

February 8, 2021 Special City Council Meeting

MINOT CITY COUNCIL - SPECIAL MEETING – FEBRUARY 8, 2021 at 5:30 PM

ROLL CALL:

Members Present:

Evans, Jantzer, Olson (phone), Pitner (phone), Podrygula, Ross, Sipma

Members Absent:

None

Mayor Sipma presiding and led the Council in the Pledge of Allegiance.

DISCUSSION OF LEGISLATIVE ISSUES

Mayor Sipma announced that the Council would be taking a look at pertinent bills under consideration at the State Legislature. He said, they will make sure the direction given to Mr. Goettle and staff is agreed upon by the full Council. He took a moment to describe how different this year is compared to others since they are handling the session while coping with COVID. He then introduced the City's Special Assistant City Attorney, Shane Goettle to present the bills under consideration.

Mr. Goettle pointed out one of the benefits brought on by COVID which is remote access to hearings. They are now able to view hearings they were not able to attend in person. During his presentation, he said, they are one month into the session where the House has 503 Bills and 33 Resolutions and the Senate has 304 Bills and 13 Resolutions. He is tracking and monitoring about 150 bills and resolutions for the City of Minot which impact infrastructure, local finance, property taxes, special assessments, Municipal powers and operations, planning and zoning, public employment and retirement, public safety, and local elections. He described the activities that take place during legislative session such as executing strategies, coordinating, drafting, and submitting written and oral testimony, frequent meetings with key legislators, attending hearings, and coordinating with other cities and the League of Cities.

He then provided details on specific bills important to the City of Minot. He described the bills, explained the City's position including whether testimony was given, and gave the status. After describing several of the bills, he responded to questions from the Council.

After Mr. Goettle's presentation, Mayor Sipma asked him to explain the crossover process. Mr. Goettle said, if a bill was defeated, then it is done. If passed, the bills will be taken up in March in the other Chamber. They will hold hearings within the policy committee and appropriations committees and bills will be discussed more thoroughly in the second Chamber. He also said it is possible for bills to be withdrawn or for amendments to be added from defeated bills.

Mayor Sipma reminded everyone, there is an update from ND League of Cities every Friday at 2:00 pm. That conference call is then followed by a meeting between the Mayor, City Manager, and Mr. Goettle to discuss the following week and strategize testimony.

Alderman Ross requested the Mayor relay information to the rest of the Council after the strategy meeting so they are better able to participate and are prepared to answer questions.

The Council commented on specific issues but all agreed on the direction taken by Mr. Goettle and City staff. They discussed the growing trend opposing local government control. The bills attempting to strip powers from local governments or control the way property taxes are levied are of increasing concern to local governments. Without those revenue streams, communities wouldn't be able to provide core services so it is important to keep an eye on bills that impact municipalities. The fiscal impact is not always included in bills but should be considered before stripping local authority.

Mayor Sipma also mentioned the Legislative Forum the Chamber EDC is holding on February 20th. It will be an in-person event taking place at the State Fairgrounds.

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Alderwoman Olson asked how the Council can help and what is the most influential method to use.

Mayor Sipma said, although virtual testimony is an option, they prefer appearances in person. He also said, Legislators are responsive to direct emails.

Mr. Goettle emphasized the impact of engaging personally with Legislators and said a stroll around the Chambers provides opportunities for one on one conversations. He also assured that the City of Minot is his client and he represents the client's best interests, not his own.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 6:42 pm.

ATTEST: _____
Kelly Matalka, City Clerk

APPROVED: _____
Shaun Sipma, Mayor