

Moscow City Council



Regular Meeting ~Minutes~

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Laurie M. Hopkins
City Clerk

208.883.7015

Thursday, March 26, 2020

10:00 AM

Council Chambers
206 E. Third St.

The meeting was called to order at 10:03 a.m.

PRESENT: Mayor Bill Lambert, Art Bettge, Sandra Kelly, Maureen Laflin (video), Brandy Sullivan (video), Gina Taruscio, Anne Zabala (video)

STAFF: Gary J. Riedner, Mia Bautista (video), James Fry, Jen Pfiffner (video), Bill Belknap (video), Tyler Palmer (video)

Riedner explained this is an emergency meeting according to Idaho Code 74-204(2) which allows in cases of emergency's, limited notice, in this case COVID-19 outbreak.

AGENDA

1. Resolution to Extend Emergency Order 20-02 - Gary J. Riedner

Pursuant to Moscow City Code Title 1, Chapter 11, Section 5(B), Mayor Lambert issued Emergency Order 20-02, restricting mass gatherings, schools, churches, gyms, tattoo parlors, barber shops and salons within the City of Moscow for a period of seven (7) days. Pursuant to Idaho Code section 46-1011, and MCC 1-11-5(B). The attached Resolution extends Emergency Order 20-02 until May 5, 2020.

PROPOSED ACTIONS: Adopt the Resolution extending Emergency Order 20-02 until May 5, 2020, or take such other action deemed appropriate.

Over the course of the last week, more COVID-19 outbreaks have occurred in Idaho and Washington, with two confirmed in Whitman County in the last couple days. Riedner introduced the item as written above and read Emergency Order 20-02. Governor Little issued an order of emergency and indicated there would be an order issued by Health and Welfare. That order was issued and was a self-isolation order for the state of Idaho. That order has been posted on the city website. Many of the items in the mayor's emergency order will be covered by the governor's order which is the reason for the extension. Bettge moved and Kelly seconded to adopt the resolution extending Emergency Order 20-02 until May 5, 2020. Taruscio pointed out approximately half of the council are small business owners and are affected by this order. She feels it is time to pull together as a community to help minimize affects to individuals and businesses. Kelly added non-profits to that list and feels this is the right thing to do as health needs to come first. Sullivan shared that on March 16, independent restaurant owners across the state (15 from Moscow) sent a letter to the governor requesting he take action in closing restaurants for sit down service, believing this would be the best thing both short and long term. Knowing this action would affect them economically, there was still support from local restaurants. Zabala and Laflin support the resolution. Roll Call Vote: Ayes: Unanimous. Nays: None. Abstentions: None. Motion carried.

Mayor Lambert said there is a hotline if you have symptoms you can call and discuss with medical professionals. The number is 208-883-4109. Local citizens are making homemade masks.

REPORTS

City Supervisor Update – All City facilities are closed and have moved to Tier 3 of the pandemic plan. Utility bills need to be paid online or delivered to the mail boxes provided at Rosauers and in the parking lot of City Hall. Essential services will continue as will utility services. Utility billing staff will be available by phone Monday through Thursday, 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. Staff is continuously updating the City website with COVID-19 information. The Mayor called a recess at 10:28 a.m. and reconvened at 10:37 a.m. Riedner continued saying staff, Mayor and Council leadership have been discussing areas for possible relief for Moscow citizens. Staff can determine financial impact to City but city services need to continue with any proposal. Relief options should be ready for review at the April 6 Council meeting. No shut off of city utilities during emergency orders. May 5 was determined as there is a regular council meeting May 4 and council can determine continuation if necessary. There are provisions in both orders that if things change, the orders can be terminated early. There has been a generous offer by a patron to pay someone else's utility bill to someone that is not able to pay. The City has the ability to take donations but the process needs to be vetted. Another issue discussed is reduction of property taxes. The City cannot reduce property taxes. The levy is submitted to the County in September of the year prior to the year being levied. Current taxes were put in place in September 2019 and many have already been paid or in the process of being paid. Citizens can talk to the county commissioners as the board of equalization regarding tax relief. Staff is looking into ways to provide services to the citizens such as online activities for the youth through the P&R Department. There are press releases on the city website regarding federal and state programs for relief and Gina Taruscio, Executive Director of PEP can also assist with those. City staff time spent on COVID-19 is being logged for the anticipation of a grant program to provide reimbursement to cities.

Mayor Lambert wanted to thank citizens for stepping up for other citizens and making things happen in Moscow. Taruscio thanked staff for assisting the other Latah County cities in navigating through this tough time. Sullivan thanked citizens as well for supporting neighbors and businesses. She also thanked staff for adjusting to the changes and making sure essential services continue. Laflin asked if there is a centralized location for those without Facebook. Riedner said press releases have been going out regularly with information. The Chamber of Commerce also has information including a list of businesses that are still available, not only in Moscow but also regional information.

ADJOURN TO EXECUTIVE SESSION PER IDAHO CODE 74-206 (1)(B) AND (1)(F) - THE MEETING WILL NOT RECONVENE.

Bettge moved and Taruscio seconded to adjourn to Executive Session at 10:51 a.m.

ATTEST:


Laurie M. Hopkins, City Clerk





Bill Lambert, Mayor