



# CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

Richfield, Minnesota

## Emergency Council Meeting

March 18, 2020

### CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Maria Regan Gonzalez at 5:30 p.m. in the Council Chambers.

*Council Members Present:* Maria Regan Gonzalez, Mayor; Mary Supple; Ben Whalen; and Simon Trautmann

*Council Members Absent:* Edwina Garcia

*Staff Present:* Katie Rodriguez, City Manager; Mary Tietjen, City Attorney; Neil Ruhland, Communications Manager; Jay Henthorne, Chief of Police; Jennifer Anderson, Public Safety Health Administrator; and Blanca Martinez Gavina, Executive Analyst

### PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mayor Regan Gonzalez led the Pledge of Allegiance

<b>Item #1</b>	<b>APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA</b>
----------------	-------------------------------

M/Supple, S/Trautmann to approve the agenda

Motion carried 4-0.

<b>Item #2</b>	<b>APPROVE OF A RESOLUTION ENACTED PURSUANT TO MINNESOTA STATUTES SECTION 12.29 EXTENDING THE PERIOD OF A MAYOR-DECLARED LOCAL EMERGENCY (STAFF REPORT NO. 44)</b>
----------------	--

Mayor Regan Gonzalez presented staff report 44 and asked for staff updates and explanation for the public.

City Manager Rodriguez explained how the resolution would allow for more flexibility and authority on spending. She provided examples of granting Finance Director Regis more authority on purchases up to \$5,000, signing documents electronically, and approving invoices electronically.

City Attorney Tietjen elaborated on the flexibility of the spending during a local emergency. The process allows for a streamlined procedure in purchasing necessary equipment and supplies. Staff is trying to cover the City in a whole gamut of things such as FEMA reimbursement and mutual aid.

M/Supple, S/Whalen to approve the resolution enacted pursuant to Minnesota Statutes Section 12.29 extending the period of a Mayor-declared local emergency.

Council Member Supple thanked all staff involved for the long hours.

Council Member Trautmann echoed thanks and wanted to recognize the quick response staff has provided. He also expressed gratitude to public safety and firefighters for being on the frontlines. He then suggested an amendment to the resolution regarding a failsafe method in revisiting the item in six months.

City Attorney Tietjen recommended moving forward and voting with the motion on the table and then Council Member Trautmann would move for a separate motion to place this item on an agenda in six months.

Motion carried 4-0.

M/Trautmann, S/Supple to place the resolution enacted pursuant to Minnesota Statutes Section 12.29 extending the period of a Mayor-declared local emergency on an agenda in six months to revisit.

Council Member Whalen expressed his confusion on why this motion has been made and why there is a need for the amendment. He is comfortable the way things are expected to proceed and asked Council Member Trautmann for some clarification.

Council Member Trautmann explained it has nothing to do with the character of the City Manager or staff but more of a structural piece for residents to create some certainty.

City Attorney Tietjen clarified there is no harm in passing the motion with the amendment and the resolution will be in effect until the Council takes further action to end it. Having a plan to discuss it in the future has no effect on anything.

City Manager Rodriguez spoke of the weekly check-ins she will have with Mayor Regan Gonzalez to reassess the situation.

Council Member Supple believed it would be a structural piece to have in place and creates good practice.

Motion carried 4-0

<b>Item #3</b>	<b>CITY MANAGER’S REPORT</b>
----------------	------------------------------

City Manager Rodriguez asked Chief Henthorne to provide an update on the recent impacts of the pandemic.

Chief Henthorne explained how everyone is in uncharted territory but emergency pandemic plan is place and being treated as a public health emergency. It involves services they need to extend, suspend or put into place while providing the best services possible during this critical time. They are responding quickly and efficiently to Governor Walz’s executive decisions as soon as they are announced. Public Safety is also on daily conference calls to communicate vital information and build surplus of vital resources to help all communities. All departments within the City are working collaboratively to help resolve the emergency and mitigate the crisis that is affecting our nation, our state and our city. An Informational letter will be going out tomorrow regarding the vulnerable population.

Public Safety Health Administrator Anderson discussed how this will be a long term event and could last 12-18 months. She spoke of how the numbers and statistics are changing rapidly. The City is in a partnership with Bloomington Public Health and has been leaning on them for support. She went on to share they are responding to questions from residents with information provided by the Minnesota Department of Health and the Center for Disease Control.

City Manager Rodriguez expressed gratitude to Bloomington Public Health and also being able to work with the City of Edina. She explained how the City is reassessing situations daily to keep providing services while practicing social distancing. All departments have been asked to create schedules for staff to maintain social distancing and this includes working from home and staggered hours. She has also asked Finance Director Regis to pull together numbers regarding financial impact due to recreation programs being cancelled, passport processing suspended and allowing only for tab renewal by drop box. As of right now, the City has sufficient reserves but departments have been asked to cut down on spending and re-think projects. City Manager Rodriguez voiced her appreciation for department directors and staff for their flexibility as well as the Council in their support and efforts.

Council Member Whalen spoke of his appreciation and asked for reiteration of where residents can find information.

Public Safety Health Administrator Anderson stressed how important it is for residents to stay home, wash your hands regularly, sneeze into your elbow or use a tissue, and to stay home when you are feeling ill. She spoke of how it is equally important to check on your neighbors and to get outside when possible for fresh air and exercise. All this information is available on the Richfield website along with a phone number to a staff member in case services are needed.

Mayor Regan Gonzalez thanked all the staff for their exceptional work around the clock and their creativity to keep crucial services available, community outreach, department heads for their resourcefulness to reduce spending, and public safety for helping keep residents safe. She expressed gratitude for Bloomington Public Health and the partnership that the City has with Bloomington and Edina. She also spoke of the physical bilingual communications going out via Block Captains so communications are not only on social media. Mayor Regan Gonzalez also thanked all the frontline workers including fire, public safety and healthcare. She referenced how the community is coming together to support one another. She also reminded residents to take care of themselves.

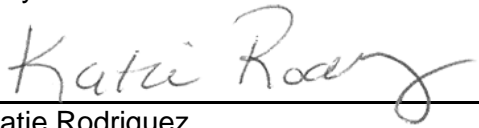
<b>Item #4</b>	<b>ADJOURNMENT</b>
----------------	--------------------

The meeting was adjourned by unanimous consent at 6:01 p.m.

Date Approved: April 14, 2020

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Kelly Wynn  
Senior Office Assistant

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Maria Regan Gonzalez  
Mayor

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Katie Rodriguez  
City Manager