norm Michels, and Consultant City Engineer Jason Cook from Bolton and Menk.

4. OPEN FORUM

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

Vanessa Davenport, 17195 242nd Avenue NW - stated she is from Tennessee but now resides in Orrock Township and is running for the MN House District 27A seat. Her life experiences have shaped how she views responsibility, work and accountability. She noted she served in the United States Navy and is currently an analyst in the electric industry in Minnesota. Davenport noted she is active in the community through the Lions Club and the Beyond the Yellow Ribbon organization. Davenport reviewed her support for local veterans and their families, noting service has always been a huge part of her life, which is the main reason she is running for office. She is running because families in our rural communities shouldn't carry the tax burden alone while large corporations and the wealthiest continue to benefit without paying their fair share. She is running because when companies like data centers come into our communities they should pay for their own infrastructure and protect our water and natural resources. She is running because government should answer to the voters, not corporate donors. We all want good jobs, safe

communities, and a government that is accountable with their tax dollars, no matter what side of the aisle you are coming from. The leadership she is offering is focused on accountability and putting the community first. Davenport announced she is holding a meeting next Tuesday at 6:30 p.m. at Lupulin for anyone interested in attending.

Mayor Knier closed the Open Forum at 6:35 p.m.

5. PROPOSED AGENDA

Council Member Noding motioned to adopt the proposed Agenda with the addition of item 7F. Authorize Application to the MNDNR Outdoor Recreation Grant Program. Seconded by Council Member Seefeld, unanimous ayes, Agenda adopted.

6. CONSENT AGENDA

Council Member Seefeld motioned to approve the Consent agenda as presented. Seconded by Council Member Noding, unanimous ayes, Consent Agenda approved. The Consent Agenda consisted of: 6A. Approve List of Claims, 6B. Approve Council Workshop Minutes of February 18, 2026, 6C. Approve Regular Council Meeting Minutes of February 18, 2026, 6D. Approve Resolution No. 2026-11 approving 2026/2027 Liquor License Renewals, 6E. Approve Appointment of Jack Berner to the Part-time Liquor Clerk Position, 6F. Approve Resolution No. 2026-12 approving the 2025 Budget Amendment No. 1, 6G. Approve 2025 Inter-fund Transfers, 6H. Approve Resolution No. 2026-13 approving Wine and on-sale Malt Liquor Licenses to Lamn Nick Bergherr 1 LLC dba Taste of Thai and Lao at 16777 Marketplace Drive, Suite B, 6I. Approve Parks Advisory Committee Liaison Appointments, 6J. Approve 2026 Recycle Day SCORE Grant Agreement with Sherburne County, 2026 Participation Agreement with Big Lake Township, and set a Council Gathering on May 16, 2026 from 7am to 1pm at the Big Lake Township Maintenance Building located at 20150 166th Street for the event, 6K. Approve the 2026 SCORE Grant Agreement for the City of Big Lake Yard Waste Site, 6L. Approve Agreement with DoorDash for a Delivery Service at the Municipal Liquor Store, 6M. Accept Resignation of Part-time Liquor Clerks Kylie Schultz and Timmothy Schultz, 6N. Approve 2026 Summer Farmers Market Agreements, 6O. Accept Resignation from Parks Advisory Committee Member Jeff Webster, 6P. Approve Big Lake Car Condos II Final Plat and PUD Extension, 6Q. Approve Prairie Meadows Fifth Addition Preliminary Plat and PUD Extension, 6R. Approve Conditional Employment Offer to Henry Harris for the Police Officer Position, 6S. Approve 2026 Music in the Park Musician and Sound Technician Contracts, and 6T. Approve Soil Boring Proposal with Chosen Valley Testing, Inc. for the 2026 Street and Utility Improvement Project No. ST2026-1.

7. BUSINESS

7A. Oath of Office for Police Captain Tom Kucala

Mayor Knier conducted the Oath of Office for Police Captain Tom Kucala.

