

CITY OF BELLEVUE  
CITY COUNCIL

Summary Minutes of Special Meeting

May 4, 2020  
6:00 p.m.

Virtual Meeting  
Bellevue, Washington

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

ABSENT: None.

1. Call to Order

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

2. Roll Call

All Councilmembers were present and participating remotely.

(a) National Police Week Proclamation

Councilmember Barksdale read a proclamation recognizing May 10-16, 2020, as National Police Week in Bellevue. He noted that the names of the individuals who have died in the line of duty are engraved on the walls of the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial in Washington, D.C. He encouraged everyone to recognize and express appreciation for law enforcement officers.

Police Chief Steve Mylett thanked the Council for the proclamation. He recalled that in 1962, President John F. Kennedy designated May 15 as Peace Officers Memorial Day and the week of that date as National Police Week. The National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial was dedicated in 1991.

Chief Mylett thanked the Council for its strong support of the men and women in the Fire Department and Police Department. He said they are aware of and appreciate the support.

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) Overview of Bellevue School District's Response to COVID-19

Mayor Robinson noted that Councilmember Stokes suggested inviting the Bellevue School District to discuss their response to the COVID-19 public health emergency.

City Manager Brad Miyake introduced Ivan Duran, Superintendent of the Bellevue School District since July 2017.

Dr. Duran described the district's focus on implementing its strategic plan over the past three years. He said the district decided to close its schools before receiving guidance from the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction on March 13 to close schools. He said the district was already beginning to see absences among both students and staff at that time.

Dr. Duran noted the district's objectives to provide meals and child care for students and their families, properly recognize graduating seniors, and to retain employees. He said the district is concerned about the mental health needs of students. The district is delivering food to 33 locations and has established six locations for picking up food items. More than 68,000 meals have been provided to students, and the district is providing an average of more than 2,000 meals daily. The district is helping provide child care for first responders and healthcare workers. Dr. Duran said that the Boys and Girls Clubs of Bellevue have partnered with the district's nutrition/meals program and kept certain facilities open for students.

In the area of technology, Dr. Duran said that secondary students in the district already had laptop computers. However, younger students did not necessarily have computers to use. Dr. Duran said the district distributed 3,000 laptop computers and more than 400 hotspots to students in need. He said the district is also providing on-site technology support at certain schools, as well as a phone number to call for assistance with technology. He said school bus drivers are now delivering meals, transporting students to and from child care programs, and cleaning the buses and other areas.

Dr. Duran said the district is working with students to develop ways to recognize and celebrate graduating seniors. Noting concerns regarding mental health support for seniors, the district held a town hall to gather information regarding students' interests and needs. The district is distributing signs to the front yards of senior students to honor and celebrate them. Dr. Duran said the district has hosted virtual meetings, lunches, and events to continue to engage and support students. He highlighted online lessons and videos that have been provided for students. He reiterated the district's concerns regarding well being and mental health. He said that graduating seniors are missing the typical traditions, and a number of students are expressing sadness, stress, and confusion.

Dr. Duran described recent surveys of students, families, and educators to identify their needs and solicit input. Questions include asking how students feel about working from home, whether

they understand what is expected of them, and how well they feel connected to their teachers and classmates. The next survey will be held on May 11. Dr. Duran noted that a majority of elementary students are more positive about the current situation than older students, who have a higher incidence of reporting that they miss interacting with other students.

Dr. Duran said the district is establishing teams to develop a plan for returning to school in the fall. Required practices could include staggering school schedules in order to accommodate social distancing. He anticipated that the district will need to close again at some point this year, depending on the status of a vaccine and other risks. Dr. Duran said the district has been able to quickly shift its resources and the utilization of staff to activities in support of senior students, special education students, and others.

Mayor Robinson thanked Dr. Duran for the presentation.

Councilmember Stokes noted his longtime involvement and interest in education. He encouraged the district to continue to focus on students' mental health. He expressed concern regarding students and families experiencing homelessness. He asked how the City can help and how it could do more. He expressed support for expanded internet service to all students and their families. Mr. Stokes thanked Dr. Duran for his leadership.

Responding to Councilmember Stokes, Dr. Duran said the district is learning a great deal through this experience, including the value of remote learning and technology resources. Dr. Duran said the district's working group will compile and review relevant data to inform discussions about education practices and grading approaches.

