

Hastings, Minnesota
Special City Council Meeting Minutes
March 26, 2020

The City Council of the City of Hastings, Minnesota met in a special meeting on Thursday, March 26, 2020 at 7:00 p.m. via Zoom video conference.

Mayor Fasbender explained why an in-person meeting was not practical or prudent due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Members Present: Mayor Fasbender, Councilmembers Balsanek, Braucks, Folch, Leifeld, Lund and Vaughan

Staff Present: City Administrator Dan Wietecha
Administrative Services Director Julie Flaten
City Attorney Dan Fluegel
Community Development Director John Hinzman
Parks & Recreation Director Chris Jenkins
Public Works Director Nick Egger

Mayor Fasbender noted that comments from the public received prior to the start of the Special City Council meeting have been disseminated to all Councilmembers.

**Resolution No. 03-13-20: Postponement of Public Hearing on Special Assessments for 2020
Neighborhood Infrastructure Improvement Project**

Wietecha summarized the 2020 Neighborhood Infrastructure Improvements project and the associated assessments. He talked of the history of the public hearing, with the hearing being previously scheduled for April 6, 2020 and how residents affected by the assessments would be notified. Wietecha indicated that this project would still go out for bid. Staff recommended to postpone the hearing until the COVID-19 Pandemic subsides and City operations and business returns to normal.

Council discussed the reasons for delay, the desire to keep moving forward with caution, timing of the contract and the possible associated debt, the current status of the bond market and condition of current bond market.

Councilmember Braucks motioned to approve as presented, seconded by Councilmember Vaughan. Roll call: Ayes 7; Nays 0.

**Postponement of Public Hearing on Municipal Consent for the Final Layout of the Highway 316
MnDOT Improvement Project**

Wietecha summarized the history of the public hearing for the Highway 316 Improvements Project. The hearing was scheduled for April 6, 2020. Staff recommended to postpone the hearing until the COVID-19 Pandemic subsides and City operations and business returns to normal; probably late May or early June.

Council discussed the financial impact of the project, Council options after the public hearing, follow-up on the status of the neighborhood petition, request to send direct mailing to residents regarding the public hearing, publication timeline of the public hearing notice and possible pandemic effects on the state fund surplus.

Councilmember Folch motioned to approve as presented, seconded by Councilmember Leifeld. Roll call: Ayes 7; Nays 0.

Cancellation of City Sponsored Activities

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Wietecha asked Council to cancel all City sponsored activities and activities taking place at City facilities through May 31, 2020 due to the COVID-19 Pandemic and why the May 31, 2020 date was selected.

Council discussed the reason for the May 31, 2020 date, consideration to follow the Governor's guidelines of school dates, staff's caveat that City sponsored activities and activities at City facilities may possibly be re-scheduled as soon as practical, plan for outside playgrounds, possibly making a blanket statement of following the Governor's guidelines, the need for clarification on the Governor's executive order regarding playgrounds, possibly invest in fences to close playgrounds if necessary and the status of other City events.

Councilmember Balsanek made a motion to cancel all City sponsored activities and events occurring at City facilities until such time there is a Governor's executive order that would be appropriate to opening all City activities and events at City facilities with the stipulation that the Parks & Recreation Department would be sensitive to preparing for such an executive order, seconded by Councilmember Braucks. Roll call: Ayes 7; Nays 0.

Emergency Ordinance No. 2020-07 Authorizing Finance Department and City Administration to Waive Late Fees Imposed for City Utilities

Fluegel recapped the history of the proposed emergency ordinance, described the waiving of utility late fees and clarified when the ordinance would expire.

Council discussed if other license fees should be included in the proposed ordinance, timing of late fees, and effective dates of the proposed ordinance.

Councilmember Braucks motioned to approve as presented, seconded by Councilmember Leifeld. Roll call: Ayes 7; Nays 0.

Approve Personnel Policies Impacted by COVID-19 Pandemic

Flaten defined the proposed Interim Short-term Telecommuting Policy and Sick Leave Gap Funding.

Council discussed the potential dollar amount of sick leave gap funding, option to not have employees use sick leave, definition of quarantine, intent of the sick leave gap funding, effects on employees from federal stimulus package, intended use of the Sick Leave Gap Funding and the possibility of an employee exhausting their sick time.

Councilmember Braucks motioned to approve the Interim Short-term Telecommuting Policy as presented, seconded by Councilmember Balsanek. Roll call: Ayes 7; Nays 0.

Councilmember Braucks motioned to approve the Sick Leave Gap Funding as presented, seconded by Councilmember Balsanek.

Councilmember Folch motioned to amend the Sick Leave Gap Funding to have those employees which are mandated to stay home but cannot conduct work from home not be required to use sick leave, seconded by Councilmember Leifeld. Roll Call: Ayes – Folch and Leifeld; Nays – Vaughan, Balsanek, Lund, Braucks, Mayor Fasbender. Motion fails.

Roll call to approve Sick Leave Gap Funding as presented: Ayes 7; Nays 0.

Update on City Procedures, Services, and Plans for Conducting Future City Council Meetings and Public Hearings

Wietecha itemized the various City procedures, services and plans for future City Council meetings and Public Hearings during the COVID-19 Pandemic. Hinzman provided comments on the work of the Economic Development Task Force.

Council discussed work of the Economic Development Task Force, concept of a possibly forming a Hastings Foundation, appreciation for City staff and operational changes made overall in the City and specifically to the Police and Fire Departments.

Mayor Fasbender and Councilmembers made the following announcements:

- In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, and in order to practice social distancing, all City meetings will be conducted remotely until further notice. We are using a platform called Zoom. This platform is free for the public and can be accessed by a computer, laptop, or phone.
- If you are unable to attend a meeting through Zoom, you can submit your comments before the meeting via email. Please remember to include your name and address for the record. The email is PublicComment@HastingsMN.gov
- The City's annual water system flushing and hydrant inspection program began this week and will continue for several weeks. During this time please remember any discoloration is harmless and the water remains safe to drink. It is completely normal to witness discoloration during the process, and it comes from iron sediments being stirred up by the large volume of water being moved. The sediments are exactly what we're working to flush out.
- Tennis Sanitation will only collect bagged trash. No loose trash items will be handled or picked up. Please place overflow trash in tightly sealed trash bags next to your bins on pickup day. All recycling should be loose in the cart as usual, not overflowing. If it doesn't fit in the cart, please call Tennis for another pick up or hold overflow items until the following week.
- Heritage Preservation Commission will meet Tuesday, March 31 at 7:00 p.m.
- Utilities Committee of Council will meet Monday, April 6 at 5:30 p.m.
- Next City Council Meeting will be Monday, April 6 at 7:00 p.m.

Councilmember Vaughan motioned to adjourn, seconded by Councilmember Leifeld. Ayes 7; Nays 0. The meeting was adjourned at 9:10 p.m.

Mary Fasbender, Mayor

Julie Flaten, City Clerk