

**SPECIAL MEETING
OAKDALE CITY COUNCIL
March 20, 2020**

CALL TO ORDER

A special meeting of the City Council of the City of Oakdale was held on Friday, March 20, 2020, at Oakdale City Hall, 1584 Hadley Avenue, Oakdale, Minnesota. The meeting was called to order by Mayor Paul Reinke at 5 PM.

CALL OF ROLL

On a call of roll, the following were present:

Mayor Paul Reinke

Council Members: Jake Ingebrigtsen
Susan Olson
Colleen Swedberg
Kevin Zabel

Absent: None

Also Present: Jeff Anderson, Fire Chief
Brian Bachmeier, Public Works Director/City Engineer
Susan Barry, City Clerk
Alyssa MacLeod, Communication Specialist
Craig Dawson, Interim City Administrator
Chelsea Petersen, Administrative Services Director
Bob Streetar, Community Development Director
Bill Sullivan, Chief of Police
Jim Thomson, City Attorney

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mayor Reinke stated that the purpose of the special meeting was to discuss the City's responses to the COVID-19 pandemic and he added the following two items to the agenda:

1. Declaration of Local Emergency.
2. Ability for the City Council to conduct City Council meetings by telephone.

Council Member Ingebrigtsen noted he contacted three of the senior living facilities in the City to learn about their concerns and he also spoke with the Oakdale Area Chamber of Commerce about ways to assist businesses in the community.

Council Member Swedberg noted that she would be working from home four days a week.

Mayor Reinke stated that for the safety of residents, and City staff and volunteers, several changes were being made: City Hall would limit access to the public and meetings would set up to meet social distancing rules. He also talked about supporting local restaurants by purchasing gift cards and encouraged blood and platelet donations.

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Council Member Olson expressed concerns with the potential of increases in crime and with business closures. She suggested that the City Council meet weekly for an hour to discuss COVID-19 related matters.

City Attorney Thomson shared that many other communities were in the same situation as Oakdale as there is no “game book” for the situation at hand. He provided the following Open Meeting guidance to the City Council:

- Council Members can email Informational videos from outside organizations to other Council Members.
- City Council should send all emails and texts directly to Interim City Administrator and he will, in turn, email them to all Council members; Council should send replies to only Interim City Administrator, not “Reply to All”.

Fire Chief Anderson provided an overview of that being faced by the Oakdale Fire Department, including depleting supplies. He noted that procedures are being frequently adjusted.

Communication Specialist MacLeod commented on COVID-19 resources available on the City’s website for residents and businesses.

Police Chief Sullivan provided an overview of that being faced by the Oakdale Police Department, including the potential of decreased staff levels.

In response to a question from Council Member Zabel about dealing with crowds at grocery stores, Police Chief Sullivan noted that the police handles occupancy matters and crowd control.

In response to a question from Council Member Ingebrigtsen, Fire Chief Anderson noted that should safety masks and gear supplies become depleted, other options would need to be utilized.

Community Development Director Streetar provided an update on the Community Development Department: meeting with the public via telephone or appointment only for new appointments; continuing to work on applications that have been submitted. He added that a drop-box would be placed in the City Hall lobby to collect building permit submittal and utility bill payments.

In response to a question from Council Member Zabel, Community Development Director Streetar indicated that he could work with the city attorney to amend the code to have planning related public hearings be held at the City Council level; however, the Community Development Department has a plan in place to continue to process applications.

In response to a question from Council Member Zabel, City Attorney Thomson replied that posting requirements differ for any boards and commissions meetings that may be held via telephone.

Community Development Director Streetar noted that Planning Commissioners would determine a method for conducting meetings.

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Police Chief Sullivan asked that the City Council give Interim City Administrator Dawson as much authority as possible.

Mayor Reinke replied that the authority would be granted with the local emergency declaration.

Public Works Director/City Engineer Bachmeier provided an overview of Public Works' operational and procedural changes, such as having only one person in vehicles. He commented on issues facing the Public Works crews, such as sharing only one breakroom and restroom facility. Public Works Director/City Engineer Bachmeier also commented on potential restrictions to discourage use of playgrounds and other recreational amenities.

