



MINUTES
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE CITY COUNCIL MEETING
MONDAY, NOVEMBER 16, 2020, 6:00 P.M.

This meeting was conducted under Governor Pritzker's Executive Order 2020-07, Section 6 implemented in response to COVID-19, which suspended in-person attendance under the Open Meeting Act, 5 ILCS 120.

The City Council convened in regular session virtually via Zoom conferencing with the City Manager, Tim Gleason, and Leslie Yocum, City Clerk, in-person in City Hall's Council Chambers at 6:00 p.m., Monday, November 16, 2020. The meeting was called to order by Mayor Tari Renner.

Roll Call

Attendee Name	Title	Status	Arrived
Tari Renner	Mayor	Remote	
Jamie Mathy	Ward 1	Remote	
Donna Boelen	Ward 2	Remote	
Mboka Mwilambwe	Ward 3	Remote	
Julie Emig	Ward 4	Remote	
Joni Painter	Ward 5	Remote	
Jennifer Jazmin Carrillo	Ward 6	Remote	
Mollie Ward	Ward 7	Remote	
Jeff Crabill	Ward 8	Remote	
Kim Bray	Ward 9	Remote	

COVID-19 Update by City Manager

Tim Gleason, City Manager, addressed Council and provided details on the Bloomington Police Department's incorporation of COVID-19 compliance checks into their weekly Downtown enforcement. He explained that, as a result of said checks, three establishments had been brought before the Liquor Commission with compliance violations. He went on to discuss current compliance and enforcement procedures, as well as plans for future enforcement. He stated that the City was following the Illinois Department of Public Health ("IDPH") guidelines and discussed how most offices currently had less than 50% of staff working in-office, but that he planned to move more to remote work. He noted that Administrative Court would also be moved to a virtual, Zoom setting.

Public Comment

Mayor Renner opened the meeting for public comment and the following individuals spoke live: (1) Allan Axelrod; (2) Charlotte Alvarez; (3) Zachary Gittrich; (4) Karla Baily-Smith; (5) Fr. Doug Hennessy; (6) Kyle Auer; (7) Matthew Sims; and (8) Laurie Bergner. There were no emailed public comments.

Consent Agenda

Items listed on the Consent Agenda are approved with one motion; Items pulled by Council from the Consent Agenda for discussion are listed and voted on separately.

Council Member Mathy made a motion, seconded by Council Member Mwilambwe, that the Consent Agenda, including all items listed below, be approved as presented.

Mayor Renner directed the Clerk to call the roll, which resulted in the following:

AYES: Mathy, Boelen, Mwilambwe, Emig, Painter, Carrillo, Crabill, Bray

ABSTAIN: Ward

Motion carried.

Mayor Renner stated that Council Member Ward had not been seated on Council for the meetings in which the minutes covered. Council Member Ward confirmed.

Item 5.A. Consideration and action to approve the Minutes of the October 12, 2020 Regular City Council Meeting, as requested by the City Clerk Department. (Recommended Motion: The proposed Minutes be approved.)

Item 5.B. Consideration and action to approve the Minutes of the October 19, 2020 Committee of the Whole Meeting, as requested by the City Clerk Department. (Recommended Motion: The proposed Minutes be approved.)

Presentation, Discussion, and Direction on Future Agenda Topics

The following item was presented:

Item 6.A. Presentation and discussion of the proposed Library Expansion, as requested by the Bloomington Public Library.

City Manager Gleason explained that the Bloomington Public Library expansion had been an ongoing process for more than ten years. He introduced Julian Westerhout, President of the Bloomington Public Library Board, who briefly introduced the item.

Jeanne Hamilton, Executive Director of the Bloomington Public Library, described the current layout and the various proposed additions, which included a two-level parking lot, drive-up curbside pick-up and drop-off, increased safety measures, study and meeting rooms, and sensory-friendly family rooms. She noted multiple proposed updates with a focus on flexible space and future needs. She ended by discussing funding for the \$20 million project.

Mr. Gleason addressed the Library Board being in the planning and design phase and pointed out to Council that no funding requests were currently being made.

Mayor Renner noted that when compared to cities of similar size, Bloomington had the lowest tax levy. Mr. Gleason confirmed.

Council Member Crabill asked about accessible parking, bus stops, how the Library planned to stay relevant with a technology driven society, and how the building size compared to cities of similar size. Mrs. Hamilton responded accordingly, and Mr. Westerhout also commented.

Mayor Renner thanked the presenters and expressed his belief that a physical and online library presence would continue to be necessary.

Council Member Emig echoed appreciation for the library expansion. She quoted statements from the Library's website and expressed appreciation for the Library's programs. She asked what a per household tax levy increase could look like. Mr. Gleason responded that a household whose home was valued at \$185,000 could expect an increase of \$20 annually. He also pointed out that the expected increase was lower than generally experienced by cities of comparable sizes.

