

COTTAGE GROVE CITY COUNCIL
VIRTUAL MEETING MINUTES
APRIL 13, 2020

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Jeff Gowing called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm in the Council Chambers at City Hall.

ROLL CALL

City Recorder Trudy Borrevik called the roll. The following were

PRESENT IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBERS: Mayor Jeff Gowing and Councilor Kenneth Michael Roberts

PRESENT VIA GOTOMEETING: Councilors Jake Boone, Bob Ehler, Mike Fleck, Greg Ervin and Candace Solesbee

YAC REPRESENTATIVE VIA GOTOMEETING: Fernando Soto-Cruz

STAFF PRESENT IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBERS: City Recorder Trudy Borrevik and Police Chief Scott Shepherd

STAFF PRESENT VIA GOTOMEETING: City Manager Richard Meyers, Finance Director Roberta Likens, Public Works & Development Director Faye Stewart and Library Services Director Pete Barrell

CITY ATTORNEY: None

OTHERS PRESENT IN COUNCIL CHAMBERS: Duane Taddei

MEDIA PRESENT VIA GOTOMEETING: Cameron Reiten, KNND Radio & Damien Sherwood The Sentinel

There were three citizens and one presenter who signed into the meeting.

ITEMS ADDED TO THE AGENDA

None

APPEARANCE OF INTERESTED CITIZENS FOR ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA

Duane Taddei 1803 W. Main Street, Cottage Grove, asked Council to have a discussion with the City Manager and Public Works & Development Director about working with him regarding a street tree in front of his house that needed to be trimmed. He said the tree was damaged during the snowstorm last February and his understanding after talking with someone from the City, was that the City would be trimming street trees last spring/summer. He said he had gotten a quote of \$300 at that time to trim the tree. He said months went by with nothing happening so he contacted the City again and was told the employee who trimmed trees was out with an injury and it would be awhile before the tree could be inspected. He said the City did eventually trim several branches from the tree, but was told they couldn't do anything more. He said he had gotten a quote of \$800 to have the tree trimmed and was asking the City to pay half of that cost.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

None

CONSENT AGENDA

- (a) Approval of March 20, 2020 Agenda Session Minutes
- (b) Approval of March 23, 2020 Council Meeting Minutes
- (c) Public Safety Telecommunicators Week Proclamation
- (d) Arbor Day Proclamation

IT WAS MOVED BY COUNCILOR FLECK AND SECONDED BY COUNCILOR BOONE TO APPROVE THE CONSENT AGENDA AS AMENDED.

The vote on the motion was as follows:

VOTE	Councilor Roberts	Councilor Ehler	Councilor Boone	Councilor Fleck	Councilor Solesbee	Councilor Ervin	Mayor Gowing
AYES	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
NAYS							
ABSTAIN							

RESOLUTIONS AND ORDINANCES

- (a) Resolution Declaring a Temporary State of Emergency Within the Boundaries of the City and Delegating Authority to the City Manager

City Manager Richard Meyers said the resolution declared a temporary state of emergency within the boundaries of the City. He said Cottage Grove was one of the last cities in Lane County to declare an emergency as there hadn't been a need until now. He said there were several items that needed to be addressed that the City could use the emergency declaration for. He said the City wasn't looking at procurement but it was included in case it was needed. He

said there was some personnel policies that would be nice to have flexibility with such as the current 30 day layoff requirement. He said another issue that had come up was the underground ordinance in existence since 1977 that required all new utilities to be underground. He said the City had been contacted by an individual who, due to the COVID-19, was working from home and didn't have internet connection. He said with the emergency declaration, the City could allow a temporary connection for a certain period of time. He also talked about the backyard burning ban from LRAPA that had been rescinded. He said the City was looking at options to provide to citizens to dispose of tree limbs and branches without burning. He said the City's limb pick-up was scheduled for May 4th – 8th and May 18th – 22nd. He said one option would allow citizens to bring their tree limbs and branches to a pile near the City Shop.

IT WAS MOVED BY COUNCILOR FLECK AND SECONDED BY COUNCILOR BOONE THAT RESOLUTION NO. 2007 BE ADOPTED.

Councilor Solesbee confirmed that citizens would be able to dispose of tree limbs and branches in the lot near the City Shop.

Richard said that was correct. Citizens could leave their limbs and branches on the street for the limb pick-up or they could take them to the lot by the City Shop.

Councilor Ervin asked what the definition of open burning was and if it included outdoor fire pits.

Richard said open burning was for the burning of tree limbs, branches, etc. He said cooking fires and fire pits were exempt from LRAPA rules. He said people were being asked to be more contentious of their neighbors health problems and if the burning would affect them.

Councilor Ervin said the air quality had been getting better due to travel restrictions. He said he wasn't in favor of putting more restrictions on the freedom of what you could currently do in your backyard. He said if there were no restrictions on outdoor fire pit burning, he could be supportive.

