

CITY OF BELLEVUE
CITY COUNCIL

Summary Minutes of Special Meeting

April 6, 2020
6:00 p.m.

Virtual Meeting/Online
Bellevue, Washington

PRESENT: Mayor Robinson, Deputy Mayor Nieuwenhuis, and Councilmembers Barksdale, Lee, Robertson, Stokes, and Zahn

ABSENT: None.

1. Call to Order/Roll Call

The meeting was called to order at 6:07 p.m., with Mayor Robinson presiding. All Councilmembers were present.

Mayor Robinson noted that this is the first virtual meeting held by the City Council since the closure of City Hall in mid-March.

2. Proclamations

(a) Proclamation Supporting Healthcare Workers

Councilmembers read the proclamation, pursuant to the Mayor's proclamation of emergency on March 3, 2020, expressing support for Overlake Medical Center staff, highlighting the important work of local healthcare workers as they fight on the front lines, and encouraging the community to join in that support.

Mayor Robinson thanked the restaurants who have provided food to healthcare workers.

(b) Proclamation Against Bias and Hate and Embracing Diversity

Deputy Mayor Nieuwenhuis read the proclamation urging the community to stand against bias and hate and reaffirming the City's commitment to embracing diversity and creating a welcoming environment for all, free of all forms of bias, especially during this unprecedented time.

3. Approval of Agenda

→ Deputy Mayor Nieuwenhuis moved to approve the agenda, and Councilmember Robertson seconded the motion.

→ The motion carried by a vote of 7-0.

4. Report of the City Manager

(a) City of Bellevue COVID-19 Response Summary

City Manager Brad Miyake introduced staff's update regarding the City's response to the coronavirus. He thanked City Clerk Charmaine Arredondo; Jeff Chandler, Information Technology Department; and BTV Manager Robin Steel and the BTV team. Mr. Miyake thanked the City Council for looking out for the community and supporting City staff. He said the City is committed to continuing to provide critical services. Mr. Miyake thanked first responders for their hard work and dedication. He encouraged the public to continue to practice social distancing.

Kate Berens, Deputy City Manager, highlighted the activities of City departments in response to the coronavirus-related restrictions. She said that first responders continue to provide critical services. City staff has been working with neighborhood groups, regular customers and volunteers at the Mini City Hall, faith-based community partners, police advisory councils, and others. Ms. Berens said that first responders appreciate the community's support.

Ms. Berens said the City has streamlined its list of community resources for callers and website users and is educating customer services staff across departments regarding the options for donating and volunteering. Human services providers have indicated that their greatest need is money, especially given that many individuals need assistance with paying rent and/or utility bills. Ms. Berens said that an ordinance scheduled for Council action proposes spending \$450,000 from the Council Contingency fund to meet the most critical community needs. The money will be split between five organizations: Catholic Community Services, Hopelink, Lifewire, Salvation Army, and Solid Ground. Ms. Berens noted that food is the second most requested assistance. She said the Bellevue School District is continuing to provide meals to families in need.

The Bellevue Utilities Department will not turn off utilities or issue late fees during this period. The Utilities Department provides an emergency assistance program available to low-income seniors and disabled individuals, as well as budget pay plans and reduced rate options.

Ms. Berens said the City is leading a weekly call with local Chambers of Commerce, tourism organizations, business groups, and the cities of Issaquah, Kirkland, Redmond, and Renton to discuss the needs throughout the region. She said that small businesses and sole proprietors are the most heavily impacted by the coronavirus restrictions. Many are aware of the availability of small business loans but are concerned about the risk of repayment and whether their loan will qualify for a repayment waiver. Ms. Berens said City staff is calling local businesses to offer assistance and to provide referrals to the resources available in the community. She said the City continues to provide public safety and other critical essential services.

Councilmember Lee thanked staff for their response to addressing human services needs. He expressed concern that many small businesses and others in the community may be unaware of the resources available for help. He expressed an interest in what the City can do to reach the people who are hardest to reach. He said he would like more details about how the City will continue to address the needs of small businesses.

Mr. Lee raised questions regarding the long-term economic outlook, whether businesses will survive the restrictions, and how the City will make up for the lost revenue. He said he is pleased that money is available in the Council Contingency fund to provide additional financial assistance to human services providers.

