

**City of Bigfork**  
**Regular City Council Meeting**  
**September 12, 2023**  
**5:30 p.m.**

Members Present: Bryan Boone, Sarah Scheff, Ben Maxa,  
Members Absent: Kristi Gustafson, Jerry Denny,  
Also Present: Caleb Strandlie (Widseth), Kara Lundin (ISD 318), Matt David, Dan Brinker  
& Sue Patrow (Riverside Residence), Lee & Shar Ramsey (JBS Holdings),  
Sarah Stone (EOWSKI), Sally Sedgwick

Mayor Boone called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

Reverend Boone opened with a prayer.

The pledge of Allegiance was recited.

The Public Forum was opened.

Matt David attended to speak regarding the Riverside Residence. The funding from Itasca County has been cut from Riverside Residence meaning that the rent for the residence will no longer be paid, forcing many of its occupants to become either homeless or move. Matt is looking to get support from the Council for Riverside so that they can get IEDC to help with funding so that they can make necessary repairs to the building to remain open for residents. Bryan stated that he spoke with Terry Snyder regarding Riverside. Terry suggested Bryan sit down with the Riverside Residence, along with himself to see what they can do regarding the funding. Bryan asked if the council would be okay sending a letter of support along to the county from the City. The Council agreed to this. Bryan would like to meet with Riverside and Terry Snyder either this week or next week. Terry did state that there are resources that could potentially help bridge the gap until funding can be back in place. Matt does not want to see the business leave, or the homing for many community members. Matt also asked if Bryan could form a letter from NIJPB, Bryan said that he would talk with the Board regarding this.

Lee & Char Ramsey from JBS Holdings attended the meeting. They have recently purchased the Henkel building. They came tonight to talk about the sewer charges that are currently being charged. Lee stated that they do not intend to use the sewer for at least the next year while they make necessary changes and updates to the building and its structure. This would only be temporary until they get the property up and running for business. Ben Maxa stated that he is very glad that they purchased the business. Ben stated that he feels more than comfortable working with them to get the building up and running, and temporarily putting a pause on the sewer charges that are currently \$450 a month. Lee stated that the reason they purchased the building is because they wanted to create jobs for the community. Lee also stated that he has

been in communication with FEDEX and UPS to see if they would be interested in renting the building for storage use or any other needs. Lee is looking for any community input on ideas for the building. Bryan suggested that he would talk with Aaron regarding the needs for the sewage and come up with a rate. Bryan said we can temporarily suspend the rate for the next month until they come up with a plan for the future. **Motion to suspend the sewage charges for JBS Holdings by Boone, seconded by Maxa, and MCU.**

Sarah Stone addressed the council representing EOWSKI to ask if anyone would be interested or willing to join a committee for a winter multi-use trail for skiing, snowshoeing and other winter activities. The group is looking for partnerships in the community so that the trails can be maintained throughout the winter. Sarah is going to meet with the Nursing home and assisted living regarding the use they have for the trail in the winter. She is hoping that the city will be willing to work with her to get this trail groomed for multi-use during the winter months. AGE to AGE is looking to assist EOWSKI, and Sarah is trying to get more volunteers. Sarah's suggestion to the city is to try it for a season and see how it goes. Sarah said that she has consulted with other communities with groomed trails on paved walkways and the wear due to the packed snow is close to none. Bryan stated that Sarah should formulate a plan with data that can prove that the elderly who use the trail would still be able to use the trail safely if it were groomed.

As no one else wished to address the Council, the public forum was closed.

**Add Selecting City Representative for IUOE Local 49 Contract Negotiations under new business. Motion by Maxa to approve the agenda, seconded by Scheff, motion carried unanimously (MCU).**

**Consent Agenda: Motion by Maxa, seconded by Scheff, and MCU to approve the consent agenda including:**

1. Minutes of the August 15, 2023, Regular City Council meeting,
2. City Clerk's office report for August 2023,
3. Financial report for August 2023,
4. Public Works Department Report for August 2023,
5. Payroll and timecards for August 4, 2023, and August 18, 2023, regular payrolls, in the amount of \$8,781.02,
6. Claims paid from August 2023, in the amount of \$5,714.85 and claims for payment in the amount of \$46,950.34.

#### **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

**Blandin Foundation Community Development Grant: Retaining Wall & Bridge Quotes:** Caleb Strandlie from Widseth attended the meeting to present the quotes he received for the retaining walls at the canoe landing. Jeff Powell Excavating quoted the city 27,875.00 for the retaining wall close to the parking. Jeff Powell Excavating quoted the city 8,800.00 for the retaining wall closest the water and boat landing. **Motion to accept the quotes for the Canoe Landing Retaining Walls totaling \$36,675.00, and to be paid through the Blandin Foundation Community Development Grant by Boone, seconded by Maxa, and MCU.**

Widseth has not gotten any quotes for the bridge project but they are still accepting quotes. Caleb suggested that Aaron reach out to the contractors and see if they would still like to make a quote.