Councilmember Robertson said that two of her children attending high school have reported a positive experience with the online and remote learning tools. However, Ms. Robertson said there are reported inconsistencies in the effective use of technology by all teachers. She expressed support for the district's outreach to the community. Noting that one of her daughters is a high school senior, Councilmember Robertson said it is important to provide alternate ways to celebrate graduation and to provide an opportunity for students to say goodbye to each other.

Responding to Ms. Robertson, Dr. Duran said that he had an update scheduled for the following day regarding the district's plans for recognizing graduating seniors. Councilmember Robertson said she would like to see some type of graduation ceremony, perhaps to be held outside to accommodate social distancing.

Ms. Robertson expressed concern regarding the district's new grading system in which students will receive an Incomplete if their grade to date is below 70 percent, and the remaining students will receive an A. She said it could lower the motivation of certain students, and students are concerned about having a qualifier added to the A grades on their transcripts. Dr. Duran said the May 11 survey addresses those issues. He said the district would like to have as few Incompletes as possible.

Councilmember Robertson said she appreciates the City's strong partnership with the Bellevue School District. She expressed support for internet service for all students and their families, in part through a partnership with the implementation of the City's Smart City strategy.

Councilmember Barksdale thanked Dr. Duran and the school district for its outreach and assistance to the public. Responding to Mr. Barksdale, Dr. Duran confirmed that the survey results have been shared with teachers and others who work for the district.

Responding to Mr. Barksdale, City Manager Miyake said that more data will be available soon to share with the Council. Mr. Miyake said there are issues related to data collection and analysis that need to be addressed by information technology and legal staff.

Deputy Mayor Nieuwenhuis thanked Dr. Duran for his leadership. He observed that Dr. Duran is asking the right questions and planning well for an uncertain future. Mr. Nieuwenhuis said he is pleased to see the district's focus on students' mental health and well being. He expressed concern about the increase in domestic violence during the pandemic and the resulting stay-at-home order.

Responding to Mr. Nieuwenhuis, Dr. Duran said that secondary level students were better prepared to transition to remote and online learning than the younger students. Dr. Duran noted that the district did not fully anticipate the significant need for internet access throughout the community. He said it can be harder for younger students to focus on online learning. Mr. Nieuwenhuis said the survey results indicate that elementary school children are generally happier and having an easier time than older students. Dr. Duran said elementary students are accustomed to having one home room teacher for the full day.

Deputy Mayor Nieuwenhuis said he appreciates the City's partnership with the school district. He said it is important to provide internet service to every student in Bellevue.

Councilmember Zahn concurred with her colleagues' comments. She observed that kids are experiencing things differently than adults, and all have different challenges. She appreciates the school district's focus on mental health and well being. She thanked the district for providing meals, child care, and other services to students and their families. She said it is interesting to track the data on food distribution to better understand the community's needs.

Ms. Zahn expressed support for internet service to all students and suggested accelerating the implementation of certain elements of the Smart City plan. She concurred with Dr. Duran that the public health threat will continue or reappear in the fall.

Responding to Ms. Zahn, Dr. Duran said the district will have its highest high school graduation rate this year. In further response to Ms. Zahn, Dr. Duran said he anticipates that the need for food assistance will continue even when people are able to return to work. Councilmember Zahn encouraged the district to focus on the needs of teachers as well as students in terms of mental health and stress management.

Councilmember Lee said the Bellevue School District is one of the highest rated school districts in the country. He said he frequently works with local high school students. He observed that the world is always changing and education should change as well. He thanked Dr. Duran for his leadership and planning and commended the district for its surveys and outreach within the community.

Councilmember Lee commented that it is important for students to be able to learn together and to socialize. He noted the importance of hearing from students about their needs. He expressed support for the focus on mental and emotional health for students, staff, and educators. He said the public health crisis provides the opportunity to understand the value of planning for the future and for unanticipated events.

Mr. Lee said he likes that the district is interested in both academic performance and overall well being. He said he appreciates the school district's survey efforts. He suggested including questions regarding mental health and well being in the City's community surveys during its budget process.

Councilmember Lee commended the district's efforts to honor and celebrate the graduating seniors. He thanked Dr. Duran for his work for the future of the community.

