

CLEARFIELD CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES  
6:00 P.M. WORK SESSION  
March 17, 2020

City Building  
55 South State Street  
Multi-Purpose Room, Second Floor  
Clearfield City, Utah

PRESIDING:	Mark Shepherd	Mayor
PRESENT:	Nike Peterson	Councilmember
	Vern Phipps	Councilmember
	Tim Roper	Councilmember
	Karece Thompson	Councilmember
PRESENT VIA ZOOM MEETING:	Kent Bush	Councilmember
STAFF PRESENT:	JJ Allen	City Manager
	Summer Palmer	Assistant City Manager
	Stuart Williams	City Attorney
	Kelly Bennett	Police Chief
	Adam Favero	Public Works Director
	Eric Howes	Community Services Director
	Spencer Brimley	Community Development Director
	Rich Knapp	Finance Manager
	John Meek	Emergency Manager
	Trevor Cahoon	Communications Coordinator
	Nancy Dean	City Recorder

VISITORS: Ruth Jones

Mayor Shepherd called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m.

Councilmember Thompson arrived at 6:06 p.m.

DISCUSSION ON EMERGENCY RESPONSE MEASURES

JJ Allen, City Manager, explained the world was experiencing unprecedented times due to the infectious disease COVID-19 Novel Coronavirus. He noted the guidelines and regulations were changing every day. He pointed out that staff was adjusting operations as best as possible.

*External Efforts with the Community*

Mr. Allen reported the City had closed two facilities so far, the Clearfield Aquatic and Fitness Center and the Arts Center; and stopped all recreation and arts programs. He indicated the City building was currently open but some services such as finger printing had been discontinued. He

acknowledged there was a reduction in the amount of traffic from the public coming to the City building likely due to the guidelines in place by the Utah State Governor and President of the United States. Mr. Allen advised that the Justice Court was open following an order from the Utah Supreme Court. Stuart Williams, City Attorney, mentioned the Administrative Office of the Courts already had a pandemic protocol in place; however, due to the many guidelines recently issued, the Chief Supreme Court Justice issued an order on March 14, 2020 addressing all courts which outlined how each would conduct business. He continued at the justice court level the instruction was for most cases to be rescheduled unless someone was in custody or limited other circumstances. He added the optimal method for any necessary hearings would be via telephone or video. Summer Palmer, Assistant City Manager, reported on staffing of the court which included alternating shifts for employee safety while allowing for staffing levels that would continue to meet the needs of Judge Brower.

Trevor Cahoon, Communications Coordinator, reviewed the ongoing communication outreach of the City. He mentioned staff other than himself were working remotely. He stated staff had been working with various departments to determine how to best address communication items. Mr. Cahoon reported thus far the biggest efforts had been to announce closures, cancellations, or postponement for various activities. He indicated staff would be working to promote online and phone access to services typically done at the Customer Service Center and encouraging the phone first approach for departments including police. He explained the City was receiving a lot of information from the health department and schools which could be communicated; however, staff was going through it and sharing information while at the same time being careful not to cause fatigue for the residents. Mr. Cahoon noted staff was working with the recreation department to find ways to promote fun at home. He pointed out all communication updates would be coordinated with department heads and staff would work diligently to get information out to the public through social media, email and the City's text messaging base as quickly as possible.

Mr. Allen asked if there were any questions about how external efforts with the community had been going thus far. Councilmember Phipps complimented how it was being handled.

Councilmember Peterson questioned what ways were being considered to reach out to the older population that was less engaged with social media. Mr. Cahoon responded the City could do an all-City postcard or other direct mailers and even utilize messaging through the utility bills at the end of the month. Mr. Allen indicated with the fluid situation there could be a struggle to share information that would not change over a few weeks. There was a discussion about providing the City's contact numbers, using the youth of neighborhoods to get the word out among residents, and the opportunity for community building despite social distancing; however, the challenge was in prioritizing everything.

Councilmember Peterson suggested there could be ways of virtual community building. There was a discussion about options for virtual activities which promoted fitness or ways to participate in a different style of searching the City.