A few ideas for the remaining funds would be playground equipment, assisting with funding at the Gun Range, purchasing materials for the bridge projects so that the Public Works employees could do the work in the spring, ordering a new dock and swimming raft for the Bigfork Beach, starting work for RV pads by the wilderness wheelers ATV Club. Fixing the retaining wall at Bigfork Beach and looking at updating the changing shack there as well. Melissa attained a quote for replacing the dock at the beach from Grand Rapids Marine totaling \$7,729.09, the council asked Melissa to also get a quote from Grand Rapids Marine on a swimming raft.

Caleb also mentioned that the final change order for the Golf Course Lane Sewer Lift Station needs to be approved and paid. This totals \$10,051.85. The total cost to the City before reimbursement from IRRRB is \$56,008.00, coming under the original quote of the project that was \$62,000.00. **Motion to approve and pay Change order #2 Final by Boone, seconded by Maxa, and MCU.**

**School Project Update-Kara:** Kara Lundin the Business Manager from ISD 318 attended the City Council meeting to update the City on the School Project & and talk about the November 2023 Referendum. There are approximately 4000 students and 600 staff members across 9 schools in ISD 318. This is the 3<sup>rd</sup> largest geographical school district in Minnesota. 278 students attended Bigfork School last year. ISD 318 wants to build a culture at school that feels welcoming and gives students the resources they need to learn, however due to budget cuts and lack of funds coming in, the district has been forced to make multiple cuts school district wide. The General Fund for ISD 318 was \$58,000,00.00. Taxes only make up 15% of this budget, the rest mainly comes from state funding. State funding has not kept up with the rising costs of education. Each year ISD 318 has had to lower their budgets due to the rising costs. As a result, ISD 318 has struggled with the budget for the school project, most bids have ended up costing more than they were originally quoted at. ISD 318 has made 70 administrative cuts, they have cut k-5 art programs including art, music, and Spanish. ISD 318 moving forward is looking at financial responsibility, restoring programming and lost classes, and advancing excellence. At the November 2023 Referendum the district is presenting voters with three questions: 1. \$1,100 per pupil operating levy that would provide an additional \$4.6 million per year. 2. A \$2.5 million annual capital projects levy, and 3. A \$300 per pupil operating levy that would provide an additional \$1.2 million per year. These would take place over a 7-year span is approved by voters, also giving the School Board the ability to renew for an additional 7 years should they be passed. Question 2 can only pass if question 1 passes. Question 3 can only pass if question 1 and 2 pass. If these pass ISD 318 will not have to make cuts; if it doesn't pass the district will face deficits and possible cuts in the future. Bryan stated that he would like to see more information regarding how the money that is budgeted would be used to give Bigfork residents an idea of how the money is being spent. If anyone has questions regarding ISD 318's plans for an operational levy they can contact the school district directly. Kara also gave an update on the Community Center. She said that the

windows are in, the bid alternates are being completed. The doors for the edge center are on hold but will be replaced as soon as they arrive. The football field updates are being looked at as well but have not been started yet. Total project costs are up to about \$4.5 million. Matt Grose is also looking at different ideas to get Bigfork a voice on the ISD 318 School Board.

#### NEW BUSINESS

**RESOLUTION 2023-14: Proposed Levy for 2024:** Melissa presented the Proposed levy to the city council as was decided by the budget committee. The preliminary budget for the City is set at \$908,227.07, which is \$14,106.53 lower than the previous levy. This is because there are not any road constructions in the plans for 2024. The preliminary tax levy has increased 1.5%; set at \$203,940.25, this reflects the rise in the interest to be paid on the city's existing 2020A GO Tax Abatement. Melissa reminded the council that this is the preliminary levy and if the Council feels like they want to lower it in the future they can, but they cannot raise it. **Motion to adopt Resolution 2023-14: Preliminary Budget and Levy for Taxes Collectible in 2024 by Boone, seconded by Maxa, and MCU.**

**MN Pump Works Quote for Lift Station at Grace Community Church:** Aaron the Public Works Manager attained a quote for the Lift station located at Grace Community Church. The lift station is currently not operating as it should and 4 of the floats need to be replaced, along with connecting an MPE Controller. No work has been done on this lift station since its installation, so it needs to be serviced. The quote for the fixes is \$3,768.70. **Motion to accept Minnesota Pump Works Quote #QTE004667 totaling \$3,768.70 by Maxa, and seconded by Scheff, and MCU.**

**Select City Representative for IUOE Local 49 Contract Negotiations:** Bryan Boone volunteered to be a City Representative along with Ben Maxa. Melissa is to reach out to Dan Manick, the Union rep, to see if they can meet following the October City Council meeting.

#### OTHER/ ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Next meeting is Monday October 16, 2023, at 5:30 PM at Bigfork City Hall

**Motion to adjourn at 7:13 p.m. by Maxa, seconded by Scheff, and MCU.**

Melissa J. Grover

*City Clerk/Treasurer*

Approved at the regular meeting held on  
October 16, 2023

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Mayor