Mayor Robinson thanked Dr. Duran for his leadership. Responding to Ms. Robinson, Dr. Duran said the district's positive response to the public health emergency is due in part to its strategic plan and to recent contingency planning. In further response to Ms. Robinson, Dr. Duran confirmed that the demand for child care and food is increasing. He said child care needs are minimal, however, because most parents are home.

(b) Special Recognition of the Service of Healthcare Workers

City Manager Miyake introduced staff's presentation regarding a special recognition of healthcare workers.

Fire Chief Jay Hagen described an event held on April 16 to honor healthcare workers. He said that first responders from across King County went to 15 area hospitals to show appreciation for the healthcare workers' dedication and commitment during the COVID-19 pandemic. First responders from Bellevue and other jurisdictions gathered at Overlake Hospital Medical Center in time for the shift change to thank and cheer the staff. Chief Hagen said he later heard that the timing of the event was appreciated given that the hospital had lost three COVID-19 patients that day.

Chief Hagen thanked Councilmembers for their support of the community's donations of personal protective equipment (PPE), especially much-needed face masks.

Police Chief Steve Mylett said the term first responders has traditionally referred to Fire Department and Police Department personnel. However, healthcare workers are now on the frontline in responding to the pandemic. Chief Mylett expressed appreciation for every hospital employee, grocery workers, utilities workers, teachers, and the many others who continue to

provide essential services. He thanked Bellevue residents for their cooperative efforts to reduce the spread of the virus and for their donations of PPE.

Chief Mylett said he is grateful to serve in a very special community with strong support from residents and the Council.

Chief Hagen shared a video of the April 16 event at Overlake Hospital Medical Center.

Mayor Robinson thanked everyone for their dedication and hard work.

Councilmember Zahn thanked Chief Hagen, Chief Mylett, and all first responders for everything they do on a daily basis to keep the community safe. She noted that May 4 is International Firefighters Day.

Councilmember Lee thanked first responders and healthcare workers for their service and sacrifice.

Councilmember Stokes thanked the Fire and Police Departments for their service to the community. He said he appreciates Chief Hagen and Chief Mylett, and he thanked them for their recognition of healthcare workers.

Deputy Mayor Nieuwenhuis said that medical professionals are risking their own health to help others during the current crisis. He thanked the heroes at Overlake Hospital Medical Center as well as the City's Fire Department and Police Department personnel.

Councilmember Barksdale concurred with his colleagues. He thanked first responders and healthcare workers for their sacrifices and dedication to the community.

Councilmember Robertson said one thing that makes Bellevue so special is the partnerships throughout the community between residents, City staff, businesses, and workers. She said the current public health emergency highlights the importance of having high quality first responders and medical centers. Ms. Robertson said it will be important to remember the value of the City's first responders in the Council's future budget discussions. She thanked Chief Hagen and Chief Mylett for their leadership and expressed her ongoing support.

Mayor Robinson said there is no better feeling than competent partnership. She praised the cooperation between first responders and hospitals. She noted that community leaders have stepped forward in response to the pandemic to offer assistance and coordinate efforts. Ms. Robinson thanked Chief Hagen and Chief Mylett for their leadership and asked them to pass on the Council's gratitude for their public service.

##### 5. Consent Calendar

→ Deputy Mayor Nieuwenhuis moved to approve the Consent Calendar, and Councilmember Stokes seconded the motion.

Mayor Robinson noted that Councilmember Lee's comments during the April 20 meeting were cut short due to a technical issue. She offered him the opportunity to share his thoughts.

Councilmember Lee commented on the importance of small businesses in the community's economic recovery. He said a number of local restaurants have remained open to provide food for healthcare workers and families in need. He encouraged the City's Economic Development staff to continue to work with community groups and businesses.

→ The motion to approve the Consent Calendar carried by a vote of 7-0, and the following items were approved:

- (a) Council Minutes  
Minutes of April 20, 2020 Special Meeting
- (b) Resolution No. 9751 authorizing execution of a purchase agreement with Freightliner Northwest for the purchase of two replacement Freightliner Utilimaster walk-in step vans for the Utilities Department, in an amount not to exceed \$219,776, plus all applicable taxes.

6. Adjournment

At 7:48 p.m., Mayor Robinson declared the meeting adjourned.

Charmaine Arredondo, CMC  
City Clerk

/kaw