



Regular Board Meeting  
Wednesday April 26, 2023 6:00 PM

The Town of Big Lake Board of Supervisors met in regular session, at 6:00 PM, on Wednesday April 26, 2023 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 Dean Brenteson, Supervisor Larry Alfords, Supervisor Norm Leslie, Supervisor Mark Hedstrom, Treasurer Kenneth Warneke, Clerk Brenda Kimberly-Maas, Deputy Clerk Jayme Cannon, County Commissioner Raeanne Danielowski, Fire Chief Seth Hansen, Peter Schmitt and Hadley Braaten - from US Solar, and news reporter were in attendance.

Clerk Kimberly-Maas requested the addition of an item to the end of the meeting agenda.

#### Approval of Meeting Agenda

Motion/Second to accept the amended Agenda by: Leslie/Hedstrom. Approved by: Alfords, Aubol, Brenteson, Hedstrom, and Leslie. Motion Prevailed. The meeting proceeded in accordance with the amended Agenda.

#### Approval of Consent Agenda

The Consent Agenda consists of: A) Approval of Minutes Regular meeting of 04/12/2023 and Local Board of Appeal and Equalization meeting on 04/13/2023. B) Approve List of Claims & Payroll presented. Supervisor Alfords noticed a misspelling of Gina Hugo's name in the DRAFT minutes. Clerk Maas will make the correction. Motion/Second to Approve consent agenda contingent on the spelling of Gina Hugo's name be corrected in the 04/12/2023 Regular Meeting Minutes by: Alfords/Brenteson. Approved by: Alfords, Aubol, Brenteson, Hedstrom, and Leslie. None Opposed. Motion Prevailed.

#### Big Lake Fire Department Report

Chief Seth Hansen reported in March 2023, the department responded to 31 calls – Twenty-four (24) in the city of Big Lake, six (6) in Big Lake township, one (1) in Orrock township. Calls of interest were three (3) fires, three (3) motor vehicle accidents, one (1) hazardous conditions (gas leak) and one (1) animal rescue – a cat was stuck in a sewer drain. March training brought the members to Cargill's Animal Nutrition plant where the members familiarized themselves with the facility. Chief Hansen reminded everyone that it is wildfire/grassfire season and to keep recreational fires to the 3' x 3' size, burn only firewood and approved materials, keep a water source nearby the fire, and to check the DNR website frequently for burning restrictions. Burning permits for fires larger than 3' x 3' are available on the DNR's website, or from a local fire warden – staff at the town hall are fire wardens.

## Open Forum

Commissioner Danielowski updated the Board and attendees about the pedestrian bridge grant and the bridge schedule. Engineering and design work will be done in 2024 and construction will be done in 2025. She also informed all that preconstruction work on County Road 43 is taking place. Trees are being removed, underground utilities are being marked, etc. Reconstruction of the section of CR43 from US Hwy 10 to the Elk River bridge will commence in July.

## Regular Business

### US Solar – Requesting Amendment to Current IUP

Peter Schmitt and Hadley Braaten, representatives from US Solar were present to request an amendment to their Solar IUP – the solar garden is between 169<sup>th</sup> Ave. NW and State Hwy 25. It was developed prior to the area being omitted from solar use in the county ordinances. The current IUP has specific vegetation requirements to which modifications are being requested. This site contains a mix of pollinator-friendly, low-lying, deep-rooted grasses, which were planted underneath the modules and between the rows, both within and outside the project's fencing. US Solar controls for noxious weeds throughout the life of the project, which maintains the prairie appearance of the vegetation. In compliance with the previously approved IUP on this site, trees have already been planted and maintained on the perimeter of the facility, outside of the fence. The IUP only regulates the vegetation within the fenced. The solar site's current conditions allow for a unique intersection of solar energy production and agriculture to exist on the same parcel. For this IUP amendment application, US Solar is proposing to add flexibility to its required vegetation plan to incorporate a concept called Agrivoltaics at the USS Big Lake 1 LLC project. According to National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL), Agrivoltaics is the concept of using Photovoltaic (PV) installations to create renewable energy and provide space for local agricultural activities to occur. US Solar proposes converting some or all of the Big Lake 1 Solar project into an agrivoltaics site to allow for agricultural activities in addition to PV production. For example, growing hand-harvested crops, expanding honey production, and potentially small livestock grazing can occur both underneath and adjacent to the solar installation. US Solar will partner with tenant farmers on this project. The farmers will carry their own insurance and will be given safety training. The amendment proposes up to 10 sheep and some chickens be allowed inside the panel area. The Agrivoltaics would utilize about 1 acre inside the fenced area and 1 acre on the outside of the fence, to start. The rest of the vegetation would remain planted with native pollinator habitat.

