

March 19, 2020 Special City Council Meeting

MINOT CITY COUNCIL – SPECIAL MEETING – MARCH 19, 2020 AT 3:30 P.M.

ROLL CALL

Members Present:

Jantzer, Olson, Pitner (phone), Podrygula (phone), Sipma, Straight, Wolsky

Members Absent:

None

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

RESOLUTION NO. 3660 - TO ADDRESS EMPLOYEE ABSENCES DUE TO COVID-19 PANDEMIC – APPROVED

Alderman Jantzer moved the City Council adopt resolution no. 3660 to supersede resolution no. 3654 addressing employee absence due to COVID-19 Pandemic, specifically, to address Emergency Pay. Motion seconded by Alderman Olson.

Alderman Jantzer asked about section (g) regarding employees caring for children due to school and/or daycare closures. He asked if there were conditions or if it was available to all employees without childcare.

Mayor Sipma said, there will be daycare available for emergency personnel including Police and Fire beginning the next week. This topic was highly discussed throughout different departments and there will be work from home options available.

The HR Director stated, this resolution is similar to resolutions passed by Grand Forks and Fargo.

Alderman Jantzer asked how many employees would be affected by school closures, to which the HR Director said, they are still processing that information.

Alderman Olson pointed out, it would only affect parents of younger children, under 12, who could not be left alone.

Alderman Podrygula said it is a generous policy and sets a good model for other organizations.

City Manager Barry pointed out, they intend to have as many employees as possible work from home. Staff will still be responsible for assignments so departments are identifying personnel who can work from home and identifying technological resources required.

Alderman Wolsky commended staff on bringing the resolution forward. He said it is an extension of good faith during these unique circumstances.

Mr. Barry also mentioned, employees will be specifically tracking their time as emergency pay in case reimbursement applies through Federal assistance.

Alderman Straight asked about childcare during the summer how that differs from school being cancelled now.

The Mayor said, they would take things day by day. So far, the daycare for emergency personnel is a two-week plan.

The City Attorney stated, the proposed resolution could be retroactive as of March 16th, the date the previous resolution, no. 3654, was approved.

Alderman Jantzer agreed to include the retroactive date in his motion. Alderman Olson as the second, agreed.

Whereupon a vote was taken on the above motion by Alderman Jantzer, seconded by Alderman Olson and carried by the following roll call vote: ayes: Jantzer, Olson, Pitner, Podrygula, Sipma, Straight, Wolsky; nays: none.

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ORDINANCE NO. 5486 - ENACTING A NEW DIVISION OF CHAPTER 2, ARTICLE II, TO BE TITLED "DISASTER AND EMERGENCY" – FIRST READING – APPROVED

Mayor Sipma stated, the proposed ordinance grants the Mayor certain powers during a declared emergency in order to expedite decisions without having to call special meetings of the City Council. He said, a similar ordinance was brought forward during the 2011 flood but was denied for being too overreaching.

Alderman Wolsky moved the City Council place ordinance no. 5486 on first reading enacting a new division of Chapter 2, Article II, to be titled "Disaster and Emergency" which shall authorize the Mayor to declare a local disaster or emergency and to provide for the necessary organization, powers, and authority to prepare for, respond to, and recover from such declared local disasters or emergencies which affect the health, security, safety, or property of the city and its residents. Motion seconded by Alderman Olson and carried unanimously.

Alderman Olson requested the City Council be kept informed of any decisions the Mayor makes.

Mayor Sipma responded by saying, of course, a critical aspect of emergency situations is that everyone be informed. He explained the difference between this pandemic and the flood in 2011 is that the pandemic is changing moment to moment. They are looking at operational changes and most of the direction is coming from the State Department of Health and First District Health Unit. The Mayor also said, they are still able to call Council meetings for large decisions.

Alderman Wolsky requested the Mayor engage the Council as much as possible. He told the Mayor to move fast, move aggressively, move first, and move without regret. He said, the mission is to save lives and that he would support the Mayor's decisions and stay out of the way.

Alderman Podrygula said the ordinance seems warranted given the nature of this emergency but he has reservations about the impact to civil rights. He requested the Mayor consult with at least one other Alderman for another set of eyes on issues. Procedures have been concerning and they need flexibility so he is glad to see measures being taken.

Alderman Pitner agreed with the other Aldermen and asked if there is an expiration to the powers in the ordinance.

The City Attorney stated, they can place an expiration but after the ordinance is approved on second reading they can always make adjustments. She added, there are limitations within the ordinance stating the declaration of a local disaster or emergency shall be in effect for up to 30 days. It would then be up to City Council to approve an extension. She further clarified, this authority is only granted after an emergency has been declared and there are limitations to those declarations as well.

Alderman Wolsky moved the City Council pass ordinance no. 5486 on first reading. Motion seconded by Alderman Olson and carried by the following roll call vote: ayes: Jantzer, Olson, Pitner, Podrygula, Sipma, Straight, Wolsky; nays: none.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Alderman Pitner moved the City Council meeting be adjourned. Motion seconded by Alderman Jantzer and carried unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 3:52 pm.

ATTEST: _____
Kelly Matalka, City Clerk

APPROVED: _____
Shaun Sipma, Mayor