

MONONA CITY COUNCIL MINUTES  
April 6, 2020

The regular meeting of the Monona City Council was called to order by Mayor O'Connor at 7:00 p.m.

Present: Mayor Mary O'Connor, Alderpersons Doug Wood, Andrew Kitslaar, Kathy Thomas, Jennifer Kuhr, Molly Grupe, Nancy Moore (all were present via video conference)

Also Present: City Administrator Bryan Gadow, Finance Director Marc Houtakker (present via video conference), Director of Administrative Services Leah Kimmell, Police Chief Walter Ostrenga, Acting Fire Chief Dan Eklof, City Attorney William Cole (present via video conference)

ROLL CALL AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

There were no minutes for approval.

APPEARANCES

There were no appearances.

PUBLIC HEARING

There was no public hearing.

CONSENT AGENDA

A motion by Alder Moore, seconded by Alder Grupe, to approve the following was carried:

1. Approval of Applications for 2019/2021 Operator Licenses:
  - a. Brandon B. Brabender, Buffalo Wild Wings
  - b. Ryan R. Sabin, Wal-Mart
  
2. Approval of Renewal Applications for 2020/2022 Operator Licenses:
  - a. Julianne Baglama, Tully's II
  - b. Tonya R. Dunbar, Wal-Mart
  - c. Olivia F. Serafini, Wal-Mart

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

There was no unfinished business.

NEW BUSINESS

Item G.2.a.

A motion by Alder Thomas, seconded by Alder Kitslaar to suspend the rules and take action on Resolution 20-4-2402 Designation of "Emergency Responder" Employees under the Families First Coronavirus Response Act was carried.

Administrator Gadow explained the provisions of the federal Families First Coronavirus Response Act which became effective on April 1, 2020, and gives eligible employees up to 12 weeks of leave to use for reasons related to the Coronavirus pandemic. This includes up to two weeks of paid leave for employees who are sick or quarantined due to Coronavirus, plus up to 10 weeks to care for a sick or quarantined family member or to care for children who can't be in school or childcare. The law allows for the exemption of emergency responders, and Administrator Gadow explained that after consulting with the police and fire chiefs, we have determined that we need to exempt our emergency responders due to the challenge of adequately staffing those departments during this health emergency if too many are out on leave at once. This includes our police, dispatch, fire/EMS, and public works employees. Mayor O'Connor signed an emergency declaration last week exempting these employees. However, we have also written a city policy which will provide those employees who are exempted from the federal legislation with up to two weeks of additional sick leave if they become sick or quarantined due to Coronavirus. These employees are also able to use traditional FMLA leave, their PTO balances, and the City's new Family Care Paid Leave Policy if applicable.

A motion by Alder Grupe, seconded by Alder Moore, to approve Resolution 20-4-2402 Designation of "Emergency Responder" Employees under the Families First Coronavirus Response Act was carried.

Item G.2.b.

A motion by Alder Moore, seconded by Alder Grupe, to suspend the rules and take action on Discussion and Consideration of Staffing and City Operations Contingency Plans for COVID-19 was carried.

Administrator Gadow presented his policy which extends until May 5 the plan which was in place through today to continue to pay employees as if they were working during the Safer-at-Home order. This allows for two Council meetings between now and May 5 in the event we need to reevaluate. "Essential" versus "non-essential" employees, as it relates to the Governor's order, are listed in the plan. All non-essential employees who are able to telework are and will continue to do so. Administrator Gadow informed the Council that we will need to have an initial discussion at the April 20 meeting to begin discussing how to proceed with the pool and summer programs.

Alder Kitslaar inquired about how we are keeping in touch with our employees who are teleworking or not working during this time. Administrator Gadow answered that we conducted a department head meeting this morning via Zoom and are also in touch via phone and email. Individual department heads are also staying in touch with their department employees via virtual meetings and email. Alder Kitslaar also suggested that we give employees an option for submitting anonymous comments, suggestions, and ideas during this time. He also updated the Council that Parks and Recreation is still recruiting for the summer, but the Director is advising employees to keep their options open and consider taking other jobs if they are offered. There will be a trigger point for opening the pool this summer – a point where we might not have enough trained staff to open or after which opening won't make financial sense.

Alder Grupe asked how Administrator Gadow is deciding on proceeding with the staff pay plan. Administrator Gadow answered that he is proceeding in incremental steps with frequent check-ins with the City Council.

A motion by Alder Kitslaar, seconded by Alder Grupe, to approve the Staffing and City Operations Contingency Plans for COVID-19 was carried.

Chief Ostrenga updated the committee on the status of the police department during this health emergency. They are following CDC guidelines for social distancing, hand washing, and the use of PPE.

