

MOUND CITY COUNCIL MINUTES
June 9, 2020

The City Council of the City of Mound, Hennepin County, Minnesota, met in regular session on Tuesday, June 9, 2020 at 7:00 p.m. remotely using the ZOOM videoconferencing website.

Members present: Mayor Ray Salazar; Council members Phil Velsor, Jeff Bergquist, Paula Larson, and Sherrie Pugh

Members absent: None

Others present: City Manager Eric Hoversten, Fin Dir/Clerk/Treasurer Catherine Pausche, Community Development Director Sarah Smith

Consent agenda: All items listed under the Consent Agenda are considered to be routine in nature by the Council. There will be no separate discussion on these items unless a Councilmember or citizen so requests, in which event it will be removed from the Consent Agenda and considered in normal sequence.

1. Open meeting

Mayor Salazar called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

2. Roll Call

Mayor Salazar read each Council Member's name and they replied 'here.'

3. Pledge of Allegiance

4. Approve agenda

MOTION by Pugh, seconded by Bergquist, to approve the agenda. Roll call vote In Favor: Larson, Velsor, Bergquist, Pugh, Salazar Opposed: None Abstain: None. Motion carried.

5. Consent agenda

MOTION by Larson, seconded by Pugh, to approve the consent agenda. Roll call vote In Favor: Larson, Velsor, Bergquist, Pugh, Salazar Opposed: None Abstain: None. Motion carried.

- A. Approve payment of claims in the amount of \$241,491.21.
- B. Approve minutes: May 26, 2020 Regular Meeting
- C. **RESOLUTION NO. 20-51: RESOLUTION APPROVING PUBLIC LANDS PERMIT FOR 6116 EVERGREEN ROAD**
- D. **RESOLUTION NO. 20-52: RESOLUTION APPROVING CHANGE ORDER NO. 1, 2019 STREET, UTILITY & RETAINING WALL IMPROVEMENTS, CITY PROJECT NO. PW-19-01**
- E. Approve Pay Request #2 in the amount of 133,221.76 to Kusske Construction for 2019 Street, Utility & Retaining Wall Improvements, City Project PW-19-01

- F. Approve Pay Request #2 in the amount of 328,797.85 to Jedlicki, Inc for 2019 Commerce Blvd Watermain Project, Project No. PW-19-04

- G. **RESOLUTION NO. 20-53: RESOLUTION APPROVING CHANGE ORDER NO. 1 FERNSIDE LANE FORCEMAIN IMPROVEMENTS & BAY RIDGE SEWER SERVICE, CITY PROJECT NO. PW-19-03 & PW-19-09**

- H. **RESOLUTION NO. 20-54: RESOLUTION APPROVING CHANGE ORDER NO. 2 FERNSIDE LANE FORCEMAIN IMPROVEMENTS & BAY RIDGE SEWER SERVICE, CITY PROJECT NO. PW-19-03 & PW-19-09**

- I. Approve Pay Request #1 in the amount of 286,894.00 to Widmer Construction for 2019 Fernside Lane Forcemain Improvements and Bay Ridge Sewer Service Project, Project No. PW-19-03 & PW-19-09

6. Comments and suggestions from citizens present on any item not on the agenda.

Council Member Pugh said she wanted to call attention to the significant events over the last two weeks that have changed not only this country but the world. Pugh said on May 25th their family had a ZOOM call to celebrate her aunt's 90th birthday and it was devastating to wake up the next morning to learn George Floyd's life had been taken by Minneapolis police officers that same night. Pugh said it prompted her to call the Police Chiefs of Orono and Minnetrista because her family has lived in area for 54 years and her family has experienced treatment different than that of their white neighbors. Pugh encouraged people not to assume this is just a Minneapolis problem and that the citizens and police officers need to work together to eliminate racism. Pugh announced she has agreed to participate in a June 11 ZOOM town hall meeting with Representative Kelli Morrison to discuss racism and what we should do in the aftermath of George Floyd.

7. Catherine Pausche, Director of Finance and Administration, requesting a discussion on in-person absentee voting for the primary election.

Pausche said Hennepin County Elections has given cities three options for the handling of early absentee voting in the wake of COVID-19: (1) County will manage all early absentee voting and cities will manage election day in-person voting at polling places
(2) City Hall can offer in-person absentee voting for all 46 days prior to the August 11th primary or (3) Cities can offer in-person absentee voting for just the 7-day direct balloting period prior to the election.

Pausche noted that in 2016 when early absentee voting was significantly expanded by making it no excuses and for a longer period of time, she called for the County to handle all early absentee voting for cities less than 10,000 in population, as they do for smaller cities. Pausche said after seeing all the paperwork behind the scenes, she believes it is more efficient for the County to ramp up staffing and facilities and manage it at a centralized location. Pausche also praised the professionalism and dedication of the Hennepin County elections staff.