Council Member Mwilambwe echoed appreciation of the proposed design and complimented Library staff and Board Members for being good stewards of library funds and project fundraising.

Council Member Ward echoed appreciation of the proposal and expressed her support in the remodel. She believed libraries contributed to leveling the playing field for those who did not have books and learning tools readily available.

Council Member Carrillo also echoed appreciation of the project and noted how wonderful it was that the expansion was focused around how the community would make the most of the space.

Council Initiatives

Mayor Renner reminded Council that the purpose of Council Initiative discussions was to merely gauge interest in moving Initiatives forward. He explained procedures.

The following item was presented:

Item 6.B.1. Consideration and action on whether to move forward a Council Initiative submitted by Council Member Boelen to adopt a Resolution for the purpose of investigating and implementing the Welcoming America Initiative, a national non-for-profit established in 2009, to seek designation as a Welcoming America Community, as requested by the City Council.

Council Member Boelen started by pointing out that the Council Initiative that she had brought forward was not related to the Welcoming City Ordinance that had been introduced several years ago. She explained that her Initiative would encourage all local government, businesses, and community members to embrace "welcoming" practices based on the Welcoming America Guidelines. She noted that Ward 2 had a robust English as a Second Language program at Cedar Ridge Elementary School and went on to explain the proposal was based on the Strong Towns philosophy. She described the philosophy as bottom-up community engagement that encourages sustainable economic growth and enrichment. She expressed interest in the creation of an intergovernmental outreach program with McLean County and the Town of Normal.

Council Member Carrillo was not supportive of the Initiative and believed the City should do more.

Council Member Bray briefly described Welcoming City discussions and the Welcoming America policy. She supported the Initiative.

Council Member Mathy politely disagreed with both Council Members Carrillo and Bray and was supportive of the Initiative with community involvement.

Council Member Boelen supported her Initiative.

Council Member Mwilambwe supported the Initiative.

Council Member Emig supported the Initiative, but also supported becoming a Welcoming City.

Council Member Painter supported the Initiative.

Council Member Ward supported the Initiative and agreed with Council Member Emig.

Council Member Crabill was not supportive of the Initiative.

Council Member Bray supported the Initiative.

Mayor Renner asked Council Member Boelen to work with staff and Council to ensure the Initiative moved to the next step.

The following item was presented:

Item 6.B.2. Consideration and action on whether to move forward a Council Initiative submitted by Council Member Crabill to adopt a Resolution finding utility shut-offs constitute a pandemic safety risk and calling on the Governor to enact a moratorium on utility disconnections under his emergency powers, 20 ILCS 3305/7 (12), as requested by the City Council.

Mayor Renner asked Jeff Jurgens, Corporation Counsel, if the State had already covered utility shut offs. Mr. Jurgens responded that the Illinois Commerce Commission (“ICC”) had an agreement with utility companies, including Ameren, and that a moratorium had been placed on utility shut offs through winter 2021 so long as residents met specific criteria.

Council Member Crabill explained that the moratorium with the ICC was voluntary and explained that his Council Initiative would include a letter that urged the Governor to place a moratorium on utility shut offs due to COVID-19. He discussed other cities that had passed similar resolutions. He pointed out that homes were the safest place for people to be during the COVID-19 pandemic and that shutting off utilities went against sheltering, driving residents out of their homes and increasing risks.

Mayor Renner left at 7:11 p.m. and returned at 7:14 p.m.

All Council Members were supportive of the Initiative.

Council Member Boelen requested additional general information.

Council Member Bray requested from the Legal Department information on the level of authority Council had over the matter at hand.

Mayor Renner asked Mr. Gleason what the next step was for both Council Initiatives. Mr. Gleason responded that an in-depth Council discussion would follow.

City Manager's Report

City Manager Gleason recognized newly-hired employees in multiple departments. He highlighted the Downtown Indoor Farmers’ Market, the Season of Small campaign to celebrate and promote shopping small businesses, and stressed the importance of supporting small businesses during COVID-19. He explained that Downtown traffic enforcement of a on-street parking would resume Monday, November 23, 2020. He pointed out that enforcement did not include parking garages and stated that the purpose of beginning enforcement again was to assist rotation of parking in front of downtown businesses. He concluded by discussing

the recent internal promotion of Michael Hurt to the Chief Diversity and Equity Officer and Niki Richards to Community Relations Manager.

Executive Session - Cite Section

No Executive Session was held.

Adjournment

Council Member Boelen made a motion, seconded by Council Member Ward, that the meeting be adjourned.

Motion carried (viva voce).

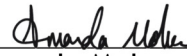
The meeting adjourned at 7:20 p.m.

CITY OF BLOOMINGTON



Tari Renner, Mayor

ATTEST



Amanda Mohan, Deputy City Clerk

