



Regular Board Meeting
Wednesday September 11, 2024
Following Reconvened Annual Meeting

The Town of Big Lake Board of Supervisors met in regular session, commencing 6:10 PM, on Wednesday September 11, 2024, at the Town of Big Lake Town Hall, located in the Big Lake Township's Lions Park Community Center, at 21960 County Road 5 NW, Big Lake Township, Sherburne County, State of Minnesota. The meeting was called to order by Chairman Bruce Aubol and the Pledge of Allegiance was recited. Supervisor Larry Alford, Supervisor Brenteson, Supervisor Mark Hedstrom, Clerk Brenda Kimberly-Maas, Deputy Treasurer Becky Guthrie, Deputy Clerk Debbie Workman, Sergeant Derek Barret - Sherburne County Sheriff's Department, City of Big Lake Engineer Layne Otteson, newspaper reporter Katie Cantin, and three members of the public were in attendance. Supervisor Laura Hayes and Treasurer Kenneth Warneke were absent.

Approval of Meeting Agenda

Motion/Second to approve the presented agenda by: Alford/Brenteson. Approved by: Alford, Aubol, Brenteson, and Hedstrom. Motion Prevailed. The meeting proceeded in accordance with the presented agenda.

Approval of Consent Agenda

The Consent Agenda consisted of the approval of minutes from the Regular Board on August 28, 2024, claims and payroll presented, and call for Special Joint Powers Board Meeting, Wednesday October 9, 2024 at 4:00PM for debrief of fire department staffing study.

Motion/Second to Approve consent agenda by: Brenteson/Hedstrom. Approved by: Alford, Aubol, Brenteson, and Hedstrom. None Opposed. Motion Prevailed.

Sherriff's Report

Sergeant Derek Barrett was in attendance and reported 334 calls in the township, for the month of July 2024. Sergeant Barrett informed the Board that thefts continue in neighborhoods, including mail thefts which are federal offenses.

Open Forum

No open forum items.

Regular Business

Joint right-of way projects

The City of Big Lake's Engineer, Layne Otteson was present to update the Board on joint safety right-of-way projects the Town, City, and ISD 727 – Big Lake School District. In 2023, the agencies submitted an application and were successfully awarded a Transportation Alternative grant, for safety improvements related to pedestrian traffic. This includes sidewalk along County Road 43 and flashers at the Fire Station, for which the Township will participate in payment. This grant pays for 80% of the construction costs. It does **not** pay for engineering, surveying, inspection, material testing, or administration. All costs are subject to bid prices and actual quantities installed.

Improvements included in the work include a 6' wide, 1900' long sidewalk on the east side of County Road 43, within the township. Some of the work was incorporated into the County's project to upgrade County Road 43. This has allowed a reduction in cost to the joint project. Flashers to indicate the exit of

fire trucks leaving the station, to respond to emergencies. Since initial grant discussion with the Township in November of 2022, the Fire Department leadership expressed that a better flashing system is a priority. They suggested upgrading with a remote activation system. This will significantly increase cost but including it in the joint project will allow for the system to be 80% funded, and potentially within the current project cost. Layne is working on the memorandum to be sent to MNDoT. Once it has been accepted, the project can progress to the design phase. Clearance from various State agencies related to environmental, protected species, cultural studies, archeology, etc. awaits. The following general schedule is anticipated: State agency clearance/reviews - December 2024; Project Memorandum - December 2024; Preliminary Design - January 2025; Final Design, Bid & Award - Spring 2025; Construction - Summer 2025; Audit & Reimbursement Process - Winter 2025 – 26. Town Board members have indicated the town's engineer will design the sidewalk and submit the plans to Layne, for incorporation to the plans. The City will be able to assist with the inspection of the sidewalk, for which the Town will reimburse the City. Layne will be the project administrator, and the Town will be expected to reimburse the City for his services. The projected financial impact to the Town is \$27,065 for 20% of the total cost of the projects in the township. Additional costs are project inspection – estimated at \$1,725 if City assists, and the town's engineer – currently unknown amount. It was recommended to add another 20% to these numbers, for possible inflationary increases.

