

**MINUTES
CITY OF LONSDALE
EMERGENCY CITY COUNCIL MEETING
MARCH 23, 2020**

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Rud called an emergency meeting of the Lonsdale City Council to order at 6:11 p.m. the City Council Chambers, 415 Central Street West. The meeting was conducted in accordance with Minnesota State Statute §13D.021 – by telephone or other electronic means and directed in his Emergency Declaration, dated March 22, 2020.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Everyone stood and recited the pledge of allegiance.

3. ROLL CALL

Members Present: Steve Cherney, Kevin Kodada, Tim Rud, Cindy Furrer and Scott Pelava

Members Absent: None

City Staff Present: City Administrator Joel Erickson, City Engineer John Powell, Public Works Director Russ Vlasak, Chief of Police Jason Schmitz, Fire Chief Dave Pfluke, Liquor Store Manager Lynette Moe and Library Director Marguerite Moran

4. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Mayor Rud asked if there were any corrections, additions or deletions to the Agenda.

A motion was made by Kodada and seconded by Furrer to approve the agenda as presented. Vote for: Cherney, Kodada, Rud, Furrer and Pelava. Vote against: None. Abstained: None. Vote: 5-0. Motion carried.

5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

None

6. PUBLIC HEARINGS

None

7. PRESENTATION OF CITIZEN PETITIONS AND COMMENTS

Mayor Rud asked if there were any citizens that wanted to address the City Council for any item(s) not on the agenda. There were none.

8. APPROVAL OF THE CONSENT AGENDA

None

9. OLD BUSINESS

None

10. NEW BUSINESS

a. Discuss and Consider Approval of Continuation of Mayor Rud's Peace Time Emergency Declaration Due to the COVID-19 Health Pandemic

Mayor Rud said the City has not taken this issue lightly, especially now with cases in Rice County and it should be expected that more cases will arise. Mayor Rud read his emergency declaration dated March 22, 2020.

b. Effects of COVID-19 on City Departments / Procedure Changes

Erickson reviewed the actions taken to date by staff and at City Hall. Kodada asked if the City pays unemployment or is self-insured? Pelava asked if the City pays unemployment 1:1 and it might be less expensive to pay unemployment in the long run. Erickson said the City does pay unemployment 1:1 for each dollar paid on a reimbursing basis. Furrer asked if there were enough cleaning supplies available to staff. Erickson said yes and departments are coordinating between themselves to help each other out when a department is starting to run low on supplies. Cherney said staff should be aware of the cleaning agents in the supplies used and to make sure what is being used is effective.

Erickson said the Police Department is experiencing an increase in resident foot traffic at the PD due to an increase in permits to purchase being submitted. Pelava asked if the Police Department was issuing them or if the Sheriff's Department was. Chief Schmitz said the City is currently issuing the permits to purchase. Furrer asked if there was still 24/7 law enforcement coverage. Chief Schmitz replied yes and all officers are working and have been assigned to specific squads so if one officer does get infected, contact is limited with other officers. Furrer asked if staff was practicing social distancing. Erickson said yes and staff is following the recommended CDC guidelines. Mayor Rud asked about actions taken to date at Lonsdale Liquor. Liquor Store Manager Lynnette Moe said customers have been good about following social distancing and staff is doing good so far. Mayor Rud asked if hours have remained the same. Moe said Subway and Machenthun's are closing at 8:00 pm and recommended the Liquor Store close at that time as well. She said if the number of hours becomes a concern, she will adjust the hours to be Monday – Saturday 11:00 am – 7:00 pm and no Sundays. Cherney asked about delivery of product. Moe said they can deliver but have never done it due to liability concerns. She said she was not recommending delivery as an option. Furrer asked about the amount of inventory. Moe said it was up due to increased purchasing due to COVID-19.

Erickson said Public Works is closed to the public and staff is using personal protective equipment (PPE) when conducting Utility Inspections in homes. Pelava said parks and trails are being used heavily and for those who are using them to practice social distancing. The City Council discussed not closing the parks but putting up "15 Days to Stop the Spread" posters to remind residents that COVID-19 is a concern and should be thought about when at the parks. Public Works Director Vlasak said he had several staff out last week due to non-COVID-19 illnesses and reviewed the tasks to be completed this time of the year. Pelava asked if staff was flushing hydrants last week because there were complaints of red water in the southwest section

of town. Vlasak said no. He said the red water was due to non-treated water from Well No. 3 entering the system. He said Well No. 3 was turned on because of maintenance to Wells 4 & 5.

