



City of Phoenix

Minutes

City Council Special Meeting

Friday, March 20, 2020

12:00 PM

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CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

The Phoenix City Council convened in a Special Meeting on Friday, March, 20, 2020 at 12:17 p.m. in the Council Chambers.

Present: 9 - Councilman Sal DiCiccio, Councilmember Carlos Garcia, Councilman Michael Nowakowski, Councilwoman Laura Pastor, Councilwoman Debra Stark, Councilman Jim Waring, Councilwoman Thelda Williams, Vice Mayor Betty Guardado and Mayor Kate Gallego

REPORTS AND BUDGET UPDATES BY THE CITY MANAGER

Discussion

City Manager Ed Zuercher began by sharing the financial precautions that have been implemented, including refraining from all non-essential spending and procurement, curbing hiring except for critical positions and monitoring pension funds.

Mr. Zuercher discussed sales tax, state shared income tax and Convention Center, Planning and Development, and airport revenue projections.

Mr. Zuercher stated while budget hearings were planned to begin in April, staff will be meeting with each Councilmember to discuss different virtual and online methods to gather public input. Finally, he concluded by stating that City Hall services will be moving to appointment only, however staff will continue to assist residents via the internet and phone.

Councilwoman Stark asked if essential hiring includes public safety positions.

Mr. Zuercher said the City will continue to hire both police and fire in addition to a few civilian positions.

Councilman Nowakowski asked if the City has an emergency budget for public safety to purchase sanitation wipes, masks and gloves. He also requested that bus drivers and field workers be provided with the same protective equipment.

Mr. Zuercher responded the City has funding to purchase protective equipment, however there is a shortage. He shared procurement staff is monitoring the availability of protective equipment.

Councilman Nowakowski shared safety concerns regarding the day camp for City employee's children.

Mr. Zuercher explained Parks and Recreation and Human Resources staff are working together to ensure proper cleaning protocols are in place and the camp is following the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidelines of no more than 10 individuals in a room.

Councilman DiCiccio asked how the City is protecting bus drivers.

Mr. Zuercher stated the contracted employer of the bus drivers is responsible for providing protective equipment. He did note that the City can choose to limit the number of riders on each bus, or have riders enter through the back doors to ensure separation from drivers. However, if the entry doors are changed, the bus would be unable to collect fares.

Councilman DiCiccio requested additional information on the economic impacts to pension, the airport and the City's revenue sources.

Councilman Waring asked about the budget, specifically if the City will have enough money to cover its expenses in this fiscal year. He also inquired whether the budget can be readjusted within the fiscal year. Mr. Zuercher stated the budget can be readjusted and clarified that refraining from non-essential spending will preserve our resources to cover obligations. Additionally, Mr. Zuercher stated next year's budget is still in the process of being developed, so it can be changed depending on how the economic situation unfolds.

Councilwoman Pastor asked which civilian positions are considered essential.

Mr. Zuercher shared there is not an exact definition, but it typically includes positions that revolve around health and safety.

Vice Mayor Guardado asked if layoffs occur, could the City implement a program in which laid off employees are provided the first opportunity to be re-hired.

Mr. Zuercher shared he does not want to speculate about layoffs. The City is taking steps to avoid layoffs by removing all nonessential spending and hiring. However, if layoffs do occur, he shared there are very specific employee rights that will be followed.

Councilwoman Stark asked if furlough days would be implemented before administering layoffs.

Mr. Zuercher shared this would have to be discussed and mutually agreed upon with labor groups.

Councilwoman Pastor asked if employees are required to take leave when they are working from home.

Mr. Zuercher shared if employees are working from home, they should not be taking leave. However, if a position limits the ability to work from home and the employee is at home, leave must be used.

Councilwoman Pastor also asked if the City is finding different scopes of work for positions that may not be needed right now.

Mr. Zuercher shared the City is working to identify opportunities to shift roles and responsibilities so that employees are not going without a paycheck.

Mayor Gallego asked if a new Federal law that changes leave policies gets enacted, would the City implement it.