Supervisor Alford noted that in past joint projects, the Town was not billed for work done by the City's Engineer for administrative or inspection work and questioned the reason for the change in the past practice. Layne had no response for the question.

Resident Bret Collier questioned why a sidewalk was needed on the east side of County Road 43, since there is a path on the west side of the road. He felt that this was an unnecessary spending of his tax dollars. Layne informed him that The Wave Youth Center will be constructed on that side of the road and having a sidewalk for students from Liberty Elementary to walk to the facility was part of the reason. As well as the future extension of Minnesota Ave to the east and potential residential development in the area were some of the reasons for the construction. No action was required as this was an update report.

Fire Department Fire Retirement

Fire Lieutenant Eric Rosa was in attendance to present information to the Board about the Big Lake Fire Department Relief Association's decision to convert from their current retirement plan through Charles Schwab to the Statewide Volunteer Firefighter plan through the Public Employee Retirement Association (PERA SVF). Lt. Rosa told the Board there are 235 paid on-call fire departments which participate in PERA SVF. Most of them joined after PERA changed their policy to allow departments opt out of the program, if they want. At the request of the Relief Association, PERA supplied two cost analysis to join PERA SVF, which the Relief Association members and their current financial planner, reviewed at their meeting held on July 21, 2024. After reviewing the two analyses, the Relief Association membership voted to join the 5 to 20 years of service plan at \$7,000 per year of service. The plan will be administered by PERA under the terms provided in the PERA cost analysis at \$7,000 per year of service with the vesting schedule beginning at 40% at 5yrs of service increasing 4% each year until 100% at 20 years.

Reasons the BLFDRA chose to convert are their current financial advisor is planning to retire. He provides his services at a very reduced cost. After his retirement administration of the current plan will likely increase significantly. Additionally, the relief association must perform an annual audit and file required reports with the Office of the State Auditor. This audit is very specialized, and few firms can perform the work. Annual audit and fund administration fees are projected to be \$25,000 to \$30,000, annually. And a change to PERA policy allowing for departments to opt out of PERA if they are unhappy with the performance of the fund. The Fire Chief and JPB will be required to request annual analysis of PERA SVF to review and determine if the department will remain in the fund or opt out. The conversion would occur January 2025 and the \$1.2 million assets in the relief association, will be transferred to the Big Lake Fire Department's PERA fund.

The Big Lake Fire Department's Joint Power Board adopted a resolution to have the relief association convert to the member's retirement to PERA SVF, at the September 03, 2024, meeting. The

Town and City are being asked to adopt a resolution, as they would be responsible for any shortages which might occur.

The Board had no concerns regarding the Big Lake Fire Department joining the state administered PERA SVF 5 to 20 years of service plan at \$7,000 per year of service.

Motion/second to adopt Resolution 2024-16 A Resolution Option To Join the Voluntary Statewide Volunteer Firefighter Retirement Plan; the plan to be joined is the 5 to 20 years of service at \$7,000 per year of service by: Aubol/Alfords. Approved by: Alfords, Aubol, and Brenteson. None opposed. Hedstrom abstained. Motion prevailed.

Roads

Supervisor Brenteson reported the town’s vendors will be clearing larger trees from the right-of-ways in the upcoming month or so. They have been working on drainage issued on the west side of Birch Lake. Installation of culverts, basins, and grading has been done to help with proper flow of water.

Supervisor Alfords stated the Road Committee will be setting the fall road tour for the beginning part of October.

Business from the Board – Committee Reports/Updates

No reports were made.

Treasurer’s Business

Ladder Truck (Tower 1) invoice

At the rescheduled February 22, 2023, Town Board meeting, the Board approved the purchase of the Fire Department’s CIP plan purchase of a new ladder truck. The Motion specified the Town will pay for its portion (50%) of the truck at the time of delivery. The City of Big Lake also moved forward with the purchase of the ladder truck, opting to pre-pay their portion (50%) of the cost.

