

Aurora City Council Meeting Minutes
Aurora City Hall
City Council Chambers
2 W. Pleasant
Aurora, Missouri
Tuesday, May 12, 2020 – 6:00 p.m.

1. **CALL TO ORDER:** Mayor Ferguson called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.
2. **PRAYER AND PLEDGE:** Mayor Ferguson led the Council in prayer and the pledge of allegiance.

3. **ROLL CALL:**

Mayor Doyle Ferguson - present
Chairman Pro Tem Stephen Wiles - not present
Councilman Larry David Marks - present
Councilwoman Dawn Oplinger - present
Councilman Don McWade – present

4. **PUBLIC COMMENT**

A citizen desiring to speak on an item not on the agenda may do so at this time. Each citizen is limited to three minutes and the Council will not take action or discuss items at this time. Discussion should be limited to matters of City business and public comment is not permitted in regard to personnel matters or on pending legal matters. Items introduced under "Public Comment" may become agenda items at a later date.

Ed Witte addressed council about the possibility of rewriting the city's regulations on sign placement and the repercussions for violating those regulations.

5. **COUNCIL FORUM**

Council Forum provides an opportunity for Council Members to share information with the rest of the Council regarding communications with constituents, meetings attended, request items to be put on the agenda, make requests of staff, or direct questions to staff regarding issues that are not on the agenda.

Councilman McWade asked City Manager Holmes if he had checked in to the subject of not allowing candidates to go from door to door campaigning since the election has been delayed to June due to COVID-19. City Manager Holmes let council know that he had checked in to it and found that it is a 1st Amendment violation to put restrictions on the door to door campaigning.

Councilman McWade also addressed City Manager Holmes about his thoughts on an airport hangar and whether there were or should be restrictions on what could be stored in that hanger and insurance coverage on said airport hangar.

6. CONSENT AGENDA

Items listed on the 'Consent Agenda' are considered routine and shall be enacted by one motion of the City Council with no separate discussion. If separate discussion is desired by a member of the Council, that item will be removed from the 'Consent Agenda' and placed on the regular agenda as a final item under 'New Business'.

6.I. Approval Of Minutes: Regular Session Held On April 14, 2020

6.II. Approval of Appropriations: April 2020 Appropriations

6.III Approval of Appropriations: April/May 2020 Appropriations

Mayor Ferguson advised that there was an invoice to the Aurora Greenhouse in the appropriations for approval and that he would be abstaining from the vote.

Councilwoman Oplinger made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda. Councilman McWade seconded the motion. Motion passed with the following council members voting aye:

AYES: Marks, Oplinger, McWade

NAYES: 0

ABSTAIN: Ferguson

7. OLD BUSINESS

7.I. Aurora Municipal Airport – Fixed Base Operator Agreement - Resolution 2020-1731: Motion to approve the City Manager to execute an agreement with Aurora Aviation to provide professional full service fixed base operations at the Aurora Municipal Airport

Discussion was held regarding the contract with Aurora Aviation. City Manager Holmes explained the changes that were made to the contract following concerns voiced by Councilman McWade at the last council meeting. Mayor Ferguson made a motion to approve Resolution 2020-1731. Councilman McWade seconded the motion. Motion passed with the following council members voting aye:

AYES: Ferguson, Marks, Oplinger, McWade

NAYES: 0

ABSTAIN: 0

8. NEW BUSINESS

8.I. 2019 Audit Presentation By Marshall Decker with Decker & Degood

Marshall Decker presented the 2019 Audit. Mr. Decker explained the city's operating revenues, operating expenses, cash flow, and the reconciliation of revenues and expenditures.

9. STAFF REPORT/ORGANIZATIONAL BUSINESS

1. Board Liaison Report
2. City Manager Report

9.I. Board Liaison Report

Nothing to report at this time.

9.II. City Manager Report

City Manager Holmes voiced concerns regarding the Lawrence County Emergency Services Board and the distribution of funds from the ½ cent sales tax increase passed by the voters of Lawrence County. City Manager Holmes advised council that he and Chief Witthuhn had exhausted all their efforts and that it was his opinion that Council should facilitate a joint work session with the Lawrence County Emergency Services Board. Council agreed and Mayor Ferguson made a motion to request that City Manager Holmes facilitate a joint works session between the Aurora City Council and the Lawrence County Emergency Services Board. Councilwoman Oplinger seconded the motion. Motion passed with the following council members voting aye:

AYES: Ferguson, Oplinger, Marks, McWade

NAYES: 0

ABSTAIN: 0

City Manager Holmes moved forward with his regular City Manager Report. He covered budget expenditures, revenues, seasonal operations, operation issues, staff issues, staffing, and department items. City Manager Holmes explained his department heads are to still hold back on expenditures that are not mission critical. City Manager Holmes discussed economic expectations for 2020 and advised council that we had received the April sales tax receipts and that he remains cautiously optimistic. Full report attached.

