



**MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING OF THE CITY COUNCIL
OF THE CITY OF WHITE BEAR LAKE, MINNESOTA
TUESDAY, MARCH 24, 2020
7:00 P.M. IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBERS**

1. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Mayor Jo Emerson called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. under MN Statute Section 13D.021, in which the City Council will be conducting its meetings during this emergency by electronic means until further notice. City staff established a means to allow the City Council to meet electronically, and to provide the public an opportunity to monitor meetings as they occur. All votes taken at these meetings will be by roll call vote. The Council is currently working on matters of immediate attention, but will resume regular Council business as soon as possible.

The clerk took roll call attendance: Councilmembers Doug Biehn – Aye, Kevin Edberg - Aye, Steven Engstran - Aye, Dan Jones - Aye and Bill Walsh - Aye. Staff members present were City Manager Ellen Hiniker, Assistant City Manager Rick Juba, Community Development Director Anne Kane, Public Works Director/City Engineer Paul Kauppi, City Clerk Kara Coustry and City Attorney Jason Hill.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. Minutes of the Regular City Council Meeting on March 10, 2020

It was moved by Councilmember **Engstran**, seconded by Councilmember **Walsh**, to approve the Minutes of the Regular City Council Meeting on March 10, 2020.

Walsh Aye
Biehn Abstained
Jones Abstained
Edberg Aye
Engstran Aye

Motion carried.

3. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

City Manager Hiniker added 9A, 9B, 9C and 9D under new business.

It was moved by Councilmember **Edberg** seconded by Councilmember **Jones**, to approve the agenda as amended.

Walsh Aye
Biehn Aye
Jones Aye
Edberg Aye
Engstran Aye

Motion carried unanimously.

4. VISITORS AND PRESENTATIONS

Nothing scheduled

5. PUBLIC HEARINGS

Nothing scheduled

6. LAND USE

A. Consent

Nothing scheduled

B. Non-Consent

Nothing scheduled

7. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Nothing scheduled

8. ORDINANCES

Nothing scheduled

9. NEW BUSINESS

A. Resolution extending the period of Mayor declared local emergency

Councilmember Edberg asked what conditions would reverse the emergency declaration.

Councilmember Jones noted that according to the resolution, the emergency declaration remains in effect until Federal or State emergency declarations have ended.

City Manager Hiniker, added that the League of Minnesota Cities is encouraging cities to adopt resolutions declaring local emergencies, which provides the ability to act more quickly, if needed.

Mayor Emerson explained it is a tool that provides cities the ability to, for example, enter into Joint Powers agreements without calling an emergency meeting.

City Attorney Hill mentioned that declaring a local emergency may open the City to receiving federal or state funding.

It was moved by Councilmember **Biehn**, seconded by Councilmember **Engstran** to adopt **Resolution No. 12556** extending the period of Mayor declared local emergency.

Councilmember Edberg supported the resolution but cautioned that emergency powers ought to have limits.

Walsh Aye
Biehn Aye
Jones Aye
Edberg Aye
Engstran Aye

Motion carried unanimously.

B. Resolution authorizing the use of electronic documents and signatures

City Manager Hiniker stated this gives the City the ability to add electronic signatures to documents that are approved through email or City Council action.

It was moved by Councilmember **Jones**, seconded by Councilmember **Biehn** to adopt **Resolution No. 12557** authorizing the use of electronic documents and signatures.

Walsh Aye
Biehn Aye
Jones Aye
Edberg Aye
Engstran Aye

Motion carried unanimously.

C. Resolution suspending late fees for utility payments

City Manager Hiniker stated that in response to callers, staff is requesting the ability to waive late fees on utility accounts. She stated that all of the essential services will continue to be provided.

Finance Director Kindsvater noted that customers are provided with 30 days to make utility payments prior to the assessment of a 10% late fee. She mentioned a recent Logis survey in which many cities indicated they will be waiving these late fees.

Councilmember Edberg recalled the resolution allows for the waiving of late fees back to January 1, 2020 and asked if the city had intention of providing relief to delinquent accounts

prior to that date. Ms. Kindsvater said that about \$6,000 - \$8,000 in late fees is collected each quarter, so extending the grace period could have an impact. City Manager added that late fees are not cumulative, rather a late fee is added each quarter when the bill is late. She explained the logic applied in this case is that billing for January, February and March would be reaching homes beginning April, May and June, but certainly the City Council may choose another effective date for this relief.

Councilmember Biehn asked if there was ever a situation in which the revenue is not received, and do the late fees cover that lost revenue. Ms. Kindsvater explained that unpaid utility bills (7/1/19 - 6/30/20) are certified and assessed to property taxes at the end of the year.

It was moved by Councilmember **Jones**, seconded by Councilmember **Engstran** to adopt **Resolution No. 12558** suspending late fees for utility payments.

Councilmember Walsh said the concept of forgiving the late fee is fine in a limited capacity. He supported this so the City is not adding insult to injury.

Walsh Aye
Biehn Aye
Jones Aye
Edberg Aye
Engstran Aye

Motion carried unanimously.

