



Regular Board Meeting
Wednesday January 22, 2025 6:00 pm

The Town of Big Lake Board of Supervisors met in regular session, at 6:00 PM, on Wednesday January 22, 2025, 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 Chair Bruce Aubol and the Pledge of Allegiance was recited. Vice-Chair Mark Hedstrom, Supervisor Dean Brenteson, Supervisor Laura Hayes, Treasurer Kenneth Warneke, Clerk Brenda Kimberly-Maas, Deputy Treasurer Becky Guthrie, Deputy Clerk Debbie Workman, Chief Seth Hansen – Big Lake Fire Department, County Commissioner Raeanne Danielowski, Tim Taylor - CUP applicant, and newspaper reporter were in attendance. Supervisor Larry Alford was absent.

Approval of Meeting Agenda

Motion/Second to accept the presented meeting agenda by: Brenteson/Hayes. Approved by: Aubol, Brenteson, Hayes, and Hedstrom. Motion carried. The meeting proceeded in accordance with the agenda presented.

Approval of Consent Agenda

The Consent Agenda consists of: A) Approval of Minutes; Regular meeting of 01/08/2025. B) Approve claims and payroll presented for payment. Motion/Second to Approve consent agenda by: Hayes/Hedstrom. Approved by: Aubol, Brenteson, Hayes, and Hedstrom. None Opposed. Motion carried.

Big Lake Fire Department Report

Chief Seth Hansen presented the Board with updates from the months of October through December 2024. The Chief reported: the department responded to 398 calls for service through the end of 2024. The total call breakout was 281 - City of Big Lake, 86 Big Lake Township, 14 Orrock Township, 17 mutual aid calls. Calls of interest for the 4th quarter of 2024 included nine (9) fires, seven (7) motor vehicle accidents (MVA), 15 hazardous conditions, and eight (8) medical assists. Members participated in auto extrication, cold water rescue, carbon monoxide, slips, trips & falls, and illicit discharge training during the 3-month period. The Illicit discharge training was conducted by the City of Big Lake.

The Department joined the Big Lake Police Department, Elk River Fire Department, and CentraCare EMS on the County Road 15 overpass bridge to pay respect and homage to Red Lake officer, as his procession traveled on US Highway 10. in Training for September of water/boat rescues and confined spaces. The department raised a flag on the CSAH 15 overpass in remembrance of 9/11.

The new Ladder/Tower Truck is in production. Tentative final inspection date is set for February 18 with delivery date in early March. The department's current ladder truck - Ladder 1, is listed for sale. Chief Hansen has been in communication with a department who is interested in purchasing Ladder 1. – potential sale upcoming. The truck bay floor resurfacing project has been completed. The Fire Department's Christmas parade was done in conjunction with the

City's tree lighting event.

The department hired six new recruits as a result of the autumn hiring campaign. One member has resigned, after a decision to return to school/college. The new firefighters are Jacob Cihlar, Jacob Dietsch, Drew Hawkes, Jesse Keller, and Colin Maki. Firefighter Dietsch had the required certifications when he joined the department. The other four recruits are attending Firefighter 1 and Firefighter 2 academy.

Several firefighters celebrated milestones with the department. Shane Roy and Jason White – 3 years of service and Kiel Ruberg – 8 years of service. Many thanks to these men for serving the community, as well as gratitude to their families for supporting these men.

Open Forum

NONE

Regular Business

2025 Recycle Day & SCORE Grant Application

In accordance with the contract for services provided by Metro Appliance Recycling, the Town's Annual Recycle Day event is scheduled for Saturday, May 17, 2025, with the gates open to the public from 8:00AM – 1:00PM. Sherburne County facilitates SCORE grant funding, provided by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency. The 2025 SCORE Grant funding amounts are a five percent increase from the 2024 Recycling Day funding amount. The Town of Big Lake was eligible for \$17,787 in SCORE Grant funds in 2024. The 2025 amount is \$18,700, for which the Town can request reimbursement of eligible recycle day event expenses.

Clerk Maas requested the Board approve the application for 2025 SCORE Grant funds and confirm the 2025 Recycle Day event date and time.

Motion/second to make application for the 2025 SCORE Grant funds in the amount of \$18,700.00 by: Hayes/Brenteson. Approved by: Aubol, Brenteson, Hayes, and Hedstrom. None opposed. Motion carried.