Ms. Berens said the City is concerned about both businesses and individuals. Public education efforts by the City and partner organizations focus on providing information about the available community resources and helping individuals navigate the network of social services. Ms. Berens said City staff is calling local businesses to offer information regarding resources.

Regarding the long-term financial implications for the City, Ms. Berens said staff is monitoring local, regional, and national economic forecasts and information. She said the City is interested in ways to support businesses after the restrictions are lifted and to help them reopen and continue their operations. Ms. Berens confirmed that the Council Contingency fund is able to provide emergency human services funding without adversely affecting other programs or services.

Councilmember Stokes thanked all of the organizations and individuals who are helping each other to address the impacts of the coronavirus pandemic. He expressed concern whether human services providers are adequately funded. He expressed support for the proposed allocation of \$450,000 to five human services providers already under contract with the City. Mr. Stokes thanked staff for their hard work.

Councilmember Robertson thanked the Leadership Team and all City staff for their efforts during the pandemic restrictions. She expressed support for the emergency human services funding. She spoke to the importance of keeping individuals in their homes. She encouraged the public to explore the many resources available to provide assistance.

Ms. Robertson thanked Amazon, Microsoft, and the other companies that donated money to assist small businesses. She thanked City staff for implementing the push notifications related to emergencies via the MyBellevue mobile app.

Councilmember Robertson said the Council is fortunate to have Ms. Robinson as the Mayor, given her knowledge of healthcare issues, human services, and business issues. Ms. Robertson thanked the community and her fellow Councilmembers for their efforts during the current restrictions.

Councilmember Zahn echoed Councilmember Robertson's support for City staff and for Mayor Robinson's leadership. Ms. Zahn noted that Bellevue was one of the first cities to declare an

emergency. She thanked first responders and healthcare workers for their dedication. She thanked the public for observing social distancing. Ms. Zahn expressed support for the emergency contributions to five human services organizations. She said she is pleased to hear about the City's outreach to businesses and residents.

Councilmember Barksdale thanked staff for their work. He noted that it will be important to address both long-term economic impacts and how the current situation will affect the public's future needs.

Deputy Mayor Nieuwenhuis thanked Mayor Robinson for her leadership and efforts on behalf of the City. Mr. Nieuwenhuis thanked first responders and human services agencies for their response to the public's needs. He expressed support for the additional funding to five human services agencies.

Deputy Mayor Nieuwenhuis thanked the City Manager, Leadership Team, and staff for working so hard to continue to provide services to the public. He thanked Brad Harwood, Chief Communications Officer, for his centralized coordination of communications across City departments. Mr. Nieuwenhuis thanked the public for helping each other and reminded everyone to continue with their efforts in social distancing.

Mayor Robinson concurred with the comments of her colleagues. She said that every Councilmember represents the community in their own special way and she appreciates their support. Ms. Robinson said the City needs to continue to advocate for public and private funds that will become available throughout the current pandemic.

Ms. Robinson concurred with Councilmember Lee's interest in reaching out to those in the community who are the hardest to reach. Ms. Robinson said that Bellevue has the best internet coverage, including for low-income students, compared to other cities. She said she appreciates the City's responsiveness to the emerging needs of the community.

Ms. Berens said staff continues to explore and to implement ways to reach as many people as possible, including phone calls to small businesses, coordination with nonprofit agencies, and outreach to neighborhood groups. The City's website provides an updated list of community resources.

Continuing with the presentation, Deputy City Manager Nathan McCommon said the City's objective is to continue to deliver essential services while minimizing the risk to the public or employees. He highlighted the City's communications efforts including website information and updates, email alerts, MyBellevue app notifications, and social media. He said the City's website contains extensive information regarding community resources, volunteering, asking for help, and offering help. Mr. McCommon noted that much of the information is provided in the five most common languages, after English, that are spoken in Bellevue.

Mr. McCommon highlighted a number of actions taken by City departments including closing City facilities, activating the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) at City Hall, establishing social distancing requirements for field workers, and cleaning equipment. He said the City

Clerk's Office and the Information Technology (IT) Department worked together to coordinate tonight's first virtual meeting for the Council.