10. CLOSED SESSION

Pursuant to RSMo 610.021

(1) Legal actions, causes of action or litigation involving public government body and any confidential or privileged communications between a public governmental body or its representatives and its attorneys.

(3) Hiring, firing, disciplining or promoting of particular employees by a public governmental body when personal information about the employee is discussed or recorded. However, any vote on a final decision, when taken by a public governmental body, to hire, fire, promote or discipline an employee of a public governmental body shall be made available with a record of how each member voted to the public within seventy-two hours of the close of the meeting where such action occurs; provided, however, that any employee so affected shall be entitled to prompt notice of such decision during the seventy-two-hour period before such decision is made available to the public. As used in this subdivision, the term "personal information" means information relating to the performance or merit of individual employees;

Councilwoman Oplinger made a motion to move in to closed session pursuant to 610.021 (1),(3) time noted 7:00 p.m. Mayor Ferguson seconded the motion. Motion passed with the following council members voting aye:

AYES: Ferguson, Oplinger, Marks, McWade

NAYES: 0

ABSTAIN: 0

Councilwoman Oplinger made a motion to move back into open session. Time noted 7:27 p.m. Councilman McWade seconded the motion. Motion passed with the following council members voting aye:

AYES: Ferguson, Oplinger, Marks, McWade

NAYES: 0

ABSTAIN: 0

11. ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Ferguson asked if there was anything further that needed to be discussed. There was nothing at this time. Councilwoman Oplinger made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:28 p.m. Mayor Ferguson seconded the motion. Motion passed with the following council members voting aye:

AYES: Ferguson, Oplinger, Marks, McWade

NAYES: 0

ABSTAIN: 0

To: Mayor Ferguson & Aurora City Council
From: Jon Holmes, City Manager, City of Aurora
Re: City Manager Report
Date: 05/12/2020

Report Items:

COVID19 Organizational Update

Financial Conditions:

As you know, the shutdown of several businesses in our community will likely have a serious impact on our finances and sales tax revenues.

2020 Budget Expenditures

At this time, I have directed all Dept. Heads that we need to hold back on expenditures that are not mission critical. Meaning, if it is not an expenditure that absolutely has to be made in order for the dept. to complete core responsibilities and duties, then it needs to wait. This would include any capital expenditures that we are not already contractually obligated to. The City Hall, windows for example, is already under contract. The only exception to that is probably the paving for this year. We really need to complete Lincoln Street. Other extra paving projects may need to wait till we see what happens with the economy.

All the dept. heads have been watching what is happening and are being careful with their dept. expenditures and understand the importance of this request. Also, this really is not a factor for the sewer system, primarily the departments that operate off sales tax revenue. But Orvil is also still being cautious with his expenditures.

2020 Revenues

Our March receipts came in only about \$10,000 under our projections for the month. With reduced travel and gas consumption, we can expect lower than expected gas tax receipts which impacts our transportation fund.

Forecasts that I am reading says that the expectation is that while there may be a challenging 2020, we just need to get through it and the economy should bounce back in 2021 if there are no surprises. So, we just need to be patient and hope that is the case. I will keep you informed and let you know what I am seeing on our monthly sales tax receipts when they come in. We still are in good shape on our cash reserves, so I am

concerned but not worried; we just need to be cautious and prudent with what we are doing and be conservative with our resources.

My overall assessment is that the remaining fiscal year (till December 31st) will be dedicated to getting our local economy back on track and rebounding. Discretionary projects will be delayed for the remainder of the year so that we can maintain ample cash reserves

2020 Revenues cont.

UPDATE:

I have good **cautiously optimistic** news to report on this.

April 2020 sales tax revenues have increased compared to April 2019 sales tax receipts. Our Year to Date (YTD) revenues are essentially even to what they were at this time last year. Copies of the State Distribution Notices are attached for you to review.

Seasonal Operations:

Currently, we are taking a very conservative approach to many of the normal seasonal City operations:

- City Pool – We expect a delayed opening due to COVID-19 precautions. No time frame at this time.
- Youth Sports Programs – Spring youth soccer and flag football will not occur. Depending on what happens regarding COVID19 restrictions being lifted, it is expected that fall youth sports will occur.
- Adult softball does not start until June, so barring extended COVID19 restrictions, that program will occur. Staff are working on having all fields ready.
- Little League is reviewing their options
- Special Events
 - The Historical Society concert waiting for information from the Governor's office and the County Health Dept. before making any decisions regarding this event
 - Light the Night - waiting for information from the Governor's office and the County Health Dept. before making any decisions regarding this event.