### *Internal Efforts with Employees*

Mr. Allen stated currently there was not an order in place to limit staff. He noted staff affected by closed functions were provided opportunities for work hours by assisting with disinfecting areas. He explained it was possible the City might get to the point that it would need to shut down except for essential personnel. He reported the administrative team had identified essential personnel and were prepared if quarantines were mandated. He indicated the City was encouraging remote work where possible but it would not be possible for all positions. He acknowledged there had been many questions and considerations given related to personnel and use of leave hours. Ms. Palmer stated staff would continue to work on creative, safe ways to keep employees working productively. She mentioned plans were to continue allowing staff opportunities to work remotely when possible. She pointed out there was a need to be sensitive to residents not working and earning a paycheck; consequently, there was a need to ensure tax dollars would be spent responsibly during this time period. Mr. Allen noted one of the accommodations that would be fitting for the circumstances regarding employee leave use would be a modification to the policy permitting an employee to go in the negative in their leave bank with the ability to repay it in the future. There was a discussion about the employees who might have contact with COVID-19 and policies that were in place to protect employment through the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA), which would be coordinated with Human Resources.

Councilmember Peterson wondered what was determined as the number of essential staff if there continued to be shut downs. Mr. Allen responded the City was operating as directed by higher governmental authorities; however, those employees identified as essential personnel would be those necessary to operate the emergency operations center if it were activated as well as the dispatch center, law enforcement, utilities, facilities, IT and a building official would likely remain on the list to keep things operational within the City.

### *The Question of Declaring a Local Emergency*

Mr. Allen stated there had been some counties within the State that had already taken the step to issue a declaration of emergency; however, he expressed his opinion that if the City were to declare a local emergency it should be done in concert with Davis County and the Davis County Health Department. John Meek, Emergency Manager, indicated Davis County Health Department was continuing to remind everyone about the importance of hand washing efforts, but hoped to keep the economy as active as possible by keeping things open. There was a discussion about the fluid nature of the situation including the recent announcement earlier in the day to shut down dine-in restaurants, allowing only online ordering or drive-thru services statewide.

Councilmember Thompson asked if there was a way the City could get access to the pandemic preparedness resources and receive trainings such as the Nonpharmaceutical Intervention (NPI) Training 101. Mr. Meek answered he would do more research about the training and try to arrange it. Mr. Allen stated he found the website Councilmember Thompson was referring to and would look into it further. Mr. Meek added if his assistance was necessary he would help.

Mr. Allen stated a declaration of an emergency would allow emergency powers, flexibility with the open and public meetings act, and it could open doors for FEMA funding, if available. He reiterated it would be important to coordinate any efforts regarding a declaration of an emergency with the County and Davis County Health Department and also continue to follow direction from the State.

### *Handling Public Meetings*

Mr. Allen reported the next City Council meeting was planned for March 31, 2020; however, since Planning Commission interviews were scheduled for that meeting it would be rescheduled. He indicated the next policy meeting scheduled would be April 14, 2020. Nancy Dean, City Recorder, indicated there were some public hearings scheduled for that meeting and so there would be a work session meeting on April 7, 2020 to discuss those items.

Mr. Allen stated staff would continue to monitor the situation and see if electronic participation at future meetings for the Council, Planning Commission, and Parks and Recreation Commission was necessary. There was a discussion about options for electronic meetings that would accommodate public participation during the meetings. Mr. Cahoon explained Facebook Live, Zoom Meetings, or a GoToMeeting would be options to explore.

Ms. Dean explained it would be important to put some controls in place so that the public desiring to comment were allowed the opportunity; yet, not have public comments disrupt the flow of the meeting. There was a discussion about placing forms on the City's website ahead of time to allow for public comments that could be shared during a virtual meeting and how that would work, messaging efforts needed in advance to encourage participation during meetings, ensuring laws were followed, and taking time to update notices with language reflecting the current restraints and practice. There was also discussion about the possibility of continuing to allow public comment virtually on a permanent basis.

Mr. Allen stated staff would work on the details and address the items mentioned in regards to public meetings. He confirmed all upcoming meetings would not resume until April which would allow some time to get any new processes in place.

