

CITY COUNCIL PROCEEDINGS

BEMIDJI, MINNESOTA

Regular Meeting – April 6, 2020

Pursuant to due call and notice, a regular meeting of the City Council of the City of Bemidji, Beltrami County, Minnesota, was held on Monday, April 6, 2020 at 6:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers of City Hall, Mayor Albrecht presiding via video and telephone conference.

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

Staff Present: City Manager Nate Mathews, Finance Director Ron Eischens, City Attorney Alan Felix, City Engineer Craig Gray, Community Development Director Steven Jones, City Clerk Michelle Miller

AMENDMENTS TO AGENDA

Mayor Albrecht called for any amendments to the agenda. **Motion by Meehlhause, seconded by Johnson, to approve the agenda as presented. Motion carried by unanimous vote.**

MINUTES

The following minutes were presented for approval:

Work Session:	March 9, 2020
Council Meeting:	March 16, 2020
Emergency Mtg:	March 27, 2020

Motion by Johnson, seconded by Meehlhause, to approve the minutes as presented. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

CONSENT AGENDA

Albrecht called for any items to be pulled from the consent agenda. Johnson requested that the claims submitted by VenuWorks for the Sanford Center be removed for further discussion. The following Consent Agenda items were presented for approval. **Motion by Meehlhause, seconded by Johnson, to approve the Consent Agenda items as follows:**

1. Claims Submitted by Finance Officer in the amount of \$850,277.07
2. Approve General Business Licenses for 2020
3. Approve Quote for Konica Copier (City Hall Upper Level) \$10,750.00

Motion carried by the following roll call vote: Yeas: Rivera, Erickson, Thompson, Meehlhause, Albrecht, Johnson

CITIZENS NOT ON AGENDA

No appearance.

REPORTS

Update on COVID-19

Sanford Health Representatives, Dr. David Wilcox, Kelly Hagen and Kayla Winkler as well as Beltrami County Health and Human Services Director Cynthia Borgen and Emergency Management Director Chris Muller provided information and an update on the COVID-19 Virus in the Bemidji and surrounding area. To date Sanford Health reports seven positive tests. Dr. Wilcox reported that the cases were not through community contact. Dr. Wilcox also provided an update on the "Surge Planning" in addition to digital and video medical visits. Ms. Hagen described the bed capacity for Sanford Bemidji. Ms. Hagen also addressed staffing needs. Dr. Wilcox reported on outside partnerships with hotels and transportation services as well as other facilities for the treatment of patients. The continued message to the public is that best way to protect the community is by protecting yourself by practicing social distancing, stay home if you are sick, wash your hands, cover your cough and clean surfaces frequently. Representatives addressed several questions from council. Mathews stated that he and Marcia Larson, have been discussing whether to restrict the use of playground equipment as well as close off the skate park due to high use, not being able to properly sanitize the equipment and users not practicing social distancing while using park facilities.

NEW BUSINESS

Consider Economic Development Revolving Loan Fund Small Business Assistance

Jones stated that due to the COVID-19 crisis, local businesses may need extra financial assistance to help recover from losses during the mandatory shut down. He stated that the state has changed its rules during this time and are allowing and encouraging uses of existing revolving

loan funds for “retail uses” at least until the end of the year. The city could consider using some of the “restricted” funds in this manner as well since the state is allowing retail uses for existing RLF funds. Greater Bemidji has created a fund to assist businesses and is requesting that the City pool its funds through Greater Bemidji, but have the funds managed by Sarah Linda with HRDC. Staff is recommending a separate “parallel” loan program with initial funding of \$250,000 of revolving loan funds to be managed by HRDC. Additional funds to the program could be approved by council at a later date if there is a high demand. Jones set forth five loan options under this program which would end by December 31, 2020 unless extended by the council.

- 1) For loans of \$25,000 or less, allow for retail end uses for the loans.
- 2) For loans of \$25,000 or less, 1% interest and 66 months amortization. For the first six months no payment or interest due, then allow up to 60 months for repayment of the outstanding principal and interest.
- 3) Loans for \$25,000 or less would not need to be matched by other qualified loans. These loans could be for up to 100% of the loan amount. Loans must be secured, at a minimum, by personal guarantees.
- 4) Loans for \$25,000 or less could be used for items not currently allowed under existing RLF policies, if the loan committee felt the loan was needed to secure the business and the associated jobs, due to COVID-19 economic issues.
- 5) For loan requests over \$25,000, existing RLF loan fund rules would remain in place.

Under the emergency declaration, these loan requests would not need to be approved by council, however, council believes that loan requests should still be vetted through the Revolving Loan Fund Review Committee. Sarah Linda stated that these loans will also follow DEED guidelines.

Motion by Erickson, seconded by Meehlhause, approving a special “temporary” small business loan program as outlined above with initial funding of \$250,000 from the City Revolving Loan Fund to end December 31, 2020 unless extended by council. Motion carried by the following roll call vote: Yeas: Meehlhause, Johnson, Rivera, Erickson, Thompson, Albrecht.

Discuss Rail Corridor MPCA Contamination Cleanup Grant

Mathews stated that the city applied for a DEED redevelopment grant last August which was unsuccessful. The next grant opportunity would be in May for a contamination clean up grant with the MPCA. Upon discussion it was determined that this is not the best time to pursue this grant opportunity. Council supports pursuing grants again in November for this project.

Claims Submitted by VenuWorks for the Sanford Center in the Amount of \$112,695.31

Johnson noticed that the VenuWorks Management fees increased from \$9,500 to \$9,699. Mathews stated that the increase is due to index inflation under the contract. Johnson also questioned the travel reimbursement from the city in the amount of \$1,221.74. Mathews stated that is for corporate travel costs under the contract.

Motion by Meehlhause, seconded by Rivera, approving the claims submitted by VenuWorks for the Sanford Center in the Amount of \$112,295.31. Motion carried with the following vote: Yeas: Albrecht, Erickson, Meehlhause, Rivera. Nays: Johnson.

UPCOMING COUNCIL MEETINGS

- Monday, April 13 5:30 p.m. Work Session (2019 Year End Financial Review)
- Monday, April 20 6:00 p.m. Council Meeting
- Monday, April 27 5:00 p.m. Board of Review
- Monday, April 27 5:30 p.m. Work Session (City Manager Performance Review)

ADJOURN

There being no further business, motion by Meehlhause, seconded by Johnson, to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 8:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Michelle R. Miller
City Clerk