

MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING OF THE NORMAL TOWN COUNCIL HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBERS, NORMAL CITY HALL, FOURTH FLOOR UPTOWN STATION, 11 UPTOWN CIRCLE, NORMAL, MCLEAN COUNTY, ILLINOIS – MONDAY, MARCH 23, 2020.

1. CALL TO ORDER:

Mayor Pro-Tem Kevin McCarthy called the Special Meeting of the Normal Town Council to order at 5:05 p.m., Monday, March 23, 2020.

2. ROLL CALL:

The Clerk called the roll with the following persons

PRESENT: Mayor Pro-Tem Kevin McCarthy and Councilmember Karyn Smith. Also present were City Manager Pamela Reece, Corporation Counsel Brian Day, and Town Clerk Angie Huonker.

REMOTE: Mayor Chris Koos and Councilmembers Chemberly Cummings, Stan Nord, Kathleen Lorenz, and Scott Preston, also present was Assistant City Manager Eric Hanson.

ABSENT: None.

3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

Mayor Pro-Tem Kevin McCarthy led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

4. PUBLIC COMMENT:

Given the circumstances necessitated by the COVID – 19 crisis, and in accordance with a mandate of social distancing, public comment was submitted via email and read by Mayor Pro-Tem Kevin McCarthy.

Rob Howard, Normal resident, submitted an audio recording of his opposition to the proposed ordinance, specifically the power to impose a curfew, limit alcohol sales and limit gun sales.

The following email submitted comments were read by Mayor Pro-Tem McCarthy.

Frank Walter, a Normal resident, expressed his opposition to granting emergency powers to the Mayor and City Manager.

Terry Brown, Normal resident, expressed opposition to the emergency powers proposed in the Ordinance where they are concerned with prohibiting gun sales.

Rodney Graf, Normal resident, opposed granting the Mayor emergency powers, specifically where related to fuel, alcohol, firearms and ammunition sales.

Elizabeth McCormack, Normal resident, asked Council not to approve emergency powers, and asked the Council to delay such a decision.

Adrienne Dailey, Normal resident, expressed her approval for imposing a curfew, restricting fuel and alcohol sales, but expressed her disapproval of the proposed ordinance relative to gun and ammunition sales, as well as opposing the “other orders” listed in the proposed ordinance.

Gil Engel, Normal resident, asked the Council to exercise caution in its decision, citing that approval would infringe on rights.

Radiance Campbell, an ISU student, commented on the role of the Council in protecting the community's most vulnerable citizens and encouraged developing a comprehensive disaster plan.

Jon Otto, Normal resident, expressed his disapproval of Section 25.2-12 of the proposed ordinance, calling it unnecessary.

Aaron Ragusa, Normal resident, expressed concern regarding the Emergency Discretionary Decision Making Authority. He noted that the ordinance lacks specific detail and should be voted against.

Jo Litwiller, Normal resident, urged the Council to vote against approving the Emergency Discretionary Decision Making Authority.

Michael Marlett, Normal resident, expressed disapproval of the proposed ordinance and also his disapproval of holding a meeting where the public could not be in attendance.

Brian Cook, Normal resident, noted that State and Federal oversight supersede the need for enhanced municipal authority.

Dave Shields, Normal resident, expressed his approval for the proposed ordinance.

Robin Levine, Normal resident, encouraged Council to have a through discussion and asked Council to communicate through local media.

Larry and Ruth Reinhart, Normal residents, expressed their disapproval of the proposed ordinance.

Brian Wills, Normal resident, noted that State and Federal oversight supersede the need for enhanced authority for the Mayor and City Manager.

Caleb Stahl, Normal resident, expressed his disapproval of the proposed ordinance calling it a clear violation of our freedoms.

David Fry, Normal resident, asked Council not to vote in favor of the proposed ordinance, citing it as a violation of rights.

Duane Smith, a Normal resident, expressed his opposition to the proposed emergency discretionary decision-making authority.

Doris Ryan, Normal resident, expressed her opposition to the declaration of emergency powers and decision making.

Karl Sila, Normal resident, asked Council to prepare rather than panic, noting he feels emergency discretionary decision-making authority is a panic response. He also asked Council to avoid unneeded spending.

5. NEW BUSINESS:

ORDINANCE TO AUTHORIZE EMERGENCY DISCRETIONARY DECISION MAKING AUTHORITY TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES (MAYOR) AND CITY MANAGER DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC TO MAKE DECISIONS OUTSIDE THE TYPICAL SCOPE OF THE PERSONNEL CODE, PROCUREMENT POLICY, ETC. AS NEEDED DURING PANDEMIC CRISIS:
Ordinance No. 5824:

MOTION TO AMEND ORDINANCE:

Councilmember McCarthy moved, seconded by Councilmember Preston, the Council Amend the Proposed Ordinance to Authorize Emergency Discretionary Decision Making Authority to the President of the Board Of Trustees (Mayor) and City Manager During COVID-19 Pandemic to make Decisions Outside the Typical Scope of the Personnel Code, Procurement Policy, Etc. as Needed During Pandemic Crisis by Removing Section 11 From the Ordinance.

AYES: McCarthy, Cummings, Nord, Smith, Lorenz, Preston, Koos.

NAYS: None.

Motion declared carried.

MOTION TO APPROVE AMENDED ORDINANCE:

Councilmember McCarthy moved, seconded by Councilmember Cummings, the Council Approve an Amended Ordinance to Authorize Emergency Discretionary Decision Making Authority to the President of the Board Of Trustees (Mayor) and City Manager During COVID-19 Pandemic to make Decisions Outside the Typical Scope of the Personnel Code, Procurement Policy, Etc. as Needed During Pandemic Crisis

AYES: Cummings, Nord, Smith, Lorenz, Preston, McCarthy, Koos.

