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AUGMENTATION: City drafts resolution of support for bonding bill **PAGE 2A**

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City throws hat in lake augmentation ring

BY DEBRA NEUTKENS
REGIONAL EDITOR

WHITE BEAR LAKE — If community support is required for an augmentation bill to gush forward, count the city in.

An early draft of a "resolution of support" made the rounds at the Feb. 23 City Council meeting as members suggested changes.

Language in the document read that proponents of augmentation asked the mayor and council to support the project and its inclusion in the Legislature's 2016 bonding bill.

That support comes with a few conditions, however, as stated in the draft. Keep in mind these are not yet set in stone:

1. That any augmentation project be predicated on the council's approval of an agreed-upon funding mechanism for its ongoing operation and maintenance.

2. That the implementation of the project have no adverse effect on water quality and other environmental factors related to White Bear Lake.

3. That the parties to the lawsuit titled "White Bear Lake Restoration Association, et al, versus the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, et al," pending in Ramsey County Court, dismiss the lawsuit if and when the augmentation project is completed.

Councilman Dan Jones felt it was good for the city to go on record with a resolution.

"Let's be first," he said. "Get it out in front. But I'd like to add that funding has to be fair and equitable

for all municipalities involved."

Something about the lake being a "regional asset" was suggested by Mayor Jo Emerson. "If it's a regional asset, the region should be helping," she said.

City attorney Roger Jensen reminded the council that the resolution is not binding on anyone. "It is merely expressing the council's desires and intent," he noted.

The mayor explained that the resolution is an attempt to protect the city's residents. "Legislators have to understand our concerns because we have residents who will not benefit from this," Emerson said. "We want to make sure their wishes are also addressed."

The resolution will come back to council at the March 8 meeting.