In response to a question from Council Member Ingebrigtsen, Public Works Director/City Engineer Bachmeier commented on adaptations that would be made should there be a significant reduction in staffing levels for tasks such as plowing operations.

Interim City Administrator Dawson reviewed measures that have been taken and that commended March 17, 2020, and would remain in effect until April 30, 2020:

- No public access to Fire Station 1, Fire Station 2, Public Works Building, and the Discovery Center/Recreation Department.
- All events and programming canceled.
- All city board and commission meeting canceled, unless there is a time-sensitive matter that requires their consideration.
- Non-City uses of City Hall meeting rooms not allowed.

Mayor Reinke asked that staff track actions and develop a plan to have in place for any future occurrences. He also commented on reaching out and supporting one another and to be ultra-sensitive to making sure the needs of the senior citizens in the community are met.

Council Member Zabel suggested holding off on less important code complaints for the time being.

In response to a question from Council Member Zabel, Interim City Administrator Dawson noted that there has been no recent communications relating to the 3M settlement matter.

In response to a question from Council Member Olson, Interim City Administrator Dawson commented on the City's plan relating to the potential of a "shelter in place" being enacted.

In response to a question from Council Member Ingebrigtsen, Police Chief Sullivan commented on the potential of increases in some crime activity such as looting.

Interim City Administrator Dawson announced that as the Legislature had temporarily suspended session until April, there is the likelihood that the City's local sales tax matter would be held over until 2021.

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Council Member Zabel commented on the possibility of local sales taxes being made part of the main tax bill.

Local Emergency Declaration

City Attorney Thomson provided an overview of emergency declarations and of the City's proposed Local Emergency Declaration that would provide, among other things, the authority to suspend operations and events and delegating authority to the city administrator.

In response to a question from Council Member Ingebrigtsen, City Attorney Thomson replied that he was not aware of any negatives relating to declaring a local emergency.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCIL MEMBER ZABEL, SECONDED BY COUNCIL MEMBER INGEBRIGTSON, TO ACKNOWLEDGE MAYORAL DECLARATION 2020-01.

5 AYES.

Council Member Zabel asked that the City Council be notified of any significant changes to be made to the local emergency declaration.

Temporary Personnel Policy Response to COVID-19

Interim City Administrator Dawson provided an overview of the City's action plan relating to COVID-19. He added that the federal emergency sick leave act just enacted would be added to the document and provided to the City Council on March 24.

In response to a comment from Council Member Zabel, Administrative Services Director Petersen noted that she would look into reimbursing for cellphones, internet, etc., for staff working from home.

The City Council asked for input on the number of employees wishing to work from home, minimum staffing levels, and working staggered shifts.

In response to a question from Council Member Zabel, Administrative Services Director Petersen noted that she would look into whether the annual citywide garage sales, set for April 30 to May 2, would be held.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCIL MEMBER ZABEL, SECONDED BY COUNCIL MEMBER INGEBRIGTSON, TO WAIVE READING AND ADOPT RESOLUTION NO. 2020-27(a), TO APPROVE THE TEMPORARY PERSONNEL POLICY RESPONSE TO COVID-19; AND THE CLOSING AND CANCELLATION OF EVENTS, PROGRAMMING, AND PUBLIC ACCESS TO CITY FACILITIES.

5 AYES.

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It was the consensus that the City Council would meet each Tuesday at 5 PM to get a COVID-19 response update from the city administrator.

Referencing conducting meetings where some or all members of the City Council participate via telephone or other electronic means, City Attorney Thomson commented on the importance of properly worded posted meeting notices.

Adjournment

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCIL MEMBER ZABEL, SECONDED BY COUNCIL MEMBER SWEDBERG, TO ADJOURN THE SPECIAL MEETING AT 6:24 PM.

5 AYES.

Respectfully submitted,
Susan Barry,
City Clerk