Operational Issues

The City Treasurer and I have responded to Federal requests regarding getting registered with the Federal Emergency Management Agency and Dept. of Homeland Security to submit reimbursement requests for COVID19 expenditures – Personal Protective Equipment, overtime, pandemic/quarantine leave, overtime, and other expenditures related to preparation and response to COVID19 can be reimbursed back to the City from the Federal government. We are tracking these expenses in order to submit them; a special line item has been opened in our accounting software to track these expenditures.

Staff Issues

Pandemic Response Staff Issues - The Federal legislation that was passed by the U.S. Congress and became effective April 2, 2020. This federal legislation provides for guaranteed leave for our employees as it relates to COVID19. This legislation also provides for reimbursement from the federal government for any time off for our

employees when leave is used by our employees for COVID19 related issues. The City Treasurer, Betty Baum, is the timekeeper and processes time sheets for our employees; she and the City Manager have been keeping track of this information and the leave that is used by our employees under this legislation for future reimbursement. We have kept our employees informed of this information and have been working with the Dept. Heads on this issue as it has come up with some of our employees over the last several weeks.

Staffing – One of the biggest concerns that has been expressed by the employees has been that of possible staff reductions or furloughs. Overall, this is not a consideration, and, in many cases, it is not a possibility.

Staff Reduction - In most every dept. the City operates at minimum staff level, and a reduction in the amount of people would directly correlate to a reduction of services to the public. The City cannot reduce staff without substantially reducing the services that is provided to the citizens and guarantee the current level of safety, responsiveness, and overall welfare of the community.

Reduction of Hours – we face much of the same dilemma in this proposal. Reducing hours of staff can reduce the level of services that the community receives. It is also can be very detrimental to the workforce, morale within the organization and employee welfare. At this time, I do not believe things to be so dire that this should be a consideration. I firmly believe that this only be a last resort consideration after fully exhausting all other alternatives. However, I would say that I have been calculating the cost-benefits that we could expect if this option needed to be considered.

Discussion, Questions or Concerns?

Dept. Items

• Police

- The Senior Parade was a success and was enjoyed by our community. Congratulations to our Seniors.

• Street & Cemetery

- Paving projects are being prepared – Lincoln and Elm Streets – Working to get street milling scheduled in the next few weeks
- Branch/Limb pickup is next week beginning Monday (Dependent of the weather)
- Memorial Day preparations are being completed at the Cemetery
 - Flag Raising at Veterans Memorial – Saturday the 23rd
 - Flag posting on the graves of Veterans

• Park

- Pool maintenance work is being completed in anticipation of a pool opening date (hopefully)
- Baldwin Park has been reopened
- Softball Fields, tennis courts, and the skate park are being reopened
- Playgrounds remain closed at the direction of Governor Parson's Executive Orders from April 27th, 2020 and the Lawrence County Health Dept.

• Stormwater

- Nothing to report

• Wastewater

- Work for the U.V. project at the sewer plant has begun – no updates at this time; it has been too wet to work on this project.

- Began work on initial Wastewater Treatment plant improvements
 - Filter Replacement Project – engineering moving forward
 - Submittal of application for State Revolving Fund completed
- TREKK is beginning work on this year's round of I & I sewer line rehab.
- **Admin. & Finance**
 - Sales Tax Renewal Information Meetings TBD – All meetings at City hall, Council Chambers
 - Laptops for Council have been ordered for paperless agendas – Update: On back order at this time
 - Planning a meeting for Historical Preservation discussion for Downtown – Meeting with State Historical Preservation Office UPDATE: Will be rescheduled
 - Cleaning old files
 - Cleaning the basement storage areas ◦ Surplus equipment – council direction
 - A Downtown Street light was damaged by a driver – we are looking at what a replacement is going to cost and we will forward that bill to the drivers insurance and the driver when we know what the cost will be to replace it
 - Drivers License Testing will resume here at City hall on May 18th
- **Planning & Code Enforcement**
 - P&Z Meetings – June 2nd for two items
 - Liberty Service Center proposal
- **Fire**
 - Chief Ward and Staff have been sitting in on MO Emergency Management Agency teleconferences regarding the COVID-19 outbreak. The FD has been following the recommended preparation and planning activities from the MO-EMA

Meetings/Events Attended:

- Meeting with engineers about Liberty Service Center project

Upcoming Meetings and Events Attending:

- Memorial Day – May 25th – City Hall Closed

Follow-Up Items/Misc. Items

- None

APPROVED:

Doyle Ferguson, Mayor

ATTEST:

Kimberly Breedlove, City Clerk