

CITY OF SAINT PETER, MINNESOTA
OFFICIAL PROCEEDINGS
MINUTES OF THE CITY COUNCIL MEETING
MAY 11, 2020

Pursuant to due call and notice thereof, a regular meeting of the City Council of the City of Saint Peter was conducted by virtual software on May 11, 2020. Under M.S. 13D.021, the City is able to conduct meetings by electronic means in the event of a state-wide emergency. Governor Walz has declared a state-wide peacetime emergency and as such City Council meetings will be conducted remotely using GoToMeeting software until further notice.

A quorum present, Mayor Zieman called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m. The following members were present through the virtual platform: Councilmembers Ed Johnson, Keri Johnson, Shanon Nowell, Brad DeVos, Stephan Grams, Emily Bruflat and Mayor Zieman. The following officials were present: City Administrator Todd Prafke, City Attorney James Brandt and City Engineer Jeff Domras.

Approval of Agenda – With all in favor, the agenda was approved.

Approval of Minutes – A motion was made by Grams, seconded by Johnson (K), to approve the minutes of the April 27, 2020 regular City Council meeting. With all in favor, the motion carried and the minutes were approved. A complete copy of the minutes of the April 27, 2020 regular City Council meeting is contained in the City Administrator's book entitled Council Proceedings 19.

A motion was made by Nowell, seconded by Bruflat, to approve the minutes of the May 4, 2020 special City Council meeting. With all in favor, the motion carried and the minutes were approved. A complete copy of the minutes of the May 4, 2020 special City Council meeting is contained in the City Administrator's book entitled Council Proceedings 19.

Visitors – Warren Friesen, 422 North Front Street, appeared by phone to express his concerns that St. Peter Police Officers are not wearing masks while in public. Friesen cited numerous occasions in the middle of the night when he entered Kwik Trip to see four Police Officers, along with Sheriff's Deputies and EMT's all congregated together without masks. Friesen indicated his belief that they should have been wearing masks and be a model for the rest of the community. Friesen also indicated he had spoken to Police Chief Peters about the matter who stated the use of masks was a guideline only and would not be enforced. Mayor Zieman thanked Mr. Friesen for his comments and indicated City Administrator Prafke would discuss Friesen's concerns with the individuals involved.

Consent Agenda – Councilmember DeVos asked for the removal of the Pool Manager and all pool staff appointments from the consent agenda. City Administrator Prafke indicated that as per Council rules, any Councilmember may request removal of items from the consent agenda and considered separately. Prafke also asked for changes to the consent agenda to note the purchase of a charging station was not from ZEF Energy, but rather through SMMPA and changes to wages for two Recreation Leaders (Regner and Skinner) to reduce the wage to \$10.75 per hour to stay in compliance with the Council wage scales for recreation positions.

Extensive discussion ensued on DeVos' request for removal of the pool staff appointments. DeVos asked for further discussion regarding whether the pool would open at all in light of the COVID-19 emergency. DeVos stated his belief that allocating taxpayer money for jobs that might not happen at this time for a pool that doesn't make money is not appropriate. City Administrator Prafke and Recreation and Leisure Services Director Schugel explained that hiring the employees would put the City in line to open the pool if conditions allowed and noted hiring at this time would allow pool staff whose certifications will end mid-summer to take the online renewal classes at far less cost (\$35) versus the cost if they have to be completely recertified (\$190). Prafke stated any recommendation on the pool opening would be based on advice from the Centers for Disease Control and the Minnesota Department of Health.

In motion by Johnson (E), seconded by Nowell, Resolution No. 2020-50 entitled "Resolution Approving Consent Agenda" was introduced with the removal of the Pool Manager and pool staff appointments. Upon roll call, with all in favor, the Resolution was declared passed and adopted as modified. A complete copy of Resolution No. 2020-50 is contained in the City Administrator's book entitled Council Resolutions 23.

COVID-19 Micro Loan Program Modification: Eligible Businesses – Community Development Director Wille presented the Economic Development Authority recommendation to

modify the list of businesses eligible for the COVID-19 Micro Loan program to include automotive repair services. Wille noted a local business owner, who had remained open as an essential service, had requested inclusion in the program because he was going “broke” as people stayed home and had wear and tear on their vehicles. Councilmember Nowell questioned how many businesses would be added to the program if the resolution was approved. Wille noted he had contacted the six businesses that would qualify and two had indicated they would not be interested in applying. In motion by Johnson (E), seconded by Grams, Resolution No. 2020-51 entitled “Resolution Modifying COVID-19 Micro Loan Program Guidelines By Adding Automotive Repair Services To The Roster Of Eligible Business Sectors” was introduced. Upon roll call, with all in favor, the Resolution was declared passed and adopted. A complete copy of Resolution No. 2020-51 is contained in the City Administrator’s book entitled Council Resolutions 23.