Officers have all shaved their beards to accommodate the wearing of masks. Their PPE supply is good for now, but they are beginning to run low on disinfecting wipes. Madison has offered to decontaminate our squads if needed. Officers are also limiting proactive investigations, limiting their involvement with EMS calls, using their PAs to disperse crowds, not engaging in pursuits unless they involve a felony, and avoiding patrol on the Beltline. Dispatch now has the ability to inform first responders if there is a known COVID patient at an address when dispatching them. The DA's office and courthouse are pretty much shut down and jury trials are on hold. As of now, morale is pretty good and no one has gotten sick. Beginning this week, patrol officers will begin working 12-hour shifts on a 3-on/9-off schedule in order to reduce the time they're around each other and reduce the amount of cleaning supplies that need to be used throughout the day as shifts change. He has discussed this with the union, but ultimately, this is his decision to help protect his personnel from exposure to the COVID virus.

Alder Wood asked how officers would handle an OWI arrest right now. Chief Ostrenga responded that the suspect would be arrested, but it would be much more complicated now. The suspect would need to be masked and gloved; blowing into the breathalyzer would not be advisable, and hospitals are not accepting suspects for blood tests. The jail will not take the suspect, and the squad would then need to be decontaminated. Alder Wood also asked of other options besides the 3-on/9-off schedule were considered and if officers will still be paid the same. Chief Ostrenga indicated that they will be paid the same, and other options were considered, but this option seems to work best to limit officers' exposure to each other, as only four officers instead of six will need to be here for each 24-hour day. Alder Wood also asked if we're seeing a surge in domestic violence cases due to the stay-at-home order. Chief Ostrenga indicated that we are not at this time.

Alder Thomas added that staffing is a decision of the Mayor, not the Council. Alder Moore asked if the department is seeing more activity in big box stores. Chief Ostrenga replied that he believes Walmart is contracting for private security during this time, and they are no longer open 24 hours. Country Inn & Suites has contracted with Dane County to house vulnerable members of the homeless population during the health emergency, and this has generated calls for service there. Alder Grupe requested that Chief Ostrenga email the Council the list of updates he presented tonight.

Acting Fire Eklof updated the Council on his department. No one has been sick, but they've had two incidences of exposure to date.

## REPORTS

Attorney Cole updated the Council on the court decisions regarding tomorrow's (April 7) election. Governor Evers issued an order to move the election date to June 9 and mail ballots to all voters who haven't already requested an absentee ballot. The Wisconsin Supreme Court enjoined that entire order today, so the election will be held on April 7. The U.S Supreme Court today overturned a lower court's decision that extended the due date for return of absentee ballots to April 13. Absentee ballots must now be delivered by the close of polls on Election Day or postmarked on or before April 7 and received by 4:00 p.m. on April 13.

Alder Moore reported that the planned Earth Week activities will all be virtual now. Plan Commission will be meeting virtually next Monday. She thanked City Clerk Joan Andrusz and Deputy Clerk Alene Houser for their extraordinary efforts for tomorrow's election, along with the Public Works crew who made plexi shields to keep election works and voters safe.

Alder Kitslaar reported that Parks & Recreation is trying its best to keep people out of the parks to maintain social distance during the health emergency.

Alder Grupe thanked City Clerk Andrusz, Deputy Clerk Houser, and everyone who is putting themselves at risk in order to make this election happen.

City Administrator Gadow reported that the City has asked for and received an extension to our agreement with the Norbertines regarding their property on Monona Drive. Interviews with candidates for the position of Fire Chief are scheduled for today and Wednesday. Leaf and brush collection continue as scheduled this spring, and residents should refer to our website for more information.

Administrative Services Director Kimmell reported that in-person absentee voting at City Hall for tomorrow's election is complete, so the City Hall building is now closed to visitors. We are still taking phone calls at City Hall, and business will continue but will be conducted via phone, email, or mail. Residents who wish to drop utility or court payments can use the outside drop box located in the parking lot.

Mayor O'Connor reported that the City Council organizational meeting will be held on April 21. The three elected alders will receive paperwork that they need sign before that meeting. She thanked alders for submitting their citizen committee reappointments to her and requested that they send her their preferences for their own committee assignments, ranked, by April 15.

#### APPOINTMENTS

A motion by Alder Kuhr, seconded by Alder Kitslaar, to approve the following was carried:

1. Election Inspectors, effective January 1, 2020–December 31, 2020:

Katy Sticha	Missy Kedzorski	Bryan Gadow
Nathan Harper	Diane Mikelbank	Charlie Houser
Michele Miller	Mary Murrell	Bill Imhoff
David Allen	LaVerne Schwengel	Leah Kimmell
Kate Allen	Mary O'Connor	Nancy Moore
Micah Buffat	Mike Clark	Elizabeth Sorge
Sally Buffat	Jenna Assmus	Diane Steele
Nick Fischer	Kathy Bell	Deb Wills Benson
Paul Johnson	Anne Borphy	

#### ADJOURNMENT

A motion by Alder Kitslaar, seconded by Alder Wood, to adjourn was carried. (7:59 p.m.)

Leah Kimmell  
Administrative Services Director