7B. Big Lake Police Reserve Officer Recognitions

Chief Sam Olson and Officer Cody Gardas introduced officers who serve on the Big Lake Reserve Unit. The Big Lake Police Reserve Unit put in 730 hours of volunteer service in 2025 with Crystal Gassman at 168 hours, Ben Bauman at 157 hours, Aaron Lee at 82 hours, Grant Reitmeier at 73 hours, and Andy Smith at 250 hours. Reserve Officers were recognized for their substantial hours of service.

Mayor Knier discussed the Reserve Unit is a strong asset to the community and thanked them for their great work.

7C. Final Plans and Specifications for the 2026 Street and Utility Improvement Project No. 2026-1 and Authorize Advertisement for Bid

Jason Cook reviewed the City has applied for a Local Road Improvement Program (LRIP) grant to fully fund the segment of Minnesota Avenue from County Road 43 to 180th Street, noting MNDOT expects to release the results by the end of March. Using the streets CIP fund No. 196 to construct the project would reduce the balance to zero and would impact street resurfacing programming and upcoming MNDOT cost participation. Cook noted if the LRIP funding is not successful, City Engineer Layne Otteson will return to Council with a recommendation moving forward.

Cook reviewed the final plans and specifications for the 2026 Street and Utility Improvement Project No. ST2026-1. Cook reviewed the work being proposed for the Minnesota Avenue extension includes pavement, concrete curb, sidewalk, trail, lighting, turn lanes, water main, sanitary main and services, storm sewer pipe and ponding, and boulevard grading. The cost is estimated to be \$700,000 for the 500-foot segment adjacent to the future Public Safety Facility project, and \$1,050,000 for the 770-foot east segment connecting to 180th Street. If funded by the LRIP grant, the City can complete the full-length segment from County Road 43 to 180th Street. Cook also reviewed the reconstruction of the 172nd Street segment from Prairie Drive to US Highway 10. The project area includes seven Township properties and four City properties. There is full support of the Township Board to widen, reclaim and pave, as well as tree removal in the right of way. This segment is expected to take approximately three-weeks to perform the work. The cost is estimated to be \$70,000 for the City frontage and \$90,000 for the Township frontage.

Cook discussed this project is reliant on State funding through the LRIP grant program. The LRIP grant, if awarded, and CIP funds will pay for the project and future special assessments will support the outlay. Cook explained per the City's Assessment Policy, new streets are 100% assessable to adjacent property owners/developers. For the Minnesota Avenue improvements, the assessable cost will be approximately \$690 per front foot, with the new Public Safety Facility frontage in the amount of \$345,000. For the 172nd Street resurfacing, the four properties abutting city boundaries will pay a 60/40 split where residents pay for 60% of eligible work at \$30.49 per front foot.

Council Member Noding asked if the grant is an all or nothing deal. Cook reviewed the specifics of the grant application, noting we can be awarded less than we requested. Noding also asked if assessment amounts would be affected if the grant is awarded. Cook responded the City's Assessment policy regulates assessing for City projects, and clarified funding for a project does not affect how assessments are calculated.

Mayor Knier asked if the increased price of oil is expected to affect the final project cost. Cook responded oil for fuel is not tied to pavement costs other than the cost to transport asphalt. Contractors look throughout the year on what they expect costs will be, noting unknown situations could affect bids, but it just depends on the contractors bidding the project.

Council Member Seefeld motioned to approve Resolution No. 2026-14 approving the final plans and specifications and authorizing the Advertisement of Bids for the 2026 Street and Utility Project No. ST2026-1, contingent upon LRIP funding and review by MNDOT. Seconded by Council Member Geroux, unanimous ayes, motion carried.

7D. Big Lake Pizza Factory, Inc. Sixth Amendment to Sale and Purchase Agreement

Hanna Klimmek reviewed the status of the Big Lake Pizza Factory, Inc. sale and purchase agreement for the property located at 616 Rose Drive. Klimmek noted the purchase agreement was approved on September 11, 2024, and Council approved subsequent extensions to accommodate the business' timeline for financing approvals. The business is requesting a sixth amendment for extension as they are finalizing an amended financing package with the SBA. The lender has provided a summary letter outlining the current planned timeline and reason for extension request, and staff is recommending a new deadline of May 22, 2026 for the property closing.

Mayor Knier discussed during the time this closing has been extended we have been receiving rent for the current space they lease from the City.