### *Impact if an Economic Recession*

Mr. Allen commented so much of the economic impact was yet to be determined but there would likely be an impact in the current budget year and next year fiscal year 2021 (FY21). He expressed appreciation to the Council for allowing staff time to rework the budget for FY21 before it was presented because the initial budget was a progressive budget and it needed to be reworked with a more conservative approach. Mr. Allen expressed concern there was the possibility that sales tax projections could be reduced between 10 and 20 percent.

He stated if the City were to declare a state of emergency then the following measures could be utilized: a hiring freeze, rescind employment offers, implement staffing reductions, freeze travel especially out of state, hold off on capital projects, and hold off on studies from consultants until things settled.

Rich Knapp, Finance Manager, said extreme measures had been discussed as staff but it would be prudent to wait on further discussions to see if they would be necessary. He reported the FY20 budget should be okay because the City had been doing really well prior to the pandemic. He noted last year the Council had talked about the property tax maneuver to keep the tax rate the same to offset the GO Bond but that would only be an option available for half the year. He indicated initially it was discussed to use the tax rate funding towards capital projects; however, the new tactic would likely be needed to keep operations going. Mr. Knapp suggested a 10 percent reduction in sales tax revenues would be fairly optimistic for the FY21 budget. He questioned if the Council would be willing to use the City's reserves for short term operations. Mr. Allen commented it was a theoretical question to be considering. Mayor Shepherd responded there was no real answer yet because it was just too early to tell how the economy would respond to the pandemic. He reported the stock market had taken a massive hit. He added there were various industries currently laying off its work force so that could be a potential hit for the City as well.

Councilmember Thompson asked what would be the advantage of preparing a recessionary budget. He appreciated the optimism of staff but expressed his preference to have a just in case measure or recessionary budget already in mind. Mr. Knapp answered staff was preparing the budget by identifying items that could be pulled out and if funding ended up being available then items could added to the budget later on in the process.

Councilmember Phipps commented the budget might be changing on a monthly basis throughout the upcoming year. He indicated it could be estimated and reviewed continually but the budget passed would likely be a best guess scenario.

Mr. Allen stated staff had been working on the City's compensation plan and the prepared budget would have included those recommendations. He mentioned if a recessionary budget was presented it would not include those recommendations which could have an impact to staff morale; nonetheless, wanted to let the Council know it was on the table. Ms. Palmer noted the City had the recommendation from the third party for the compensation plan but there were tiers to it; so, there was the possibility it could be adjusted and phased into the progressive budget. Councilmember Phipps stated the compensation expenditures might need to be an area of flexibility and more conservative at the onset of the budget year. Mr. Allen indicated when staff presented the budget it would reflect what the recommendations were and each need from the actual data; although, the recommendations from staff for the budget might be more conservative.

Mr. Knapp explained capital expenses were the largest expenses but the ones he was least worried about because there was money set aside for one-time capital projects. He noted the operating budget was mostly personnel and the decisions that affected personnel were more difficult.

Mayor Shepherd indicated there was so much going on and things were constantly changing due to the pandemic. He explained it would be important to be the leaders and maintain a positive

force. He mentioned the underlying reason for urgency in stopping the spread of COVID-19 as much as possible was so that hospitals were not overloaded beyond capacity.

Councilmember Peterson asked if the department heads could provide an update on how employees were doing and how things had shifted in each department.

Adam Favero, Public Works Director, responded the public works department was doing things to keep clean and keep staff working. He indicated the water system was good. He noted staff had been calm despite uncertainty.

Spencer Brimley, Community Development Director, answered staff with code enforcement, planning, and the building official were managing social distancing with public interactions. He explained the Customer Service Center was trying to manage expectations as it continued its interaction with the public. He stated there had been a temporary border put in place to help distance the public from the counter, staff was cleaning the area each morning, and staff was using gloves as needed for cash handling. He noted even with the changes the staff in the community development department were doing well with everything that had happened thus far.