Erickson said as far as business assistance, all information he receives he is sending to the Lonsdale Area Chamber of Commerce for its members and to be posted on the Chamber's website. Shanna Gutzke-Kupp, Executive Director of the Lonsdale Area Chamber of Commerce said she is providing all information she receives to businesses' via email and the Chamber's website. She said she attends daily MNDEED webinars regarding business assistance, that state and federal taxes do not need to be filed until July 15, 2020. Gutzke-Kupp said Governor Walz has signed Executive Orders for financial assistance, price gouging, etc. She said she created a spreadsheet listing businesses, if they are open or not, hours of operation and how they are providing services/goods such as curbside pick-up, takeout, etc. Mayor Rud asked what the effects on businesses would be if the Governor issued a "Shelter in Place" order. Gutzke-Kupp described the process to determine what businesses would be required to be closed or allowed to stay open based on what other States have done. Cherney said based on his research, there are loans available up to \$2,000,000 that are non-collateralized with no payments required for 11 months. Gutzke-Kupp said she has a fact sheet on the Chamber's website describing what financial assistance is available.

Erickson said the Library cancelled all programming and has been closed to the public since last week. Moran said at this time, the Library will remain closed through April 3, 2020.

Mayor Rud asked if the City Council had any questions regarding what had been discussed. He asked what the City Council thought about closing City Hall to the public. Cherney said he was at City Hall earlier in the day and recommended remaining open as long as cleaning was continued and CDC guidelines were followed. Mayor Rud said some staff have indicated they are not comfortable working with the public given COVID-19. Erickson said that was correct. Cherney suggested residents make appointments to conduct business with City Hall as a way to error on the side of caution. A motion was made by Cherney and seconded by Furrer to close City Hall to the public. Vote for: Cherney, Kodada, Rud, Furrer and Pelava. Vote against: None. Abstained: None. Vote: 5-0. Motion carried. Mayor Rud asked if hours at Lonsdale Liquor would be changing. Erickson said yes, if staff has concerns. Kodada asked if on-line orders could be taken. Moe said she would look into it but has concerns with verifying age, security, etc. A motion was made by Kodada and seconded by Cherney to revise the hours of Lonsdale Liquor to close at 8:00 pm. Furrer asked how long they would remain revised. Kodada replied indefinitely. Vote for: Cherney, Kodada, Rud, Furrer and Pelava. Vote against: None. Abstained: None. Vote: 5-0. Motion carried.

Cherney asked if the City had a succession plan for department heads. Erickson explained that staff does a good job communicating when staff is out sick, on vacation, etc. He said there is information on succession in the City's Emergency Operations Plan as well. Gutzke-Kupp asked how long utility payment late fees and shut-offs would be waived. A motion was made by Cherney and seconded by Pelava to temporarily postpone late fees and shut-offs. Pelava asked when it should start, given what is being billed in March was for water used before COVID-19 was an issue and lay-offs began. Cherney said he would leave it to the discretion of the City Administrator. Erickson recommended August 1, 2020 as the date to restart charging late fees

and water shut offs. Vote for: Cherney, Kodada, Rud, Furrer and Pelava. Vote against: None. Abstained: None. Vote: 5-0. Motion carried. Mayor Rud asked if there was anything else to discuss. Kodada said the situation is day to day and recommended that the City not begin to provide assistance to businesses for now because that is the role of the State and Federal governments. Mayor Rud thanked Department Supervisors and Shanna Gutzke-Kupp for their hard work on behalf of all residents and businesses'. Mayor Rud also thanked the City Council.

11. OTHER BUSINESS

- a. City Staff Reports
None

12. ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Kodada and seconded by Furrer to adjourn the meeting. Vote for: Cherney, Kodada, Rud, Furrer and Pelava. Vote against: None. Abstained: None. Vote: 5-0. Motion carried. The meeting ended at 7:32 pm.

Respectfully Submitted:

Joel A. Erickson, City Administrator