

Kearney, Nebraska
April 3, 2020
12:00 p.m.

A special meeting of the City Council of Kearney, Nebraska, occurred at 12:00 p.m. on April 3, 2020 and was convened via public video and teleconference means. The meeting was open to the public via video and teleconference means pursuant to the Governor's Executive Order No. 20-03 issued on March 17, 2020. Present via video and teleconference means were: Stanley A. Clouse, President of the Council; Lauren Brandt, City Clerk; Council Members Randy Buschkoetter, Bruce Lear, Tami James Moore and Jonathan Nikkila. Absent: None. Michael Morgan, City Manager; Michael Tye, City Attorney; Wendell Wessels, Director of Finance; Eric Hellriegel, Assistant City Manager; Bryan Waugh, Chief of Police; Nate Mollring, Director of Information Technology; Mike Young, Captain of Operations; Peggy Eynetich, Deputy City Clerk; and Dan Lillis, Engineering Assistant II, were also present via video and teleconference means. Brandon Cortes with NTV News and Kit Cloninger with Local 4 News were in attendance along with several members from the public who attended through video and teleconference means.

Notice of the meeting was given in advance thereof by publication in the Kearney Hub, the designated method for giving notice, a copy of the proof of publication being attached to these minutes. Advance notice of the meeting was also given to the City Council and a copy of their acknowledgment or receipt of such notice is attached to these minutes. Availability of the Agenda was communicated in the advance notice and in the notice to the Mayor and City Council. All proceedings hereafter shown were taken while the meeting was open to the public via video and teleconference means.

I. ROUTINE BUSINESS

ANNOUNCEMENT

Mayor Clouse announced that in accordance with Section 84-1412 of the Nebraska Revised Statutes, a current copy of the Open Meetings Act is available for review and is posted on the wall of the Council Chambers and is also available on the City of Kearney website under the City Clerk.

REJECT BIDS RECEIVED FOR 2020 PART 2 IMPROVEMENTS; 31ST STREET FROM D AVENUE TO G AVENUE

Agenda Items 3 and 4 can be discussed together but voted on separately.

Lauren Brandt, City Clerk, stated on Tuesday, March 24, 2020 the City received bids for 2020 Part 2 Improvements. After further review and due to the current COVID-19 conditions City staff believes that due to the negative fiscal impact and uncertainty of the duration of the current situation as well as the reallocation of future project funding, it is best to reject all bids received at this time.

Additionally, there are currently two projects under bid, 2020 Part 1 Improvements and 2020 Part 4 Improvements, that need to be cancelled due to the same issues as the 2020

Part 2 Improvements as well as the limited availability for the City to issue debt for said improvements as bonds are not currently being bought. Based on these concerns City staff is requesting that 2020 Part 1 Improvements and 2020 Part 4 Improvements bid openings that were to occur in April be cancelled.

Moved by Moore seconded by Lear to approve rejecting the bids received for 2020 Part 2 Improvements; 31st Street from D Avenue to G Avenue. Roll call resulted as follows: Aye: Clouse, Nikkila, Moore, Buschkoetter, Lear. Nay: None. Motion carried.

CANCEL SCHEDULED BID OPENINGS FOR 2020 PART 1 IMPROVEMENTS FOR THE REMOVAL AND REPLACEMENT OF N AVENUE FROM 28TH STREET TO 39TH STREET AND THE 2020 PART 3 IMPROVEMENTS; 2ND AVENUE OVERPASS REPAIRS

Agenda Items 3 and 4 can be discussed together but voted on separately.

Moved by Lear seconded by Buschkoetter to approve cancelling the scheduled bid openings for the 2020 Part 1 Improvements for the removal and replacement of N Avenue from 28th Street to 39th Street and the 2020 Part 3 Improvements; 2nd Avenue Overpass Repairs. Roll call resulted as follows: Aye: Clouse, Moore, Buschkoetter, Lear, Nikkila. Nay: None. Motion carried.

APPOINTMENT OF DR. ROBERT MESSBARGER TO SERVE AS CITY PHYSICIAN

Michael Morgan, City Manager, stated City Code provides for a City Physician; this agenda item is to formerly designate Dr. Robert Messbarger as the City Physician. Dr. Messbarger will assist the City with HR issues as well as providing guidance and recommendations throughout the COVID-19 crisis.

Moved by Buschkoetter seconded by Clouse to approve the appointment of Dr. Robert Messbarger to serve as City Physician. Roll call resulted as follows: Aye: Clouse, Buschkoetter, Lear, Nikkila, Moore. Nay: None. Motion carried.

CITY OF KEARNEY COVID-19 UPDATE

Mayor Clouse stated during this time, we as a community are faced with concern, uncertainty and a challenge unlike any other we have ever faced. But there is hope and certainty in what we can do to meet the challenge. All of us can do our part by simply staying home, washing our hands and practicing social distancing. These measures are proven and everyone has the capability and resources to take these basic steps.

WHAT ARE WE DOING?

- Your city government is in great shape and we are confident that we will continue to meet the essential needs of our citizens including public safety, water and sewer and sanitation services.
- As an employer we are practicing the recommended guidelines to ensure the safety and health of our employees including establishing remote work sites and rotating employees in the office.