D. Resolution deferring rate increase for Pioneer Manor residents until October 1, 2020

Mayor Emerson said that deferring the 2% rental increase for Pioneer Manor residents is something the City can easily do to help the seniors. City Manager Hiniker explained that much like the utility account, Pioneer Manor is an enterprise fund (a self-supported fund). She noted receipt of Ramsey County's Community Development Block Grant for window replacement at the facility means this savings can be passed along to the residents.

It was moved by Councilmember **Engstran**, seconded by Councilmember **Edberg** to adopt **Resolution No. 12559** deferring rate increase for Pioneer Manor residents until October 1, 2020.

Walsh Aye
Biehn Aye
Jones Aye
Edberg Aye
Engstran Aye

Motion carried unanimously.

10. CONSENT

A. Resolution authorizing the City Manager to execute the Washington County Recycling Grant Agreement. **Resolution No. 12560**

B. Resolution authorizing a temporary liquor license for Bear Boating. **Resolution No. 12561**

It was moved by Councilmember **Walsh**, seconded by Councilmember **Engstran** to adopt the consent agenda as presented.

Walsh Aye
Biehn Aye
Jones Aye
Edberg Aye
Engstran Aye

Motion carried unanimously.

11. DISCUSSION

Nothing scheduled

12. COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE CITY MANAGER

- Ms. Hiniker provided a report to the City Council summarizing the actions taken in response to COVID-19 as follows:
 - Daily remote management team meetings.
 - Most all office staff have been set up to work remotely.
 - The License Bureau closed due to the inability to provide adequate social distance. The License Bureau Supervisor has been working with the State and DMVs to work through the best ways to serve customers. The License Bureau counter will be retrofitted to create a sneeze barrier. Between license tabs and title work, staff have been sustaining 5-7 workers daily.
 - The Fire Department has been following directions from the State Board of Medical Directors.
 - The Police Department will rotate officers with four on at a time. There is a low call volume currently, which is expected to change.
 - The Food Shelf has been providing pick-up service and are making provisions for food delivery to those sheltering in place and has no need for assistance at this time. The City will reach out to the School District Meals on Wheels program to offer assistance to them as well.
 - The Administrative Assistant at the Sports Center will learn more about Volgistics, a volunteer database management system with hopes to work with various organizations to coordinate volunteer efforts within the City.
 - The Community Foundation is sending a survey to non-profits in the City to find out the needs as they have an opportunity to apply for grants from a statewide non-profit organization. The American Red Cross is in need of blood as collections are down.
 - The Rotary arranged for a Blood Drive at the Armory on April 7th.
 - The local and state chambers are keeping up on resources for businesses. The City links to this on the website.

- Updates from Public Works Director/City Engineer, Kauppi
 - Crews are busy as usual, but with social distancing in place.
 - The sewer and water crews are on rotation schedules to limit exposure due to license and expertise required to run those systems.
 - With more people at home, sewers are at a higher capacity. Residents are reminded to flush paper products other than toilet paper.
 - Double shifts of street sweeping are happening and additional projects tackled in other city facilities.
 - Bids for the Mill and Overlay Project are being opened tomorrow and Bids for the Street Reconstruction Project are being opened next week

- Updates from Community Development Director Kane
 - Building permits for the City have increased 30% over 2019 at this time and the City of Mahtomedi's increased 45% higher over 2019, which was already a record breaking year. The Building Permit Clerk issued 21 building permits today.
 - Rental Housing inspections are on hold and many building inspections are being deferred when possible or conducted via photographs. This has not affected any of the large construction projects in the City. A backlog of roofing inspections was cleared and erosion control inspections aimed at keeping runoff out of storm sewers.
 - The Code Enforcement Officer has spent time closing open cases rather than opening new cases at this time.
 - The Chamber has done a fabulous job supporting local business and advertising curbside pick-up and delivery services. The City was asked not to be aggressive in enforcement of temporary signs to promote restaurants with take-out. This could be considered in the interest of public health.

- Updates from Finance Director Kindsvater
 - Operations as usual with social distancing in place. Staff are set up and mostly all are working remotely, while periodically dropping in for items as needed.

- Updates from Assistant City Manager Juba
 - Republic Services, the City's Refuse Hauler, has a good plan in place for continued services, however, they are looking to suspend optional services starting next week, which would include yard waste, bulky items and extra pick-up.
 - Continue to check the City's website, <http://www.whitebearlake.org>, Facebook and Twitter for daily updates to information.
 - Sign up for Notify Me, the City's website subscription service to continue to get updates through email.


- Mayor Emerson thanked staff and said that the City will continue to provide essential services and obey social distancing guidelines in an effort to slow down the spread of COVID-19. She encouraged residents to seek information from the City's website, the CDC and the MN Department of Health and to verify information rather than relying on rumors. Mayor Emerson thanked the residents of White Bear Lake for cooperating and supporting local businesses.

13. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the Council, it was moved by Councilmember **Walsh** seconded by Councilmember **Engstran** to adjourn the regular meeting at **7:50** p.m.

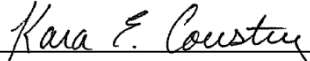
Walsh Aye
Biehn Aye
Jones Aye
Edberg Aye
Engstran Aye

Motion carried unanimously.



Jo Emerson, Mayor

ATTEST:



Kara Coustry, City Clerk