Council Member Noding motioned to approve Resolution No. 2026-15 approving a Sixth Amendment to the Sale and Purchase Agreement between the City of Big Lake and Big Lake Pizza

Factory, Inc. Seconded by Council Member Seefeld, unanimous ayes, motion carried.

7E. Comprehensive Plan Land Use Map Amendment

Hanna Klimmek reviewed the Sherburne County Rail Impact Study was completed in 2018 to evaluate opportunities related to rail and related industries, as well as the potential economic impact of such development on the region. The study area is currently reflected on the adopted Land Use Map. Staff is proposing an amendment to the map to clarify the specific parcels included within the study area and to accurately designate the guided land use as Industry/Office. Klimmek noted the Planning Commission held a public hearing during their March 2, 2026 regular meeting and no public input was received. The Commission unanimously recommended approval of the land use map amendment to guide the area designated as Rail-Served Industrial Park Study Area as Industry/Office.

Council Member Seefeld motioned to approve Resolution No. 2026-16 approving a Comprehensive Plan Amendment to change the land use map to guide the Rail-Served Industrial Park Study Area as Industry/Office. Seconded by Council Member Noding, unanimous ayes, motion carried.

7F. Authorize Application to the MNDNR Outdoor Recreation Grant Program

Hanna Klimmek reviewed the MN Department of Natural Resources (MNDNR) Outdoor Recreation Grant Program, noting the City is applying for funding to support the Big Lake Skate Park project. Community and Economic Associates (CEDA) will prepare and submit the application on behalf of the City, which requires a formal resolution of support from the City Council as part of the application process. Klimmek discussed approval of the resolution would authorize the City Administrator to submit the grant application on behalf of the City and certifies the City has the authority and financial capability to meet the program requirements, including any applicable match. At this time, the financial impact is unknown as the Skate Park Project will need to go through a formal bidding process. If successful, the MNDNR grant award can financially benefit up to 50% of the total project cost. The cost of preparing and submitting the application is not to exceed \$3,045.

Council Member Noding motioned to approve Resolution No. 2026-17 authorizing application to the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources Outdoor Recreation Grant Program. Seconded by Council Member Seefeld, unanimous ayes, motion carried.

8. ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

City Administrator Hanna Klimmek discussed staff's attendance at the City Day on the Hill, where they met with Representative Mekeland and Senator Mathews. Klimmek noted as they work through the legislative session, they are aware Big Lake's top priority is securing state funding for

the Wastewater Treatment Facility Expansion Project. Bonding bills are typically finalized at the end of the session, and staff remains hopeful local community projects will be included. Staff also learned more about the Starter Homes Act, which is the same local authority zoning bill we have been discussing in prior years. Every year the City has written a letter opposing the bill and Klimmek suggested we continue doing that. Staff will be drafting Letters of Opposition, which will be included in the April meeting agenda. Klimmek also reviewed Mayor Paul Knier, Council Member Seefeld, and staff attended the Chamber Community Fair on Saturday and had the opportunity to connect with residents and businesses. Staff highlighted the Public Safety Facility Project, including the dedicated project webpage. The project is currently in the site and building design phase, with plans to provide monthly updates. As construction begins, updates may become more frequent. Klimmek stated our thoughts and prayers are with retired BLPD Officer Todd Seibert and his family following the passing of his youngest son, Cody. Cody served as a Police Officer with the East Range Police Department in northern Minnesota and began his career as a Reserve Officer with Big Lake. Several members of our department will be attending the funeral this Saturday.

9. MAYOR & COUNCIL REPORTS and QUESTIONS/COMMENTS

Mayor Knier: reviewed the March BLEDA Meeting.

Council Member Geroux: discussed recent Public Building Planning Committee Meetings he has attended.

Council Member Noding: reviewed the recent Big Lake Community Lakes Association Meeting.

Council Member Seefeld: discussed the march Planning Commission Meeting.

10. OTHER – No other.

11. ADJOURN

Council Member Seefeld motioned to adjourn at 7:09 p.m. Seconded by Council Member Geroux, unanimous ayes, motion carried.

Gina Wolbeck
Clerk

04.15.2026
Date Approved by Council