Councilor Fleck said DEQ and the State were adamantly asking for a ban of outdoor burning because of the impact on citizens during COVID-19. He said the LRAPA Executive Director had issued a ban on outdoor burning, but that ban was rescinded by the LRAPA Board at their recent meeting. He talked about the air quality index and how it impacted neighborhoods. He said he would like to see a ban on outdoor burning in Cottage Grove until mid-May or until the limb pick-up was over.

Councilor Boone said he would be in favor of backyard burning if the smoke and pollutants could be contained on the property which was impossible to do within the City. He said the Coronavirus was a very big deal as far as people's respiration however the rights argument didn't apply.

Councilor Solesbee asked who would do the enforcing.

Richard said the City would do the enforcement with the assistance of LRAPA. He said the Resolution didn't specifically talk about a burn ban or delay, however he wanted to get the Council's thoughts if they wanted to support or not.

Councilor Fleck said LRAPA would enforce any rules Cottage Grove put in place. He provided some background on the burning regulations in Eugene and Springfield and how the air quality is different in different areas of the County. He said to him it was more about the impact of citizens who had breathing issues.

Councilor Solesbee said she was wavering on the issue. She said she liked the City's idea to let people bring their limbs and branches to the lot by the City Shop. She wondered if the City should wait to limit backyard burning until the Coronavirus started to show in Cottage Grove.

Councilor Roberts asked if the Resolution was a template and if it was what other communities were doing.

Richard said it was written by the City Attorney and very similar to other cities. He said it was also based off the City's template in the City's Emergency Operations Plan.

Councilor Roberts said Section 2(a) referred to curfews and asked how the City would enforce that.

Richard said it wasn't something the City was looking at but was part of satisfying the State's requirements.

The vote on the motion was as follows:

VOTE	Councilor Roberts	Councilor Ehler	Councilor Boone	Councilor Fleck	Councilor Solesbee	Councilor Ervin	Mayor Gowing
AYES	X	X	X	X	X		X
NAYS						X	
ABSTAIN							

Mayor Gowing asked Richard if he wanted to poll the Council on backyard burning or if he wanted to wait until later.

Richard said based on the discussion, the City would make a very strong encouragement to let people know there were other options for them to dispose of their limbs and branches in lieu of burning.

Mayor Gowing said everyone knew he was very adamant about not banning backyard burning in town and he had been very vocal. He said given the current conditions however, he would support a ban.

BUSINESS FROM CITY COUNCIL

(a) Concerns from Council

Councilor Roberts said he had received emails from parents of some of the graduating seniors and wondered if the City could work with the School District about having a parade through town. He felt they should be noticed for completing four years of high school. He said he cancelled his May downtown clean-up due to COVID-19 and would clean the remaining two block himself. He asked if the City was doing anything else for the homeless. He said All-America City Park was getting really bad and he found three syringes today.

Councilor Fleck provided an update on Community Sharing. He said if citizens were having issues paying their rent or mortgage, they had received some funding to assist with that which was distributed on a first come basis and based on qualifications. He said they were increasing their income expectations. He said they also had received additional funds to purchase food for distribution. He said they may be doing a survey to make sure the needs of the community are being met. He said the USDA had increased the income guidelines so people who may not have qualified in the past, might qualify now.

Councilor Boone said the current guidance from the CDC and other public health authorities was that everyone should be wearing cloth masks when they were out and about, but it wasn't to replace social distancing.

Councilor Solesbee provided her perspective on COVID-19. She said she believed our town would recover, however it would take a while for businesses and families to recover their losses. She said everyone can help by shopping and dining local. She said if there was a silver lining, it was that citizens would appreciate it more and not take the community and businesses for granted. She said those businesses donated and contributed to school fund raisers and supported community events and it was our turn to give back to them by supporting them during this time.

Mayor Gowing said since there wouldn't be a graduation ceremony or scholarship night, he wanted to recognize Youth Advisory Council member Fernando Soto-Cruz as the recipient of the \$500 Pat Patterson Scholarship. He congratulated Fernando and said it had been a pleasure having him on the Youth Advisory Council.

Fernando thanked the Council and said he had enjoyed his time being on the Youth Advisory Council. He said he planned to go to college in the fall. He commended the City on the handling of COVID-19.

BUSINESS FROM CITY MANAGER

(a) Oregon Aviation Historical Society & Museum Presentation on Aviation Centennial Celebration

City Manager Richard Meyers introduced Janice Scanlon, Executive Director and Board Vice-

President Tim Talen from the Oregon Aviation Historical Society & Museum who talked about their preparations for the 2021 Oregon Aviation Centennial.