- Constantly evaluating on how we can increase electronic communication, billing and potential new on-line services.
- Our finances are strong due to conservative and excellent fiscal management that includes several millions in reserve accounts for situations like this.
- Additionally, to boost our reserves we have paused most major capital projects and equipment that is not grant funded or funded with donations.
- Also, we are evaluating closely all staff vacancies and eliminated all travel and training.
- Monitoring financial assistance that maybe available from federal and state agencies.
- We will continue to assist financially Hot Meals to provide nutrition for our community.
- We are communicating with Two Rivers Health Department and local hospitals frequently to assess the situation and seek their input on how we can assist.
- Based on constantly adjusting non-essential city services and related operations based on recommendations, stages of the virus and financial impacts.
- Appointed City Physician to educate and guide staff as appropriate.

WHAT ELSE CAN YOU DO?

- Reach out to those you know who are isolated or may be at high risk. Ask how they are doing and check in with them regularly.
- Start a group text with your neighbors and friends to keep up on one another's well being and mental health.
- If available, donate to area hospitals Level 3 or surgery masks.
- Prepare for fraud attempts to be on the rise and for residents to be cautious.
- Continue to utilize the covid-19@kearneygov.org for questions related to the coronavirus.
- Check the City's Home Page and Facebook to keep updated.
- Follow the rules and be patient and kind as we face this challenge.

Mr. Morgan stated the City has been and continues working with citizens by extending payments that are past due and not shutting essential City services off. Mr. Morgan further thanked the contractor community for working with the City by doing visual inspections on their projects. Mr. Morgan also thanked City Council and City staff for their continuing efforts through the COVID-19 crisis.

VII. REPORTS

City Council Member, Jonathan Nikkila, questioned how much the City of Kearney has assisted Hot Meals, USA? Mr. Morgan stated the City has given \$30,000.00 to Hot Meals, USA to date. Council Member Nikkila thanked City staff and City Council for all they are doing.

City Council Member, Tami Moore, also thanked City staff and reminded citizens there may be tough times ahead but we are Nebraskans and have the grit to get through this.

Council Member, Randy Buschkoetter, agreed with Council Member Moore's comment

that Nebraskans do have grit. Council Member Buschkoetter reminded citizens to remember those that are developmentally challenged in our community as they may now be living more independently due to distancing regulations. Mr. Buschkoetter encouraged citizens to reach out to their neighbors and others to check on them throughout this time.

Mayor Clouse thanked everyone for their patience and stated healthcare officials are stating citizens are still a few weeks out from the wave of what is being seen; therefore, everyone needs to make sure to do their part in stopping the spread of COVID-19. Mayor Clouse further stated both special and regular scheduled Council meetings will continue in this format. Mayor Clouse thanked the local media for their support and further encouraged members of the media to follow-up with the City regarding any questions they may have. Mayor Clouse extended prayers to those who currently have COVID-19 and encouraged the community to help each other out and be supportive of one another.

City Clerk Lauren Brandt read a question sent in by a citizen during the meeting via the teleconference chat feature: "For some of the people I've talked with, there is some concern of unnecessary shopping at retail stores that sell both essential and non-essential items; is it possible a statement could be given, strong encouragement, for residents not to shop unless necessary to help protect both citizens and the retail workers"? Police Chief Bryan Waugh stated the Kearney Police Department has also received similar concerns. Chief Waugh stated a meeting is scheduled this afternoon with local retailers where they will encourage retailers and their Loss Prevention Teams to limit hours and possibly limit parking in parking lots to allow fewer people into stores.

Brandon Cortes with NTV News stated he has been informed that UNK may house people with COVID-19 or recovering from COVID-19 in some of UNK's vacated dorms. Mr. Cortes wondered if that was something still planned or something that may be discussed in the future? Mayor Clouse stated Governor Ricketts has mentioned in his daily briefings the State's agreement with the University system granting the ability to house people in dorms as needed; however, this agreement is between the State of Nebraska and the University system and does not include the City of Kearney. Mr. Morgan stated some of the hotels are also working with quarantine individuals in healthcare and law enforcement fields that may have people at home with compromised immune systems.

Kit Cloninger with Local 4 News asked for an expanded explanation regarding the appointment of a City Physician. Mr. Morgan stated that it is a standard practice that has been in City Code; the action taken today formally appointed a City Physician. Mayor Clouse stated many City's have a Board of Health; this appoints a City Physician, Dr. Robert Messbarger, as one of the members of the Board for not only what is facing the City today but also any future events where the Board may be needed. The Board of Health for the City of Kearney includes the Chairman of Council (Mayor), Vice-Chairman of Council, Chief of Police, City Manager and a City Physician that is appointed by City Council.

Mr. Morgan stated the City has been working directly with local hospitals on a weekly and sometimes twice weekly basis and also requested citizens support our healthcare workers for all the work they have been doing.

Mayor Clouse also expressed appreciation of Chief Waugh and all he is doing along.

VIII. ADJOURN

Moved by Clouse seconded by Nikkila that Council adjourn at 12:29 p.m. Roll call resulted as follows: Aye: Clouse, Lear, Nikkila, Moore, Buschkoetter. Nay: None. Motion carried.

ATTEST:

**STANLEY A. CLOUSE
PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL
AND EX-OFFICIO MAYOR**

**LAUREN BRANDT
CITY CLERK**