

CITY COUNCIL PROCEEDINGS

BEMIDJI, MINNESOTA

Emergency Meeting – Friday, March 27, 2020

Pursuant to due call and notice, an emergency meeting of the City Council of the City of Bemidji, Beltrami County, Minnesota, was held on Friday, March 27, 2020, at 10:00 a.m. in the Chambers of City Hall, Mayor Albrecht presiding via telephone conference.

Upon roll call, the following Councilmembers were declared present: Albrecht, Meehlhause, Johnson, Rivera, Erickson, Thompson.

Staff Present: City Manager Nate Mathews, City Attorney Alan Felix, Finance Director Ron Eischens, City Engineer Craig Gray, Community Development Director Steven Jones, Parks & Recreation Director Marcia Larson, Police Chief Mike Mastin, City Clerk Michelle Miller

Mayor's Proclamation and Declaration of a Local Emergency and City Council's Consent to Extension and Continuation of Emergency Declaration

Mathews stated that staff is bringing this resolution to council to help with administrative functions and decisions during this Peacetime Emergency and Stay at Home order from Governor Walz due to the COVID-19 Global Health Pandemic. Felix stated that a Mayor's Emergency Declaration is only valid for three days the extension the continuation of a declaration needs to be done through council action. Calling a local emergency under Minnesota Statutes enables the city and staff to take appropriate actions and respond to the pandemic locally to give powers to the city and staff to take actions that normally require council action. One example relates to signing of contracts and purchase of equipment that may be needed for the response to the pandemic. Erickson noted that the resolution authorizes staff and the mayor extraordinary authority to take action that would otherwise be taken by the full council. Erickson stated she is not opposed to this; however, she would suggest that language be added to the final resolution to require notification to the council of any such actions either pending or executed. Erickson also noted that there are no limits identified regarding contracts and spending. Mathews stated that relating to spending, the manager has discretion up to \$20,000. There are no plans to change that at this time. Felix noted that once this declaration is no longer needed that the resolution will be rescinded by the council.

RESOLUTION NO. 6294: Proclamation and Declaration of a Local Emergency and Extension of Declared Local Emergency was offered by Councilmember Erickson, who moved its adoption, and upon due second by Councilmember Rivera was passed by the following roll call vote: Yeas: Rivera, Erickson, Thompson, Meehlhause, Albrecht, Johnson. Nays: None.

Consideration of Related Municipal Policy Directives

Mathews stated that he has prepared a Shelter in Place Workforce Plan based on the Governor's Stay at Home Order and related Homeland Security documents to use as a guideline to help determine critical workers, whether it is necessary for certain employees to come into work, and how to keep employees working either from home or in person. The city is concerned about the potential spread of the virus and how that could run through the workforce and being able to keep staff healthy to continue to provide services to the public. Staffing will be limited in all departments to maintain social distancing. Mathews stated he is recommending that the city provide paid time off during this time so as not to exhaust the emergency paid sick leave as well as individual's paid time off hours. City Hall will be open on a limited basis to process mail and other city reception duties. Mathews stated that the Sanford Center is available for emergency response needs. Staff provided updates to council on how each department will be working during the stay at home order. Jones stated that staff is looking at potential opportunities to provide assistance to local and businesses and will be bringing a recommendation to council at the next regular council meeting. Council and staff addressed several questions regarding operations as well as concerns within the community.

Motion by Rivera, seconded by Meehlhause to approve the proposed Shelter in Place Workforce Plan including allowing a flexible work schedule approved by department heads and the city manager and to approve paid time off to be paid by the city for all employees through April 10. Motion carried by the following roll call vote: Yeas: Thompson, Erickson, Albrecht, Johnson, Rivera, Meehlhause.

Adjourn

There being no further business, motion by Erickson, seconded by Meehlhause, to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried by the following roll call vote: Yeas: Meehlhause, Johnson, Rivera, Erickson, Thompson, Albrecht. Meeting adjourned at 11:54 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Michelle R. Miller". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Michelle R. Miller
City Clerk