The vendor, MacQueen, has submitted the first invoice – chassis & aerial, for pre-payment. The City’s Finance Director has provided the Town with the breakout of the invoice, including the savings to the Town, should the Board wish to reconsider pre-payment of their portion of the cost. If the Board chooses to pre-pay, the Town will be billed by the City \$608,547.50 for the chassis & aerial. This amount will be due by November 1, 2024. The remaining \$413,041.99 will be due at the time of delivery, for a total of \$1,021,589.49. If the Board maintains their decision to pay upon delivery the amount due will be \$1,032,826.49.

Per City Finance Director:

Town’s 50% paid on delivery	\$1,032,826.49
Town’s 50% pre-payment	\$1,021,589.49
TOTAL DUE THIS INVOICE BY 11/1/2024	\$ 608,547.50
TOTAL DUE ON DELIVERY	\$ 413,041.99
TOTAL SAVINGS	<u>\$ 11,237.00</u>

The Town’s Treasury staff provided, interest earning on \$608,547.50:

5% monthly = \$3,042.47/month 5 months interest (November – March) \$15,213
DIFFERENCE: \$11,237(pre-pay savings) - \$15,213(potential % earning) = <\$3,976>(loss)

4% monthly = \$2,434.19/month 5 months interest (November – March) \$12,171
DIFFERENCE: \$11,237(pre-pay savings) - \$12,171(potential % earning) = <\$934>(loss)

The Board decided to maintain their decision to pay for the ladder truck upon its delivery. No Action was taken.

Obligation of ARPA funds

Deputy Treasurer Guthrie reminded the Board they have yet to take action to obligate the remaining ARPA funds. The funds need to be obligated by the end of the year. Treasurer Warneke has recommended the remaining ARPA funds be obligated toward fire capital expenses. The Board deferred taking action until Treasurer Warneke is in attendance.

Treasurer’s Report

Deputy Treasurer Guthrie informed the Board that Treasurer Warneke and she reviewed the fund balances, treasurer’s report, financial statements being presented to the Board. She reminded the Board that all interest is placed in the road fund during the year, and it is broken out at the end of the year into all funds, so the road fund is overstated. The last payment for the 2023 road projects will be made as soon as the State required documentation is received. That payment will be roughly \$29,000. There will be another property tax settlement in November.

Accounts balances highlighted in the report included the general fund balance (\$355,378.69) and road fund balance (\$1,124,734.31), Big Lake fire capital fund balance (\$826,737.82), and ARPA fund balance (\$175,951.95). The town treasury ending balance (less escrows) after payment of approved claims was \$ 2,873,640.36 and escrow funds balance of \$ 156,938.68. The total town treasury balance: \$ 3,030,579.04

Motion/Second to approve the Treasurer’s report by: Brenteson/Hedstrom. Approved by: Aubol, Alfords, Brenteson, and Hedstrom. None opposed. Motion Prevailed.

Financial Reports are retained as part of the Official Minutes, which are available in the Clerk’s Office.

Announcements

- Big Lake Community Food Shelf – Produce & Pantry food distribution Monday September 16th 3:30PM – 5:30PM.
- Big Lake Lioness Garage Sale – Saturday September 14th – Town Hall.
- Annual Dog Vaccination Clinic and Water Testing (Nitrates only) – Saturday September 21st 9:00AM – 12:00PM - Town hall adjacent garage.
- Next regular meeting on Wednesday September 25, 2024, at 6:00PM

Adjournment:

Motion/Second to adjourn Regular Board Meeting at 7:01 PM by: Alfords/Hedstrom. Approved by: Aubol, Alfords, Brenteson, and Hedstrom. None opposed. Motion prevailed.

Respectfully Submitted,

Brenda Kimberly-Maas, Clerk

Accepted this 25th day of September 2024, by the Town of Big Lake Board of Supervisors.

Bruce Aubol, Chair

Attest: _____
Brenda Kimberly-Maas, Town Clerk