Motion/second to confirm the 2025 Recycle Day event as Saturday May 17, 2025, with gates open to the public from 8:00AM – 1:00PM by: Hedstrom/Hayes. Approved by: Aubol, Brenteson, Hayes, and Hedstrom. None opposed. Motion carried.

CUP Application – Accessory Building on Vacant Land

An application for a CUP to allow for a 30' x 40' Personal Storage Structure on vacant property. The parcel is located in the Revised Plat of Eagle Lake Park and consists of two lots (Lots 4 & 7, Block 12) PID# 10-00401-1240, owned by Thomas and Linda Roof. The CUP applicant, Tim Taylor, the applicant, was present at the meeting. The Town Board inquired if the owner has plans to construct a permanent dwelling on the property. Mr. Taylor informed the Board as the zoning ordinances currently state, the property is not conducive to the construction of a permanent dwelling. He also told the Board he has a purchase agreement on the property, which is contingent on the ability to construct the storage building. He noted the parcel adjacent to the subject property may become available for purchase in the future. If this occurs, he may purchase the parcel, combine it with the subject property, and construct a residential dwelling. Should the CUP be granted, Mr. Taylor plans to store some of his personal property in the building. Though the Board has previously allowed personal storage buildings on vacant parcels; those CUP applicants had plans to construct personal dwellings on the property. Board members voiced concerns of allowing only storage buildings on properties when no future dwelling is planned and recommended denial of the CUP.

Clerk Kimberly-Maas will send the Board's comments and recommendation of denial to the County Planning and Zoning department, for inclusion to the Planning Commission.

Big Lake Fire Department capital asset donation/disposal

During the January BLFD JPB meeting, Chief Hansen informed the Joint Powers Board there is a set of gas powered/hydraulic extrication equipment the department no longer needs. He noted the equipment would be something a smaller rural department may need, and use. Chief Hansen would like to place it online for donation. The fire department land, building and equipment comprise its capital assets. The extrication equipment is fully depreciated.

Disposal of surplus fire department equipment requires approval from both the Town of Big Lake and the City of Big Lake, since they are the owners of the department and its capital assets.

The BLFD Joint Powers Board recommends offering the 2004 Amkus extrication/spreader tool and compressor, for donation to another fire department in need of the equipment.

Motion/second authorizing the Fire Chief to list the 2004 Amkus extrication/spreader tool and compressor, for donation to another fire department by: Aubol/Hayes. Approved by: Aubol, Brenteson, Hayes, and Hedstrom. None opposed. Motion carried.

During the same meeting, Chief Hansen the BLFD Joint Powers Board, he had received an inquiry about purchasing the 2003 Pierce ladder truck. This inquiry was made by Chief Tom Brown of the Minden, NE Fire Department, whose ladder truck was damaged, in an accident.

Chief Brown plans to travel to Big Lake to inspect the ladder truck. Upon the approval of purchase from his governing body and authorization of the Big Lake Fire Department owners, the transaction can commence. The asking price for the ladder truck is \$150,000.00 with 20% earnest money deposited to secure the sale.

If the sale to Minden NE fire department falls through, the Joint Powers Board is requesting Ladder 1 be placed on the Brindley online auction house with the listing price of \$150,000.00. Brindley online auction will charge a commission fee for the listing and sale of the truck, whether it be sold to the Minden, NE department or online.

Proceeds from the sale of Ladder 1 will be divided equally between the Town of Big Lake and the City of Big Lake. The funds from the sale will be used toward Big Lake Fire Department, capital asset purchases.

Note: The Pierce mid-mount ladder truck – Tower 1, is expected to have its final inspection on February 18, 2025. Delivery and placing the new truck into service is expected once all issues identified are resolved – tentatively March 1, 2025. Should the governing bodies approve the sale of the ladder truck, the Big Lake Fire Department will be able to rely on local departments who have ladder trucks – Becker, Elk River, Monticello, and Zimmerman, with which there are mutual aid agreements, between the sale of Ladder 1 and delivery/in-service of Tower 1.