ADA Grant Program Approvals – Community Development Director Wille presented the Economic Development Authority recommendation for approval of Central Business District/Accessibility grants to three businesses that wished to install handicap door openers at costs ranging from \$3,175 to \$4,550. Wille noted the three applications were the only ones received and the loans/grants would be forgivable at the rate of 1/15th each year of the loan term. Wille also pointed out applicants must maintain the equipment in good working condition. In motion by Bruflat, seconded by Johnson (K), Resolution No. 2020-52 entitled “Resolution Awarding Central Business District/Accessibility Improvements Grants To Kind Vet Clinic, Swedish Kontour And Riley-Tanis and Associates” was introduced. Upon roll call, with all in favor, the Resolution was declared passed and adopted. A complete copy of Resolution No. 2020-52 is contained in the City Administrator’s book entitled Council Resolutions 23.

Aquatics Staff Appointments – As requested by Councilmember DeVos, the appointment of the Pool Manager and pool staff had been removed from the consent agenda to be considered separately as allowed by City Council operational rules. DeVos questioned whether there was potential for the pool to open and if it would be an “all or nothing” opening or one with restrictions. Recreation and Leisure Services Director Schugel reported that the decision would be made based on CDC and Minnesota Department of Health guidelines with the decision based on whether any restrictions would make it feasible to open the pool complex. City Administrator Prafke said any decision would be reported to the City Council and suggested the pool may only open for swimming lessons so the staff could control the number of participants. Prafke also indicated appointment of the Pool Manager was still recommended so she could be paid for the recruitment process work she has done so far and so she can develop policies and procedures to be used next year. Prafke pointed out the decision to hire staff shouldn’t be confused with the decision of whether or not to open the pool.

DeVos again expressed his belief the City should “cut our losses” and that from a public safety perspective the pool should not open this year.

Prafke expressed his belief that without guidance from the CDC and MDH, the Council could not have a clear discussion, but indicated staff understood the value of tax dollars and asked for room for he and the Recreation Director to develop a recommendation for pool opening.

Schugel reported his professional association was working with the State on possible restrictions that would allow for opening the pool that were based on CDC and MDH information.

In motion by Johnson (K), seconded by Nowell, Resolution No. 2020-53 entitled “Resolution Appointing Aquatics Staff For 2020” was introduced. Upon roll call, with all in favor, the Resolution was declared passed and adopted. A complete copy of Resolution No. 2020-53 is contained in the City Administrator’s book entitled Council Resolutions 23.

City Administrator Prafke stated he would bring a recommendation on the pool opening to the Council at a future meeting and any recommendation would include any restrictions that would need to be implemented to allow for the opening.

Reports

Mayor’s Report – Mayor Zieman proclaimed May 10-16, 2020 as “Police Officer Week” and May 15, 2020 as “Police Officer Memorial Day” and encouraged residents to thank the City’s Police Officers for their service.

COVID-19 Update – Due to the length of the meeting, no COVID-19 report was provided.

City Administrator Prafke reminded Councilmembers of the Minnesota River Valley Transit Board meeting scheduled for 2:30 on May 12th.

Councilmember Nowell asked whether a moratorium on travel had been placed on staff. Prafke noted conferences and training had either been cancelled or were being held through a virtual medium and staff was not traveling for training at this time.

Councilmember Bruflat asked that with the possibility the Governor's stay at home order would end soon, the City Council be proactive in considering ways the Council can continue to meet virtually. Prafke stated he and the City Attorney had been discussing the State Statutes regarding open meetings and he expected to have discussion at the Council workshop on what will happen.

Closed Session: Sale of Former Wastewater Treatment Ponds – Mayor Zieman presented Prafke's recommendation to go into closed session, as authorized by State Statute, to discuss sale of the City's former wastewater treatment ponds. In motion by Johnson (E), seconded by Nowell, Resolution No. 2020-54 entitled "Resolution Calling For Closed Session" was introduced. Upon roll call, with all in favor, the Resolution was declared passed and adopted. A complete copy of Resolution No. 2020-54 is contained in the City Administrator's book entitled Council Resolutions 23.

The Council adjourned to closed session at 8:34 p.m. to discuss sale of the City's former wastewater treatment ponds property. The Council returned to open session at 8:45 p.m.

There being no further business, a motion was made by Johnson (E), seconded by Bruflat, to adjourn. With all in favor, the motion carried and the meeting adjourned at 8:46 p.m.

Charles Zieman
Mayor

ATTEST:

Todd Prafke
City Administrator