Pausche said Staff is recommending Option 1 to let the County handle all in-person and mail-in absentee voting based on the low demand for in-person in previous primary elections, the

amount of time it takes to prepare for it, the fact that we are in the middle of a pandemic and have closed City Hall to walk-in traffic to protect the public, staff and our first responders for whom we share space and lastly because there is a reasonable alternative and plenty of time to go through Hennepin County. Pausche stressed this is just for the August 11th primary and noted that if these same options are offered for the November 3rd General Election, then she will recommend Option 3, to open City Hall for the 7-day direct ballot period. Pausche said they will be better able to handle social distancing and wiping down surfaces, etc. on election day vs maintaining it for the 46 or 7 day periods before the election. Pausche said no formal resolution is required, so this is just a discussion to see if the Council has any thoughts or concerns with this direction.

Salazar clarified the difference between mail-in and in-person and Pausche said all the same paperwork is required, it is just saving postage. Pausche said walk-in on Primary Election Day will be 7:00 am – 8:00 pm at St. John’s and the Centennial Building. Pugh expressed concern that if they wanted to do early in-person absentee voting they would have to go all the way to the Government Center downtown. She said she feels Option 3 is the best compromise in case people have a last minute schedule change, noting the bus service is currently suspended. Pausche said she is just suggesting this for the primary and she feels the odds of a last minute schedule change would not be significant. Pugh said there are competitive races and Pausche showed the primary ballot on the screen. Pausche agreed but noted 2018 had competitive races and only 57 people used the in-person option, many she felt as a matter of convenience and the fear of long lines at the polls, which is a non-event in Mound. Pausche said she appealed to the county to allow in-person at the regional centers like Ridgedale and that they are considering it, but could not commit to it as things are so fluid. Pausche said she agrees voters should be given all opportunities to vote, but in 2016 when early voting was expanded, it put a pretty large and questionable burden on small cities when viable mail-in alternatives existed. Pausche noted there is a lot of prep and equipment testing and organizing and weekly/daily couriers and now more effort for safety measures in the time of COVID-19, so she is just asking for reprieve for this election but noted she will certainly support the will of the Council.

Salazar asked how people can get a mail-in ballot. Pausche said applications are available on-line, or by phone or email. Pausche said some cities are putting them in grocery stores but noted the County will not mail them directly. Discussion ensued about organizations that are sending the applications to homes. Pausche said there are back-end controls to ensure the applicant is eligible to vote when an application is received, so controlling the applications is not a big issue. Pausche said there is a lot of duplicative effort on the city and county’s part and she thinks it is reasonable for the City to sit the primary out. Pugh asked how the City will communicate options to the voters – newspapers, website, liquor store, etc. Pausche agreed and said she will work closely with the Laker to convey those options, and will update the city website, newsletter, and our emergency notification system.

Salazar asked how the Council feels. Pugh said she is in favor of Option 3. Pausche showed a graph of what other cities are doing and noted that it is across the board and that the cities that

choosing Options 2 or 3 have dedicated city clerks. Bergquist said he is OK with Option 1 based on the small staff and COVID-19 and is glad to see the County stepping up. Velsor said he is OK with Option 1. Larson verified we are only talking about the August 11th Primary Election and Pausche said yes, and that Pausche just included info on the General Election to show she would definitely recommend Option 3 for the General. Larson confirmed on August 11th there will be in-person voting at the polling places and Pausche said yes. Pausche mentioned the on-line tracking of absentee ballots and they will be focused on letting you know your ballot has been received. Larson said she is OK with Option 1 for the Primary and Salazar agreed. Pausche thanked the Council for the discussion and promised she will be adamant about education.

8. Information/Miscellaneous

A. Comments/reports from Council members/City Manager:
Hoversten said agendas continue to be posted on the city website and staff will continue to push info outward to let people know how they can participate in city government. Hoversten noted the Primary Election on Tuesday, August 11th caused us to move the regular City Council meeting to Wednesday, August 12th.

Salazar noted the slight reprieve with the warmer weather but reminded listeners that we are still under alert. Salazar noted the Governor is lifting some restrictions and he looks forward to more business being open. Salazar applauded and thanked everyone for remaining vigilant in social distancing, wearing masks and making the necessary adjustments the moment requires.

Salazar said regarding council meetings the use of ZOOM is getting better every time, but it is apparent some of us are struggling with internet access. Salazar said although his desire is to get back to the chambers in person soon, there are some obstacles with the technology and he is working with Staff to come up with some options that will preserve social distancing and the safety of all involved.

- B. Reports: Liquor Store – May 2020
Orono Police Department – Mound Activity March 2020
- C. Minutes:
- D. Correspondence: Lake Minnetonka Update and LMCD Preliminary Budget
Hennepin County Public Health Update on COVID 19

9. Adjourn

MOTION by Bergquist, seconded by Larson, to adjourn at 7:50 p.m. Roll call vote In Favor: Larson, Velsor, Bergquist, Pugh, Salazar Opposed: None Abstain: None. Motion carried.

Mayor Raymond J. Salazar

Attest: Catherine Pausche, Clerk