The Joint Powers Board recommends offering the 2003 Pierce ladder truck to Chief Brown, if financing can be secured. Earnest money of 20% of the asking price of \$150,000.00 will be required to hold the truck until the disposal is approved by the Town of Big Lake Board and City of Big Lake Council. Chair Aubol noted Chief Brown has already inspected Ladder 1 and the Minden, NE City Council has approved its purchase.

Motion/second authorizing the sale of the Big Lake Fire Department's 2003 Pierce Ladder. Asking price of \$150,000.00. The truck will be held for the Minden Nebraska Fire

Department with a deposit of \$30,000.00 (20% of the listing price). If the sale to the Minden Fire Department is unsuccessful, Ladder 1 will be listed on the Brindley online auction site by: Hayes/Brenteson. Approved by: Aubol, Brenteson, Hayes, and Hedstrom. None opposed. Motion carried.

QSEHRA update

At the December 11, 2024 meeting, the Town Board decided to terminate its relationship with Benafica – the Town's QSEHRA administration firm. QSEHRAs are reimbursement programs where the employer - the Town, contributes a set dollar amount to help employees pay for health insurance premiums and eligible health expenses.

Supervisor Hedstrom updated the Board with information regarding offering health benefits to the Town's full-time employees. He noted that members of the Personnel Committee – Supervisor Hayes, Supervisor Hedstrom, and Treasurer Warneke, have met as a group and with staff to find out what their needs are regarding health benefits. The Personnel Committee has been in conversation with HealthEquity, a company which specializes in several healthcare consumer products, including Qualified Small Employer Health Reimbursement Arrangements (QSEHRA). QSEHRA benefit requirements include:

- Fewer than 50 full-time equivalent employees
- No group health plan offered to employees
- QSEHRA is provided on the same terms to all employees
 - You may choose to offer the benefit exclusively to full-time employees.
 - The IRS defines full-time employees as those who are scheduled and work a minimum of 35 hours/week.
 - If the benefit is extended to part-time employees, they must receive the same contribution amount as full-time employees per QSEHRA guidelines.
- Participating employees are covered under a health insurance plan that is considered minimum essential coverage through their state exchange, a broker, or a carrier directly.

The Personnel Committee recommended the Board enter into an agreement with HealthEquity for administration of QSEHRA benefits for full-time staff, at the same annual benefit level of \$6,350.00 as approved by the Board, during the November 11, 2024, meeting. Clerk Kimberly-Maas asked how full-time staff was being defined, since the IRS defines full-time as scheduled and working 35 hours weekly. Supervisor Hedstrom stated the committee was informed they could classify staff as full-time, what they report may be different. Adjustments may need to be made to staff hours to fulfill the full-time hours requirement. Clerk Kimberly-Maas asked which staff members would be considered full-time, since she and her Deputy Clerk, Debbie Workman, are the two staff members who are in the office during business hours. Supervisors Hedstrom and Hayes stated the Treasurer would also be considered full-time. However, Ken Warneke works an average of 10 hours a week on treasurer business and road committee work. To be able to offer the benefit to Ken, who is a part-time employee based on the number of hours he works, QSEHRA would have to be offered to all staff. Supervisors Hedstrom and Hayes stated they were informed they could identify which positions would be considered full-time staff, by the representative with whom they spoke. Clerk Kimberly-Maas suggested this be clarified to ensure the Board doesn't create a plan which is non-compliant to IRS regulations. She also noted the Board can offer QSEHRA to all employees at the same benefit level. Employees then could opt to participate, providing they met all other eligibility requirements. Supervisor Hedstrom stated they could do this, if that was the Board's wishes. The

other option the Personnel Committee was considering was to pay a monthly stipend to certain positions.

Clerk Kimberly-Maas also asked how the proposed plan reimburses claims submitted. Based on the information, which was shared with her by the Personnel Committee, the HealthEquity plan appears to require the Town ensure there are funds available in each participant's balance, to pay out weekly claim submissions. This is very different than the way Benafica administered their QSEHRA plan.

The Board felt that the questions that Clerk Kimberly-Maas asked needed more clarification and decided to wait on making any decisions regarding QSEHRA or any other health reimbursement options for staff, until those questions could be answered.

The item was TABLED.