Mr. Zuercher confirmed the City would comply with the Federal law.

CALL FOR AN EXECUTIVE SESSION

Vice Mayor Guardado made a motion to move into Executive Session.

Councilwoman Stark seconded the motion which passed unanimously, 9-0.

DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION

1 (CONTINUED FROM MARCH 18, 2020 FORMAL AND SPECIAL MEETINGS) - Request City Council Confirmation of Mayoral Declaration of a Local Emergency

Request for the City Council to confirm a declaration by Mayor Kate Gallego by proclamation of the existence of a local emergency in the City of Phoenix, as required by the Phoenix City Code, Chapter 11, section 3.

The Phoenix City Code, section 11-3(B), and Arizona Revised Statutes, section 26-311, empowers the Mayor to proclaim the existence of a local emergency, subject to confirmation by the City Council, in the case of a great emergency which endangers life or property within the City. The Mayor declared the existence of a great emergency related to the threat from the COVID-19 virus by Proclamation on March 17, 2020 **(Attachments A and B)**.

This item is required by City Code section 11-3(B) as a result of the Proclamation by the Mayor declaring a local emergency.

THIS ITEM IS FOR DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION.

Note: Items 1 and 2 were heard together. For discussion on Item 1, refer to Item 2.

This item was approved.

2 Consideration of Adoption of Local Emergency Declaration and Regulations on Bars, Restaurants and Other Businesses

THIS ITEM IS FOR DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION.

Discussion

Mayor Gallego reconvened the Special Meeting at 3:46 p.m.

City Manager Ed Zuercher stated City Management Assistant Jenny Hackelman will provide a summary of the public comments collected for the meeting.

Ms. Hackelman stated the City received 364 public comments. Two-hundred and eighteen of the comments were in favor with the Mayor and City Councils' declaration of an emergency, and 15 of the comments were in opposition. Ninety of the comments addressed restaurant and bar closures. Nine of the comments did not support Item 1 (the declaration of a great emergency) and 32 additional citizen comments were on topics such as senior center closures and small business assistance.

Councilwoman Pastor made a motion to approve Item 1.

Councilwoman Stark seconded the motion.

Vice Mayor Guardado made a substitute motion to declare a local emergency.

Councilman Nowakowski seconded the motion.

Councilwoman Stark stated she will support the substitute motion, however she wanted it to be known that she supports and trusts Mayor Gallego.

Vice Mayor Guardado assured residents that the Council is ready to work together during this crucial time.

Councilwoman Williams stated she supports Mayor Gallego. She also recognized that the City is in a crisis and the Council needed to work together to be successful.

Councilmember Garcia recognized the current emergency and stated he trusts the Mayor. He thanked all of the staff that has been working hard to support residents, businesses and other employees.

Councilwoman Pastor thanked the Mayor for her leadership. She also encouraged the public to practice social distancing and stay home.

Councilman DiCiccio shared his support for Mayor Gallego and encouraged the Council to work together.

Councilman Nowakowski thanked the Mayor for her leadership.

Councilman Waring shared the country is going through a crisis. He shared his appreciation and support of the Mayor's and Governor's actions to address the crisis.

Mayor Gallego thanked the Council for coming together to fight the COVID-19 crisis. She shared the Council is committed to working together to reduce the spread of the virus, and offered her support for medical professionals as well as all members of the community.

This item was approved.

A motion was made by Vice Mayor Guardado and seconded by Councilman Nowakowski to declare a local emergency with additional language that Mayor Gallego has the right to declare a great emergency in the future.

Yes: 9 - Councilman DiCiccio, Councilmember Garcia, Councilman Nowakowski, Councilwoman Pastor, Councilwoman Stark, Councilman Waring, Councilwoman Williams, Vice Mayor Guardado and Mayor Gallego

No: 0

ADJOURN

There being no further business to come before the Council, Mayor Gallego declared the meeting adjourned at 4:00 p.m.

For further information, please call the Management Intern, City Manager's Office, at 602-262-4449.