Mr. McCommon noted the City's outreach to businesses and human services providers to address current needs and to share information regarding community resources. He said the City's neighborhood outreach staff created a COVID-19 resource guide for residents. He noted that all of the City's permitting is now online. However, it is possible that land use hearings will be deferred.

Early in the outbreak of the virus, the Fire Department adjusted its response protocols to require personal protective equipment (PPE) on every call and to implement screening for all Fire Station personnel. The Human Resources Department continues to function as usual and to provide updates to City staff. The IT Department has been busy assisting employees with working from home. Mr. McCommon reiterated that human services staff in the Parks and Community Services Department is coordinating with nonprofit agencies, other cities, and agencies.

The Police Department has changed its practices for emergency calls. Officers use extra screening questions, wear PPE, and may request assistance from emergency medical technicians (EMTs). Mr. McCommon highlighted additional changes made by the Transportation Department and the Utilities Department in response to the COVID-19 restrictions.

Mr. McCommon spoke to the importance of social distancing. He advised the public to not call 911 to report public gatherings but to instead call a non-emergency Police Department phone number or to report it on the Police Department's web page or through the MyBellevue app.

Mr. McCommon said that Seattle-King County Public Health holds a daily meeting with emergency managers throughout the county. He noted that the Police Department and the Fire Department are working closely with their counterparts. Area municipal executives are coordinating through the Sound Cities Association (SCA) and through calls with the King County city administrators group.

Councilmember Barksdale referred to long-term planning and questioned whether the City is looking at data across the community to identify trends. Mr. McCommon said the EOC tracks needs and requests, and City staff is working with businesses and human services providers to address emerging and urgent needs.

Responding to Councilmember Zahn, Mr. McCommon said that certain City staff are no longer employed due to the nature of their job and are eligible for unemployment benefits. A number of employees have been reassigned to assist other departments. Ms. Zahn expressed concern regarding the loss of income for individuals and families.

Responding to Ms. Zahn, Mr. McCommon said the City has an adequate supply of PPE for its employees. He noted the generous donations of PPE from the community.

Councilmember Zahn said she looks forward to future discussions regarding the City's financial picture, economic forecast, and long-range financial planning. She wondered how life will go back to normal without triggering another outbreak of the virus.

Councilmember Robertson thanked staff for providing information on how the public can help each other. She encouraged strong support for local businesses when they are able to reopen. She thanked the individuals who donated PPE to the City. She noted that Congregations for the Homeless and other agencies are looking for face masks and other items.

Councilmember Stokes said he has been encouraged by the community's response to COVID-19 and he hopes that the spirit of working together continues beyond the pandemic. He thanked staff for their work and for the use of technology to hold tonight's meeting.

Councilmember Lee said it is important to talk about long-range financial planning. He said Bellevue is an amazing city with the best staff and the best public. He acknowledged that it can be difficult working from home, and he thanked staff for their flexibility.

Mr. Lee thanked City Manager Miyake for his extensive efforts during this time. He thanked first responders and healthcare workers for taking risks and for working under difficult conditions. Mr. Lee thanked Jeff Chandler for his technical assistance while working from home.

Mr. Lee reiterated his concern regarding the impacts of the pandemic restrictions on small businesses, including restaurants. He noted that many of the businesses are trying to retain their employees and have made certain adjustments, including offering takeout and delivery restaurant services. Mr. Lee thanked the public for the PPE donations to City personnel. He said the community will get through this together.

Deputy Mayor Nieuwenhuis thanked staff for the presentation and observed that the City has done a great job in responding to the COVID-19 crisis. He encouraged the City to prepare for May 4 should the governor lift the current restrictions at that time. He suggested exploring ways to help businesses when they are allowed to reopen. He looks forward to discussions regarding the City budget and long-term financial planning.

Mr. Nieuwenhuis noted a news article about an increase in property crimes in Seattle, due largely to vacant businesses. Mr. McCommon said that Bellevue has not had the same experience at this point. However, the Police Department anticipates a potential increase over time.

Mayor Robinson thanked staff for providing helpful information for the public. She thanked former Councilmember Kevin Wallace for his leadership in organizing a funding and supplies drive to benefit Congregations for the Homeless.

