Minutes of Special Meeting held June 2, 2020

Special meeting with the following present: Mayor Mark Bowen; Aldermen Erik Dahler, Sam Cortez, Ruben Gonzalez, Laura Reyna; City Secretary Josie Campa; Director of Public Works James McGrath; Police Chief Richard Priest; and City Attorney Tom Cate. Alderman Stone was absent.

Mayor Bowen called the meeting to order at 6:33 p.m. and told Council the purpose for the meeting was for them to either approve the declaration he signed May 29th or to make changes to it. He then asked Council for their input. The Mayor asked that after discussing an item in Exhibit A, a motion be made for each of the sixteen items listed in Exhibit A.

Exhibit A. Item #1-City Hall
City Secretary Josie Campa asked Council if all of the office employees have to wear masks. Council discussed customers should be encouraged to wear masks, but employees shall wear masks when working with customers.

The City Secretary told Council that she doesn’t feel more than six (6) people can be in the lobby at one time. Alderman Gonzalez suggested if there are more than six people in the lobby that the Council Chamber be used for the overflow. The City Secretary agreed to use the Council Chamber if there is an overflow in the lobby of the City Hall. Alderman Gonzalez made the motion that Council ask that customers be encouraged to wear face masks and city staff wear face masks when working with customers. Seconded by Alderwoman Reyna. Passed unanimously.

Exhibit A-Item #2-Utility Cut-offs and late fees
City Secretary Josie Campa asked a question on the months listed for late charges and asked about whether June should be included. After discussion, Alderwoman Reyna made the motion that the first line be left out and that cut-offs and late fees shall resume with the July 1st bill, and that accounts that had late fees and cut-offs waived that are not paid by September 1, 2020, shall be subject to be cut-off and any late fees incurred after July 10th. Seconded by Alderman Cortez. Passed unanimously.

Exhibit A-Item #3-Community Center, Annex, Park Pavilion and Park Gazebo
City Secretary Josie Campa asked whether the park fields should be included on this list and explained that someone asked about using ball fields for “All-Stars”. After lengthy discussion, Alderman Cortez made the motion that the park ball fields be included in the list of city facilities where activities are cancelled until September 1st. Seconded by Alderman Dahler. Passed unanimously.

Exhibit A-Item #4-Municipal Court
City Attorney Tom Cate explained what the Municipal Court is required to do to resume court during this pandemic. He told Council the Judge has submitted the plan for the court’s reopening and the Emergency Management Coordinator (Mayor) and Local Health Authority have to review it and approve it before it is sent to the Office of Court Administration for approval. The
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Exhibit A-Item#4-Municipal Court(cont.)
City Secretary told Council about some of the things that will be done for court to practice social distancing and other required CDC recommendations. Chief Priest told Council about the technology set-up that is necessary for the court to operate. Alderman Dahler made the motion that Council approve this item with the addition of as “approved by the Office of Court Administration”. Seconded by Alderman Gonzalez. Passed unanimously.

Exhibit A-Item#5-City Gatherings
Alderman Gonzalez made the motion that Council approve this item, as written. Seconded by Alderman Cortez. Passed unanimously.

Exhibit A-Item#6-City Council Meetings
Alderman Dahler made the motion that all City Council meetings shall be held at the Community Center instead of just the regular meetings. Seconded by Alderwoman Reyna. Passed unanimously.

Exhibit A-Item#7-Library
After a lengthy discussion on the library reopening and things needed for this to happen, Alderman Cortez made the motion that Council allow the Library Director to use her discretion as to when the library is ready to open and that she be allowed to open to only 25% capacity, accept appointments for computer usage, have additional cleaning and sanitizing of the restrooms done, and items such as puzzles not be made available to patrons, and as well as following all CDC guidelines. Seconded by Alderman Gonzalez. Passed unanimously.

Exhibit A-Item#8-Animal Shelter
Alderman Cortez made the motion that Council add “the animal control staff will follow all CDC guidelines”. Seconded by Alderwoman Reyna. Passed unanimously.

Exhibit A-Item#9-Public Works
Alderman Gonzalez made the motion that Council accept the wording on this item, as written. Seconded by Alderman Cortez. Passed unanimously.

Exhibit A-Item#10-Police Department
Alderman Gonzalez made the motion that Council approve the wording for the Police Department section of the declaration, as written. Seconded by Alderwoman Reyna. Passed unanimously.

Exhibit A-Item#11-City Parks
City Secretary asked if the multi-purpose court was to remain closed since it was not listed. City Attorney Tom Cate told Council that he feels that teenage boys will play basketball like they normally do and this will mean that social distancing will not be followed. Council discussed this matter along with the 4th of July celebration. The City Secretary told Council the 4th of July celebration is on the June 8th agenda for their consideration. Alderman Cortez made the motion
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Exhibit A-Item#11-City Parks (cont.)
that the playground equipment and restrooms be opened at the park once the proper warning signs are put in place. Seconded by Alderwoman Reyna. Passed unanimously.

Exhibit A-Item#12-Travel
After discussion, Alderman Gonzalez made the motion that Council approve the wording be changed from “without City Council approval” to “without approval from department head and the Mayor”. Seconded by Alderman Dahler. Passed unanimously.

Exhibit A-Item#13-Businesses
After lengthy discussion, Alderman Gonzalez made the motion that “all nursing care facilities” be added to this item since the Governor has called special attention to these facilities. Seconded by Alderman Cortez. Passed unanimously.

Exhibit A-Item#14-Signs of Illness
Alderman Dahler made the motion that the wording for the item be approved, as written. Seconded by Alderman Cortez. Passed unanimously.

Exhibit A-Item#15-Personal hygiene
Alderman Gonzalez made the motion that Council approve this paragraph, as written. Seconded by Alderwoman Reyna. Passed unanimously.

Exhibit A-Item#16-Social distancing
Alderman Gonzalez made the motion that the words “is strongly encouraged” be replaced by “needs” to practice social distancing and that “and to wear face masks” be changed to “and to strongly encourage they” wear face masks. Seconded by Alderwoman Reyna. Passed unanimously.

General-1st paragraph
Alderwoman Reyna recommended that “All CDC guidelines shall be followed” be added to this paragraph. Alderman Gonzalez made the motion that Council approve this line and be added to the end of paragraph 1. Seconded by Alderman Cortez. Passed unanimously.

Alderwoman Reyna asked the City Attorney about the 2nd paragraph under “General” and Mr. Cate explained that any violation of this declaration would be considered a Class C misdemeanor and the penalty could be as much as $2,000.00 if this declaration is enforced.

Council discussed the length of the declaration and the City Attorney told Council it does go through September 1st.

Mayor Bowen told Council that if things change with the COVID-19 pandemic, he can bring this declaration back to Council for changes.

Mayor Bowen adjourned the meeting 8:12 p.m.