The Board recommended approval of the IUP amendment with the comment that they prefer no fowl be placed on the parcel.

## Roads

Supervisor Brenteson told the Board that a salt shortage caused Plaisted's to purchase salt at a higher cost than was estimated at the beginning of the season. The company has proposed to split the increase with the township 50:50. He recommends the Board accept the offer to split the difference and pay the revised invoice upon receipt, since this circumstance was out of the control of Plaisted.

Motion/second to split the difference of the increased salt cost with Plaisted Companies at a 50:50 ratio and pay the revised invoice, upon receipt by Aubol/Alfords. Approved by: Alfords, Aubol, Brenteson, Hedstrom, and Leslie. None opposed. Motion prevailed

Supervisor Brenteson said that Driveway Services has been using cold mix to temporarily fill potholes. But Commercial Asphalt should be open soon with hot mix available to patch holes.

Supervisor Alfords noted the previously scheduled Road Tour was postponed due to the heavy snowfall the weekend prior to the original scheduled date. The Road Tour will be conducted May 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup>. The road committee will leave the town hall at 8AM on Wednesday the 3<sup>rd</sup> of May. Time of departure on the 4<sup>th</sup> will be determined at the end of day of May 3<sup>rd</sup>.

### Supervisor Updates

Supervisor Leslie was contacted by Sandy McClurg, from the Big Lake Area Food Shelf. The first food distribution for 2023 will take place on Monday May 15<sup>th</sup> at the town hall. Distribution will begin at 3:30PM. All are welcome to participate.

Supervisor Aubol attended a planning and zoning advisory council meeting where he learned that a Santiago resident wished to start a small winery on their property. There was no Big Lake Township business discussed at the meeting.

### Treasurer's Report

Treasurer Warneke reviewed the Treasurer's Report and Financial Statements with the Board. He noted the fund balance for Fire District #1 shows a negative balance as the 2-23 contract was included in the claims approved in the consent agenda. The balance will adjust when we receive the tax settlement from the County. He also reminded the Board that all interest is placed in the Road & Bridge Fund during the year, and he splits the amount between the funds (based on the fund balances). He let the Board know that several trees were blown over in the last storm and the bill will be received next month. The Fire (coverage) fund is where he would expect after paying our second quarter budget advance tonight. He also pointed out that some of the reported balance in the ARPA fund - \$620,821.84, has been obligated to town hall maintenance and upgrade projects. The town treasury ending balance (less escrows) as of April 26, 2023 is \$2,034,481.10. Including escrows, the total town treasury was \$2,563,167.03. *Financial Reports are retained as part of the official Minutes and available in the Clerk's Office.* Motion/Second to approve the Treasurer's report by: Hedstrom/Alfords. Approved by: Alfords, Aubol, Brenteson, Hedstrom and Leslie. None opposed. Motion Prevailed.

### Announcement

- ~ BLFD JPB regular meeting on Tuesday May 2, 2023 commencing at 5:00PM at the fire station.
- ~ Next regular board meeting on Wednesday May 10, 2023 commencing at 6:00PM, at the town hall.
- ~ Recycle Day is Saturday May 20, 2023 from 8:00AM – 1:00PM at the town's maintenance building.

Clerk Maas informed the Board she had received a letter dated April 26, 2023, from Supervisor Leslie who asked it be read into the minutes.

"April 26, 2023

TO: Big Lake Township Board and Staff

I am asking the Big Lake Township Board to approve my request for resignation from the board effective 04-26-23. I have very much enjoyed serving on the board and will miss working with

my fellow supervisors and staff. Age is catching up with me and I would like to have more time to spend with my wife and family so I feel it is time to retire. It has been my great pleasure to serve the residents of the Big Lake Township for the past 19 years and want to thank them for allowing me to represent them.

Yours truly,  
Norm Leslie”

Supervisor Leslie told the Board that he has been contemplating stepping away for some time, since age is “catching up with me” and he has lost his enthusiasm after nineteen years on the Board. He hopes the Board will find a suitable replacement.

With all due admiration and respect, Supervisor Aubol made the Motion to accept Supervisor Norm Leslie’s letter of resignation.

Reluctantly, Supervisor Brenteson Seconded the Motion.

Approved by: Alfords, Aubol, Brenteson, and Hedstrom. None opposed. Motion prevailed.

Adjournment

Motion/Second to adjourn the Regular Meeting at 7:11 PM by: Leslie/Hedstrom. All Supervisors present approved. Motion Prevailed.

Respectfully Submitted,

Brenda Kimberly-Maas, Clerk

Accepted this 10th day of May 2023, by the Town of Big Lake Board of Supervisors.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Bruce Aubol, Chair

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_  
Brenda Kimberly-Maas, Town Clerk