Ms. Robinson noted a need to compile and organize data encompassing all of the funding and equipment needs of social and human services agencies and organizations.

City Manager Miyake said the City is working to identify ways to provide financial relief to businesses, nonprofit organizations, and medical institutions. The City is monitoring and exploring the funding packages approved by the federal government to identify the funding

available to Bellevue and the region. Mr. Miyake said the City is developing recovery scenarios for municipal operations and for working with the local business community. Staff is exploring innovative ideas for helping businesses and nonprofit organizations to resume their operations.

Mr. Miyake thanked Amazon, Microsoft, Walmart, Eddie Bauer, Global Innovation Exchange (GIX), Bellevue Chamber of Commerce, Bellevue Downtown Association (BDA), civic clubs, faith-based groups, and all of the many others who have partnered together during the pandemic restrictions. He noted that several local hotels have provided rooms for essential workers and for quarantined individuals.

Mr. Miyake thanked staff for their work and the Council for its support of staff's efforts.

5. Consent Calendar

- Deputy Mayor Nieuwenhuis moved to approve the Consent Calendar, and Councilmember Robertson seconded the motion.
- The motion to approve the Consent Calendar carried by a vote of 7-0, and the following items were approved:
 - (a) Motion to award Bid No. 20008, Crossroads Trail Improvements (CIP Plan Nos. PW-W/B-56 and NIS-2), to Award Construction, Inc. as the lowest responsible and responsive bidder in the amount of \$604,940, plus all applicable taxes.
 - (b) Motion to reject the bid by Westwater Construction Company as a non-qualified bidder on Bid No. 20003, 124th Avenue NE Improvement Project, Seattle City Light (SCL) Transmission Tower Replacements (CIP Plan No. PW-R-191).
 - (c) Motion to approve payment of claims and payroll for the period February 1, 2020 through February 29, 2020.
 - (d) Motion to award Bid No. 20022 for SE 16th Street Walkway, 160th Avenue SE to SE 16th Street cul-de-sac project to Kamins Construction as the lowest responsible and responsive bidder in the amount of \$428,614.30 plus all applicable taxes. This project is fully funded by the Neighborhood Safety, Connectivity and Congestion Levy (CIP Plan No. PW-R-199).

6. Other Ordinances, Resolutions, and Motions

- (a) Ordinance No. 6506 ratifying and confirming Order #1 Pursuant to Proclamation of Emergency of March 3, 2020, and amending Ordinance 5436, Section 1, as previously amended, to extend deadline for certain Business and Occupation tax payments.

City Attorney Kathy Gerla said that Ordinance No. 6506 ratifies and confirms Emergency Order #1 issued by the Mayor related to Business and Occupation (B&O) tax payments for small

businesses. She noted that, during an emergency declaration, the Mayor has the authority to issue emergency orders that are necessary for the protection of life and property. Emergency Order #1 was signed by the Mayor on March 20, 2020, in recognition of the extreme revenue losses experienced by small businesses due to the pandemic restrictions. The order allows businesses with \$5 million or less in taxable gross receipts during the 2019 tax year to defer their first and second quarter B&O tax payments until October 31, 2020. The regular deadlines for the first and second quarters are April 30 and July 31.

Councilmembers expressed support for the proposed ordinance.

→ Deputy Mayor Nieuwenhuis moved to adopt Ordinance No. 6506, and Councilmember Lee seconded the motion.

→ The motion carried by a vote of 7-0.

- (b) Ordinance No. 6507 to increase the budget appropriation by \$450,000 for emergency financial assistance to fund five non-profit agencies to fund operational expenses for additional emergency financial assistance.

City Attorney Gerla said that Ordinance No. 6507 increases the City's budget appropriation by \$450,000 for emergency financial assistance to five nonprofit agencies providing human and social services.

Councilmembers expressed support for the ordinance. Mayor Robinson said she hopes to see more funding from partners across the region.

→ Deputy Mayor Nieuwenhuis moved to adopt Ordinance No. 6507, and Councilmember Robertson seconded the motion.

→ The motion carried by a vote of 7-0.

7. Adjournment

At 8:05 p.m., Mayor Robinson declared the meeting adjourned.

Charmaine Arredondo, CMC
City Clerk

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