

**MINUTES OF THE
WATERTOWN CITY COUNCIL**
Emergency Meeting Monday, March 16, 2020

Mayor Steve Washburn
Deborah Everson
Lindsay Guetzkow
Adam Pawelk
Michael Walters

1. Call to Order and Roll Call

Pursuant to due call and notice thereof, the emergency meeting of the Watertown City Council was called to order at 4:00 p.m. Monday, March 16, 2020 in the Council Chambers of City Hall by Mayor Steve Washburn. Council Members present: Washburn, Michael Walters, Deborah Everson, and Lindsay Guetzkow.

City Staff present: City Administrator Shane Fineran, Clerk/Treasurer Lynn Tschudi, and Fire Chief Ryan Schroeder.

Others in attendance: Kyle Jarvis, Jim Sandquist, and Jim May.

2. Adopt Agenda

EVERSON MOVED, GUETZKOW SECONDED A MOTION TO ADOPT THE AGENDA AS PRESENTED. MOTION CARRIED 4-0.

3. New/Old Business

A. Declaration of Emergency and COVID-19 Response

Fineran said Council is meeting in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and the Governor's declaration of a peacetime emergency. The city declared a local state of emergency on March 15th and needs to extend this in order to be eligible for any future possible funding. If the resolution is adopted the special emergency would last until April 30th, 2020.

GUETZKOW MOVED, WALTERS SECONDED A MOTION TO ADOPT RESOLUTION 2020-43, DECLARING A SPECIAL EMERGENCY FOR PURPOSES PROVIDED BY MINNESOTA STATUTE SECTIONS 365.37 AND 415.01 IN RESPONSE TO THE COVID-19 (CORONAVIRUS) PANDEMIC. MOTION CARRIED 4-0.

Fineran stated the next resolution is related to temporary policies, procedures and waivers to aid in the city's response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Fineran stressed it is important to keep staff safe as well as their families safe. Fineran would like to temporarily make changes to the city's PTO policy in an effort to allow staff to be more flexible during this time. Fineran detailed the plan for staff time off if ill or caring for an ill family member.

For local businesses, Fineran would like Council to allow flexibility with parking for curbside pickup and delivery as requested.

Also, as an effort to support social distancing, the city will be waiving late fees on utility bills and encourage them to mail or pay electronically. The city would also bear the 2.75% fee for the online payments.

All of these would be terminated on April 30 unless terminated earlier by council action.

Everson asked about the two parking spaces in front of local businesses. Fineran clarified that each

business will need to request this through the city so the signage is uniform. Guetzkow asked about the 14 day language relating to PTO. Washburn said if people are sick, it is preferred that they stay home. Guetzkow would like to revisit if an employee is ill and then needs to care for a family member for an additional 14 days. Fineran noted that many employees have healthy leave balances so it should not be an issue.

Walters asked what happens if a resident does not pay their utility bill. Fineran said there will be no shut offs right now, but eventually the balance can be certified to taxes.

Washburn said all we can do is try our best.

Guetzkow asked if things go better than planned, could business resume earlier than April 30. Fineran said being that it is tied to the emergency plan, yes.

EVERSON MOVED, GUETZKOW SECONDED A MOTION TO ADOPT RESOLUTION 2020-44, APPROVING TEMPORARY POLICY, PROCEDURE, AND ORDINANCE WAIVERS TO AID IN THE CITY RESPONSE TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC. MOTION CARRIED 4-0.

4. Other Reports

Chief Ryan Schroeder updated that the fire department is limiting their exposure especially to the vulnerable population. They have limited access to the fire station to fire fighters only. All trainings and meetings have been cancelled. Personal protective equipment has been re-evaluated and purchased. Schroeder said they are assessing each call and sending in the least number of staff as possible. Mutual aid partners have been contacted and they are all working together. Schroeder said flu like symptom calls are being assessed from six feet away or even from cell phone. If the patient is displaying critical symptoms, proper PPE will be worn and fire fighters will respond.

City Administrator Fineran updated on city hall precautions for COVID-19. Plexiglass has been installed at the front counter. Cross training employees has started for various jobs in all departments. Carver County Public Health has announced a testing hotline number to help diagnose symptoms and direct people to testing sites. Charter Spectrum has announced a partnership for student online learning making service free for 60 days for those who do not have internet. City hall is closed for public use such as group meetings. We are open for business to serve the community.

Mayor Washburn stated Council meetings will continue, however commission meetings will not. Fineran stated the planning commission will extend their planned March meeting for a future date. Washburn noted additional spending due to the COVID-19 such as cleaning products, laptops, PPE, community center refunds. Washburn is encouraging people to come into the city but to take the correct precautions. The direction Watertown is taking is from the Governor and the MN Department of Health.

5. Adjournment

Members of the City Council and City staff may convene directly following the adjournment of the meeting at the Luce Line Lodge in a purely social event. Members of the public are welcome to attend.

EVERSON MOVED, GUETZKOW SECONDED A MOTION TO ADJOURN THE MEETING AT 4:36 PM. MOTION CARRIED 4-0.

Steve Washburn, Mayor

ATTEST: _____
Lynn Tschudi, Clerk/Treasurer