

March 16, 2020

**CITY OF GUNNISON COUNCIL
SPECIAL SESSION MEETING MINUTES**

12:00 PM

The City Council Special Session meeting was called to order at 12:00 P.M. in Council Chambers at 201 W. Virginia by Mayor Jim Gelwicks with Councilors Boe Freeburn, Jim Miles, Mallory Logan and Diego Plata present along with Western Liaison Adam Engleman, City Attorney Kathy Fogo, City Manager Russ Forrest, and City Clerk Erica Boucher. Additional City staff present were Community Development Director Anton Sinkewich, Electric Superintendent Will Dowis, City Engineer Cody Tusing, and Police Chief Keith Robinson. A Council quorum was present.

Mayor Gelwicks stated that the purpose of the Special Session was to address a Local Disaster Emergency Declaration and to discuss of City facilities operations as related to the emerging COVID-19 situation. Those are the only topics to be discussed.

City Attorney Fogo stated that the Emergency Declaration process is a state statute process. The City Manager signs the Emergency Declaration which can only be in place for seven days unless it is extended by an action of Council. This Local Disaster Emergency Declaration will not change how the City operates administratively or financially but, as a possibility, could help the City recoup expenses later on since a National Emergency Declaration has been put into place. If Council wants to extend the Local Disaster Emergency Declaration, they would be required to meet within seven days to sign a resolution for an extension.

Attorney Fogo recommended that a resolution for Council to hold electronic/virtual meetings be added to the next meeting's agenda. Attorney Fogo also highlighted that the second "That" listed in the Local Disaster Emergency Declaration gives City Council the authority to act as the Board of Health and Safety for the City. This statement is to protect the City from the County exercising overreaching authority. Statutorily, the County could come into a municipality and issue orders if a municipality lacked an existing Board of Health and Safety. Gunnison's Charter defines City Council as the Board of Health and Safety for the City of Gunnison. This is primarily a precautionary step. Currently, Gunnison County is taking the lead on COVID-19, but is working in close collaboration with all affected entities and municipalities.

This Declaration puts into effect the City of Gunnison's Emergency Plan that was approved by Council in April 2019. The City Clerk will email Gunnison's Emergency Plan to all councilmembers.

Council set another Special Session for March 20, 2020 to sign a resolution to extend the Local Disaster Emergency Declaration.

Councilor Plata moved and Councilor Logan seconded the motion to direct the City Manager to sign the Local Disaster Emergency Declaration for the City of Gunnison.

Roll call, yes: Freeburn, Miles, Gelwicks, Logan, and Plata. So carried.

Roll call, no: None.

City Facilities Operations. Council and staff went into discussion about the evolving COVID-19 situation in the County and how it will impact administrative functions for the City and staff. Staff will continue to seek Council direction on policies and will continue to communicate with Council as the situation evolves.

City Manager Forrest stated that there is one Emergency Operations Center (EOC) for Gunnison County which is spearheaded by Gunnison County Health and Human Services and the Gunnison Valley Hospital. The City of Gunnison will institute its own Incident Command System (ICS) to maintain its own functions at a faster, more nimble pace and to be in line with the EOC. Daily, the City will identify key objectives to accomplish. Current key objectives are to contain and minimize the spread of coronavirus and to protect City personnel in order to maintain essential services for the community.

Senior citizens are a key population that needs additional protection. Young at Heart asked that the City take over operations to continue to provide meals to seniors through a pick-up or delivery

service. Each City department has identified its essential functions to continue to serve the community. When appropriate and possible, staff will still move forward on Council's strategic priorities as well. Communication is extremely important. The Clerk's Department will continue to execute communication on City services for residents.

City Manager Forrest shared the new leadership structure and duties with Council. Manager Forrest is the Incident Commander for the City of Gunnison, followed by Police Chief Keith Robison, who is the City's liaison to the EOC. There will be an increased police presence throughout the City to help keep the community calm and feeling safe.

City Manager Forrest reviewed City staff assignments for the ICS. Anton Sinkewich was tasked with planning and tracking daily objectives. Finance will handle purchasing and logistics. Ginny Baylor was tasked with Community Welfare. The purpose of this work is to help maintain the physical and mental health of the community. Arden Anderson is managing and assigning volunteers, but needs assistance to keep pace. The City proposed paying non-essential employees to participate in volunteer activities (i.e. meal deliveries) if they have a willingness to do so since they will not be working their normal job. Council supported this idea. Community Development Sinkewich will also be working with local businesses and ICELab on economic recovery.

The conversation returned to making the Young at Heart cooks employees of the City in order for them to continue to provide meal services for seniors.

Councilor Miles moved and Councilor Logan seconded the motion to direct the City Manager to hire three the Young at Heart cooks as temporary City employees.

Roll call, yes: Miles, Gelwicks, Logan, Plata, and Freeburn. So carried.

Roll call, no: None.

City Manager Forrest recommended, after speaking with health professionals, that the City cease recycling operations for two weeks. The City's manual process makes it unsafe for employees. The public should bring their recycling to the County Recycling Center or put it in the trash. Refuse will continue to be picked up regularly.

City Manager Forrest introduced the idea of Council having virtual meetings in cases of emergencies like this when gathering physically is not a prudent decision. Council discussed the pros and cons of using such technology for the meetings and made suggestions for ways it can be most effective. Zoom would allow the public to continue to participate in public meetings and for Council and the public to follow Public Health Orders. A resolution to hold virtual meetings is appropriate, as the Charter does not require Council to be physically in Chambers. A physical meeting setting has just been the practice. Virtual meetings would be for emergency or pandemic situations only.

City Manager Forrest noted that Council may also want to revisit expenditures and resources dedicated to large capital projects this year. Priorities and resources may need to be adjusted, considering the evolving COVID-19 situation. Supporting local businesses is a priority for the City.

It was noted that a Second Amended Standing Public Health Order Related to Events was just released by the County. City staff, especially in Public Works, noted that shipments and order inventory are being delayed or quickly becoming unavailable. The mayor noted that he was told that Eagle and Pitkin counties are suspending plumbing and electrical inspections.

Councilor Plata mentioned that he is working with the EOC PIO on translating as much information as possible into Spanish.

At 12:44 P.M., Councilor Freeburn stepped out of Council Chambers and did not return.

With no further business for the Special Session, Mayor Gelwicks adjourned the Special Session meeting at 12:45 P.M.


Mayor

Attest:

E. Baucher

City Clerk