NAYS: None.

Motion declared carried.

Mayor Chris Koos led the discussion on this item and expressed his thanks to Council and Staff and Citizens for stepping up to a challenging situation. He expressed he goal of minimizing the impact of COVID-19 in our community. He noted the desire of the Council and Town Staff to be nimble and be empowered to make quick decisions if necessary.

The Mayor clarified that it is a misconception that this Ordinance was proposed with no overview or input from Council. He explained that any Mayoral decision would be temporary and subject to Council approval in a special meeting or scheduled meeting. The Mayor reiterated that the town cannot supersede the authority of the State and Federal Governments and reaffirmed his personal belief in maintaining personal rights and freedoms.

Mayor Koos mentioned this Ordinance was written in 1969 and contains language that has never been invoked. The goal of the Council and Town leadership is to be able to be nimble and do things for the citizens of Normal. The Mayor expressed his sincere hope that this ordinance would be beneficial in these uncertain times.

Councilmember Kevin McCarthy noted the seriousness of the situation and clarified that this item is not creating a new emergency code. This code has been in existence since 1969. Mr. McCarthy acknowledged concerns over Section 11 of the ordinance. In response to public comment and communication with constituents, Mr. McCarthy moved to amend the proposed ordinance, by striking Section 11 from the ordinance.

Councilmember McCarthy clarified that this section is the primary portion of dispute and mentioned that striking section 11 would not impede the Town's ability to act quickly regarding this crisis.

Mayor Koos asked for thoughts on the amendment

Councilmember Stan Nord expressed gratitude to staff for continuing municipal services and adjusting to challenges. Mr. Nord expressed his approval for all other sections of the ordinance, save for Section 11, and thanked Mr. McCarthy for proposing the amendment. He expressed his support and encouraged Council to do the same.

Councilmember Scott Preston thanked the hundreds of citizens who reached out to him and the Council regarding the proposed ordinance. He noted that all concerns had been related to section 11. Mr. Preston expressed his hopes for unanimous support of the ordinance in light of the Section 11 amendment.

Comments continued regarding the Amended Proposed Ordinance.

Councilmember Scott Preston commended the merits of the ordinance for staff allowing them to adjust sick leave and also facilitate closure of Town Facilities as well as encourage shift and remote work if possible, to protect staff and the public. He commended the Town for protecting staff and community members and applauded the focus on reacting quickly and effectively.

Councilmember Kevin McCarthy expressed his full support of the Ordinance. He applauded the Town for its ability to now appropriately respond regarding the challenges posed by the Virus.

Councilmember Kathleen Lorenz expressed gratitude to the citizens who reached out. She also mentioned that it spurred a good dialogue and is supportive of the ordinance now that the amendment has been adopted. She quoted Franklin D. Roosevelt saying "There is nothing to fear but fear itself" and expressed the idea that Council should move forward as a team and by not responding with fear. Finally, she thanked staff for their resilience and continuity.

Councilmember Chamberly Cummings thanked the Town staff. Considering the rapidly changing situation, she expressed her support for the ordinance, as it affords the Town the ability to confront changes and challenges head on. Ms. Cummings expressed the universal experience of not wanting to give up liberties and rights and acknowledged that the ordinance is necessary to insure that the Town can respond with agility. She expressed her approval of all Councilmembers, who she says clearly communicate their care and concern for the community. She mentioned that while some citizens have expressed that the Council is not doing enough, that they exercise patience as the Council must not infringe on other levels of Government authority. She emphasized the need for

patience and kindness. She urged community members to respond with concern and care for one another and encouraged citizens to be mindful of neighbors.

Councilmember Stan Nord noted that citizens have been heard with this amendment. He also noted that going through tough times together makes us better and sees this experience as providing us a universal bond. He reassured citizens that things will return to normal eventually, and we will all share this experience. He thanked the public for their involvement.

Councilmember Karyn Smith offered her personal perspectives. She acknowledged a lot of community anxiety. She noted the many challenges citizens are faced with, using ISU students adjusting to new ways of learning as one example. Given these changes, she encouraged the community to give one another the benefit of the doubt in upcoming dealings. She encouraged citizens to take a deep breath and give people the benefit of the doubt that we are all doing the best we can with an unprecedented situation. She further thanked the citizens for reaching out and reminded citizens to seek reliable information.

City Manager Pamela Reece added that she appreciates Council's concern and appreciation for staff. Ms. Reece noted that the Town's priority is to provide successful services. She clarified that staff will be working each day for the community and she appreciates the Council's approval of the ordinance. She thanked the public for their patience regarding the learning curve on the remote meeting.

Mayor Chris Koos reiterated the need to seek reliable information, citing the McLean County Board of Health as a resource. City Manager Reece mentioned that the Town of Normal website has a landing page for reliable resources regarding COVID-19.

Mayor Koos encouraged community member to listen to the recommendations from the CDC, county, and other reliable sources. He noted that following guidelines will help us move together in one direction.

City Manager Pamela Reece thanked those municipalities and industries who have been helpful in keeping Town leadership and citizens informed and safe.

6. CONCERNS:

There were No Concerns.

7. ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business to come before the Council, Mayor Koos called for a Motion to Adjourn the Special Meeting of the Normal Town Council.

MOTION:

Councilmember Cummings moved, seconded by Councilmember Smith, the Council Accept a Motion to Adjourn the Special Meeting of the Normal Town Council.

AYES: Nord, Smith, Lorenz, Preston, McCarthy, Cummings, Koos.
NAYS: None.

Motion declared carried.

Mayor Koos adjourned the Special Meeting of the Normal Town Council at 6:10 p.m., Monday, March 23, 2020.