Business from the Board – Committee Reports/Updates

Supervisor Aubol reported he attended the January SCAT meeting where attendees were informed of delays in the state rolling out cannabis related businesses and updates on solar installations, in Sherburne County. Phase 4 solar is being installed on the north side of US Hwy 10 and is being overseen by MN PUC.

Supervisor Brenteson reported the CMRP group has identified four potential options for crossing the Mississippi River. These options include do nothing; reconstruction of the existing bridge and incorporate the use of Cedar Street in Monticello as a 2-lane one-way road, the existing bridge will be widened; crossing near the nuclear power plant using 120th and tying into County Road 11; eastern Becker area. The full Pell study is scheduled to be submitted in March.

Roads

Supervisor Brenteson reported that the road committee has been working with William Tessmer, the town's engineer, to define 2025 road construction projects. The committee is planning to perform overlays on 180th St., in Sleepy Hollow South, roads in Knick Knack Knoll, and 172nd St. north of US Hwy 10 to Prairie Dr. is planned to be widened and overlaid. The engineering estimate is \$882,000 for those projects. No ultra-thin bituminous wear course work is being planned. Supervisor Brenteson felt that potholes should not be a huge concern this spring since there has been minimal ice on the roads and crack filling work & ultra-thin wear course applications should help with potholes. The Road Committee requested authorization to go out for bids.

Motion/second to allow the town engineer to create bid documents and advertise for bids by: Aubol/Hedstrom. Approved by: Aubol, Brenteson, Hayes, and Hedstrom. None opposed. Motion carried.

Treasurer's Business

2025 Budget

Treasurer Ken Warneke presented a 2025 Proposed Budget again, for consideration. The Board was given the budget at the January 8, 2025, meeting. The Board opted to take the budget home to review and revisit it at this meeting. Board members requested some adjustments to be made to the budget. Road Fund: increase the mowing budget to \$50,000; increase the brushing budget to \$350,000; increase the sanding budget to \$150,000; increase the plowing budget to \$150,000. Treasurer Warneke noted the general fund wages and salaries accounts were increased 5%.

Motion/second to adopt the 2025 budget with the increases requested by the Board

by: Aubol/Hedstrom. Approved by: Aubol, Brenteson, Hayes, and Hedstrom. None opposed. Motion carried.

Clerk Kimberly-Maas inquired if the Board would consider sending notifications to residents that the town is mowing and trimming the full width of the right-of-way and will be trimming that same distance vertically. This may eliminate some of the "concerned citizen" calls. Board members agreed this would be a helpful communication tool and would like additional ROW information be added to the mailer. Staff will work on language for a mailer and present it to the road committee prior to sending it out.

Treasurer's Report

Treasurer Warneke reviewed the Treasurer's Report and financial statements with the Board. Highlighted funds in the report included the general fund (\$446,594.98), road fund (\$1,490,714.35), and Big Lake fire fund (\$161,206.32). January 22, 2025, ending balances (less escrows) after payment of approved claims, town funds: \$3,587,543.26; escrow funds balance: \$133,595.93. The total town treasury balance: \$3,721,139.19.

Motion/Second to approve the Treasurer's report by: Brenteson/Hayes. Approved by: Aubol, Brenteson, Hayes, and Hedstrom. None opposed. Motion Prevailed. *Financial Reports are retained as part of the Official Minutes, which are available in the Clerk's Office.*

Clerk Kimberly-Maas asked if the Board would like to perform the Local Board of Audit during the next regular meeting since all the documents needed have been prepared. Board members agreed to conduct the Local Board of Audit during the February 12, 2025, meeting. The Board will review and verify the Town and BLFD financial books, for 2024 during this process.

Announcements

- BLFD JPB Special Meeting to discuss staffing study recommendations from the Joint Town & City meeting Town held on October 9, 2024.
- Next Town regular meeting Wednesday February 12, 2025, at 6:00PM.
- Town Office closed President's Day, Monday, February 17, 2025

Adjournment:

Motion/Second to adjourn Regular Board meeting at 7:24PM by: Hayes/Hedstrom. Approved by: Aubol, Brenteson, Hayes, and Hedstrom. None opposed. Motion prevailed.

Accepted this 12th day of February 2025, by the Town of Big Lake Board of Supervisors.

Bruce Aubol, Chairman

Recorded by: Brenda Kimberly-Maas, Town Clerk