

MINUTES OF THE CITY COUNCIL, CITY OF CONWAY, ARKANSAS

Conway, Arkansas
Tuesday, 6:30 pm
April 14, 2020

On this date the City Council of the City of Conway, Arkansas met in regular session. ***Due to restrictions imposed because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the City Council meeting was held via Facebook Live on the City of Conway, Arkansas Facebook page.*** The following members being a quorum were present online and acting: Councilman Hawkins, Councilman Grimes, Councilwoman Mehl, Councilman Jones, Councilwoman Isby, Councilman Pruitt, Councilwoman Smith, and Councilman Ledbetter. Also, present and acting: Mayor Bart Castleberry, City Clerk Michael Garrett and City Attorney Chuck Clawson.

Call to Order: Mayor Bart Castleberry

Roll Call: Michael O. Garrett, City Clerk

Mayor Castleberry opened the meeting and thanked Aaron Knight, Director of IT and his department for all their work setting up the online meetings and providing resources for a number of City employees to work from home.

Report of Standing Committees:

A. New Business

1. Consideration to set a date for a special City Council meeting.

Mayor Castleberry asked the Council to schedule a special meeting on April 21, 2020 to discuss items for the Planning Commission and any other items to be brought before the Council. Councilwoman Smith made a motion to allow a special Council meeting and Councilwoman Mehl seconded it. The motion passed 8-0.

2. Brief update from Mayor Castleberry.

Mayor Castleberry stated that all department heads are meeting each morning at 9:00 via Microsoft Teams, which allows them to stay connected and on top of issues within the City. He asked several heads of departments to give a brief report on conditions within their departments. He thanked the department heads for adhering diligently to the spending freeze that he put in place on March 1. Conway Fire Chief Mike Winter, reported that his department is still responding to calls but on a "scaled back" level, allowing MEMS to go out to help conserve personal protective equipment. Conway Police Chief Jody Spradlin said that much of his department's work is being done through email and over the phone, however the records department is still open and police are still patrolling. He added that they have not reduced very many services other than fingerprinting cards and the drug takeback program. He said that access to CEOC is limited to dispatchers and supervisors only in an effort to limit exposure to these critical first responders. Joe Hopper of the Sanitation Department thanked the Procurement Department and the Physical Plant for helping his department secure PPE for the sanitation employees. He added that the Sanitation staff has been scaled back to about 60 and they have also reduced services such as recycling and access to the Convenience Center at the landfill. He said that the goal for his department is to protect the general public and also City employees. Jack Bell of the Conway Municipal Airport stated that the airport is open for business. The main lobby is closed to the public but pilot lounge is open and fuel sales are continuing, though at a reduced level. James Walden of the Planning & Development Department reported that working remotely has worked very well for his department. He added that the e-file system for filing plats that the County has set up has been very beneficial and will likely be used going forward. Approval processes that do not require a public hearing have temporarily been handled administratively. He added that the Mayor's executive orders easing some of the zoning restrictions have been helpful to the most vulnerable of businesses right now, such as hotels and restaurants. Finley Vinson, of the Transportation Department stated that engineers have transitioned to working from home and also that lighter traffic on the streets has allowed road crews to work faster. He added that the project on Van Ronkle was completed and open to traffic this week. He said that they are continuing to respond

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to calls as usual, but that crews are limited to 10 people or less. Spencer Clawson of the Physical Plant stated that his employees are taking extra measures to ensure the City buildings and grounds are clean and disinfected regularly. Chuck Clawson, City Attorney reported that his office is rotating staff and utilizing the administrative days on Thursdays, as well as working from home, which is going well. He stated that all calls to the City Attorney's office are being returned within a 24 hour period and all attorneys are available to any department within the City. He added that they have adopted some new procedures to deal with the changes in the courts system which is only holding essential hearings and all jury trials have been cancelled. He said he has been working with attorneys around the state to stay in a good position and to accomplish the Mayor's goal of keeping the staff and general public safe, and also helping businesses within the City during this difficult time. Aaron Knight, Director of IT reported that the City is well-equipped to keep employees working remotely and to allow City Council, Boards and Commissions to meet live via several platforms available. Tyler Winningham, CFO reported that while it is still too early to evaluate the financial impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the City, the reserves in place were strong and he felt the City was in a good position at the present time.

There was no further discussion. The meeting was adjourned.

Adjournment-----

PASSED this 14th day of April 2020

APPROVED:

Mayor Bart Castleberry

City Clerk Michael O. Garrett