Eric Howes, Community Services Director, responded many meetings had been cancelled, start times for various crews might be adjusted to help with social distancing, but the parks crews were ramping up for spring and summer staffing and had recently hired seven seasonal workers. He mentioned the City would try to keep them working as long as possible. Mr. Howes stated as long as the facilities were open, the facilities maintenance crew would be necessary to keep the systems operational. He mentioned the main focus for the aquatic and recreation divisions was in trying to reach out to the community with communications, yet the main thrust was in planning for when things could open again so there would be minimal delays. Mr. Howes stated the part-time personnel were offered opportunities to help with meaningful work by disinfecting and cleaning, but so far there were minimal part-time staff taking advantage of that opportunity.

He indicated one item that had not been anticipated was playground usage. Mr. Howes stated staff had contemplated closing the parks but was not sure how it would be enforced. He mentioned some signage might be placed that discouraged large gatherings and cleaning of the equipment could also be done regularly. Mr. Allen commented the main responsibility for practicing social distancing would be with individuals and families if they opted to visit public places.

Kelly Bennett, Police Chief, reported the department had been working with the communications team through social media to try to limit response calls to residences as much as possible. He indicated staff had been able to respond to calls so far and had the appropriate safety equipment. He noted there had been an increase in psychiatric calls, suicide attempts, and welfare checks over the past week. He acknowledged family fight cases had not yet increased but anticipated there could be a rise in those types of calls. Chief Bennett mentioned the department was currently down five officers. He stated a new schedule would be implemented immediately that involved utilizing some of the administrative officers with call handling. He indicated the

schedule would be monitored to ensure the department would operate with at least minimum coverage.

Ms. Palmer commented so far IT had been supporting the departments' needs as things changed to more remote work. She mentioned the remote work was having an impact on IT, so employment offers were made to two interns to help manage the demands after the recent loss of an IT intern. She noted the communications division was using email work orders to manage requests. Ms. Palmer acknowledged there were a few team members who she had been concerned about working on site because they or others in their household were considered vulnerable. She mentioned safety was a priority and the work station areas were being regularly cleaned, workers were alternating shifts, but as a department with mostly support staff it was difficult to allow for the entire division to work remotely.

Mr. Cahoon indicated the City had been in the process of hiring an event planning intern to assist with special events and the Fourth of July; but given the fact there were not any events to plan, staff had discontinued its search for a candidate. He reported the recreation staff continuing to work had agreed to assist in reaching out to make contacts for Fourth of July event sponsorships in hopes that the event would still be held.

Mr. Knapp pointed out much of the City's office equipment had been loaned out for remote work. He indicated in the future it could be wise to consider purchasing equipment such as laptops rather than desktop computers for ease in transitioning to remote work.

Mr. Williams responded the legal department started working from home except for the prosecutor who was still working with the courts and balancing remote and in office work needs.

Councilmember Roper updated the Council on the efforts of the North Davis Fire District to provide the best possible service to the community. He acknowledged the stations were on lockdown and no family was allowed. He added cleaning had been increased to have added safety for personnel and there had been a decontamination center established in one of the bays.

Councilmember Thompson wondered if all the measures that had been implemented could continue for another eighteen months if it became necessary to continue operations in such a manner. Ms. Palmer answered it was uncertain, but the measures were in place to help flatten the curve so that healthcare networks were not overwhelmed. Councilmember Thompson stated some data he reviewed indicated there was the possibility that to curb the spread restrictions could continue for up to eighteen months. There was a brief discussion about the newness of the situation and how things would continue to change so the City would need to adapt to survive.

Mr. Allen expressed his appreciation for the Council's support and trust.

**Councilmember Thompson moved to adjourn at 7:31 p.m., seconded by Councilmember Peterson. The motion carried upon the following vote: Voting AYE – Councilmember Bush, Peterson, Phipps, Roper, and Thompson. Voting NO – None.**

**APPROVED AND ADOPTED  
This 12<sup>th</sup> day of May, 2020**

**/s/Mark R. Shepherd, Mayor**

**ATTEST:**

**/s/Nancy R. Dean, City Recorder**

I hereby certify that the foregoing represents a true, accurate, and complete record of the Clearfield City Council meeting held Tuesday, March 17, 2020.

/s/Nancy R. Dean, City Recorder