(b) Consideration to Temporarily Cover Costs Associated with Extending Health Insurance to COVID-19 Laid-Off Full-Time Employees

City Manager Richard Meyers said the City issued layoff notices for twenty employees, fifteen part-time and five full-time beginning May 2, 2020. He said the full-time employees would be covered with insurance through the end of May. He said insurance coverage couldn't be extended but employees would be eligible for COBRA coverage which the City could cover. He asked Council if they wanted the City to continue to pay for health benefits which would be about \$6,811.74 a month. He said something to consider was what to do if someone didn't come back to work after being laid off, did they want to put any restrictions on that. He was open for suggestions and comments and said he would prepare a resolution for the next meeting.

Councilor Fleck said the prospect of losing income and having to pay for COBRA insurance coverage was considerable. He said his wife was laid off and her employer was continuing to provide insurance coverage. He said he supported the City paying for the COBRA coverage.

Richard said the employee would continue to pay their 5% of the insurance premiums with the highest being \$54.00.

Councilor Boone said he also supported paying for COBRA coverage for the laid off full-time employees. He said it was the worse time for people to be losing their health insurance. He said we had a good staff and wanted to keep them and was okay if we paid for someone's insurance and they decided not to come back to work at the City.

Councilor Ervin said he supported paying for COBRA coverage for the laid off full-time employees as it wasn't the fault of anyone being laid off during this time.

Richard said staff would prepare a resolution for the next meeting stating the City would pay for COBRA coverage for the five full-time laid off employees.

Mayor Gowing said he also supported paying the COBRA coverage and said we needed to take care of our employees.

Richard said there had been some questions whether employees would be hired back and this would show that the City is planning to hire everyone back. He asked if Council wanted to have a limit for how long we would provide the COBRA coverage.

Councilor Boone said he thought for the duration of the emergency and if it lasted longer than expected, to revisit it at that time. He asked if there needed to be an ending date.

Richard said if there was no end date, employees might think it would be covered indefinitely. He said he would rather have an end date and the month before that date to review and determine if it needed to be extended.

Councilor Ervin asked what the health coverage year was.

Richard said it went from January to December.

(c) Report from City Manager

Richard said two elected officials hadn't completed their SEI and reminded them to do so by this Wednesday, April 15, 2020.

Richard talked about the homeless and said the County had asked if the City wanted to participate or if the City was going to provide housing in one location. He said staff questioned whether that was a smart thing to do since they might have more vulnerability to exposure and/or risks associated. He said Eugene did their separated spaces for homeless with health care professionals monitoring and screening people. He said Lane County Public Health adopted a policy that in rural Lane County there would be a shelter where you sheltered policy, where they stayed where they were. He said Teresa and Jessica from the Community Center worked on creating a new card for police to pass out that contained information on services available. He said the City had installed a handwashing station and restroom at the Community Center and the restrooms were open at All-America City Park and Coiner Park during the day. He said staff was monitoring the situation.

Richard said Teresa and Jessica worked with the Be Your Best Committee on the preparation of an information card that would be mailed to all the senior citizens in the community, roughly 3,700. He said the card had places to go, services available, people to contact for help and finding other resources that were available.

Richard said the YAC were working on resources for youth.

Richard said Teresa and Jessica were also gathering information from groups and organizations on what they needed, etc. He said they helped find volunteers for Community Sharing and were looking for volunteers to help other service agencies. He said they were also accepting donations and collections and assisted with the mobile food pantry. He said Lane County's mobile food pantry was moving to Bohemia School this week to allow a better traffic flow.

Richard said the most important item was the award of the \$500 Pat Patterson Scholarship to Fernando Soto-Cruz. He read the letter he wrote to Fernando regarding his contributions to the Youth Advisory Council.

Fernando thanked Richard for the amazing experience.

Richard said the City was working with the Chamber and Main Street to do something special for the graduating seniors.

Mayor Gowing said Chris Woodard and the Woodard Foundation donated \$100,000 to the Community Foundation. He said \$90,000 was distributed at the Woodard Foundation's

discretion and \$10,000 was distributed at the discretion of the Community Foundation. He said he would do a formal recognition at a Council Meeting at a later date.

Mayor Gowing reminded everyone that when they were out and about and around essential employees who were working, to thank them and tell them they are appreciated. He asked people to support each other during this time.

Mayor Gowing said when the COVID-19 was over, he was going to do a BBQ at PeaceHealth parking lot, similar to Kicking it with the Cops, as an appreciation thank you to employees.

BUSINESS FROM CITY ATTORNEY

(a) Report from City Attorney

None

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Mayor Gowing adjourned the regular meeting of the City Council at 8:02 pm.

The next regular City Council Meeting will be held April 27, 2020, at 7:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers at City Hall.

Trudy Borrevik, City Recorder

Jeffrey D. Gowing, Mayor