

Remote City Council Retreat (Thursday, July 30, 2020)

Generated by Jennifer R Sorrell on Thursday, July 30, 2020

Council Members present

Councilmember Adam Loos, Councilmember Jessica Bradshaw, Councilmember Jeff Doherty, Councilmember Lee Fronabarger, Councilmember Tom Grant, Councilmember Carolin Harvey, and Mayor John M Henry

Meeting called to order at 8:04 AM

1. Roll Call and Introductions

2. Citizens' Comments

3. Council Comments

Mayor Henry asked Council if they were comfortable in holding an executive session in this format. He suggested holding off until August.

Councilmember Harvey asked if there could be a special executive session in person. The City Clerk noted that such meeting would need to begin as an open session with the public present, which would be concerning with the number of COVID cases spiking.

Councilmember Doherty asked if the City Manager would have any concerns about delaying the review.

Councilmember Fronabarger noted that if the executive session were to be the only item, not many people would show up for such meeting.

Councilmember Bradshaw inquired about the ability to secure the privacy of the Council discussion in executive session. Finance Director Davis responded to her inquiry.

City Manager Williams indicated he was willing to defer the meeting, but that he would like to have the results provided to him so that he knew what issues to work on.

The City Clerk asked the City Attorney to offer suggestions on how to address the semi-annual review of closed meeting minutes.

4. General Business

Action: 4.1 Ordinance Establishing a Temporary Requirement for Face Coverings While in Public Places

Councilmembers noted that if the State doesn't take action, the City may need to close bars and/or restaurants; discussed the issues contributing to spread of COVID; that the Chancellor will be helping to address the issue of parties; raised rumors of private parties in excess of occupancy limits at a local bar and what actions the City can take to mitigate these issues; accountability measures for bars; discussion regarding re-implementing emergency authority; the extent of the Health Department's authority; questions about the enforcement of and penalties for

violations of the face-covering ordinance; and challenges for businesses in enforcing the wearing of masks.

MOTION: Adopt an Ordinance establishing a temporary requirement for wearing face coverings while in public places

Motion by Adam Loos, second by Carolin Harvey.

Final Resolution: Motion Carries

Yea: Adam Loos, Jessica Bradshaw, Jeff Doherty, Lee Fronabarger, Tom Grant, Carolin Harvey, John M Henry (*Ordinance 2020-20; Exhibit A-07-30-2020*)

5. City Council Discussion

Discussion: 5.1 **City Council Discussion of Municipal Finances**

There was discussion about which years to focus on, declines in revenue in specific categories, the reduction in dollars captured by 1/4% sales tax increments, the trends of expenditures separated by areas of government, pension requirements, the effects of extending the deadline of reaching 90% funding on police and fire pensions, how other municipalities are experiencing and addressing the rising costs, the impact of staffing as it relates to pension costs, and the impact of federal grants funds for hiring police officers post-9/11.

Next, a review of real estate property tax trends from 1999 to the present for the City, District 95, District 165, Carbondale Library, and Carbondale Parks was undertaken. Council members shared their thoughts regarding whether or not real estate tax increases would be necessary, supported, other options which may be available, and what such increases would need to be accompanied by; actions that other taxing bodies should consider; the impact that real estate taxes have on home sales and the Equalized Assessed Value (EAV); an inquiry into what is required to switch to a unit school system; and comments and questions regarding the reason for increasing education costs.

Employee-related costs were considered next. This included a review of health insurance costs since 1999; the impact of a self-insured plan leading to a decrease in annual increases; a review of decreasing staffing levels across the various City departments; recent actions and expected changes in the near future; and actions taken due to budgeted increases for contracted and NBU employees. As some units were not willing to forego increases, the 2.5% increase will have to be offset by furlough or other unpaid leave options. The possibility of reducing the operational hours or a hybrid of furlough and reduced hours was discussed. Modified work schedules were briefly discussed as alternatives.

The City has reached a point where we must either reduce services or increase revenues due to the structural imbalance in the budget; additionally, we need to be mindful of external threats, and to increase our payments to pension obligations. Carbondale's strengths are that we have a strong debt position, have strong liquidity, and we are a home rule community.

Recommendations from staff are to adopt a real estate tax levy policy which should be a percentage of the public safety pension requirement which will increase/decrease accordingly; to consider new revenue opportunities, such as raising sales tax, a combination of increasing sales tax and reducing other home rule taxes, and implementing a stormwater utility fee; and to defer capital investments in the short-term, such as implementing grant-funded projects or those

required to maintain regulatory compliance, and utilizing existing revenue streams to mitigate threats.

Council discussed these options including opening a dialogue with the school districts to have a collective approach on property taxes, conducting a review of minimum staffing levels of the City to maintain services, focusing on increased economic development, increasing entertainment options in Carbondale, focus on improving tourism, and identifying short term and long term options. There was discussion relating to home rule authority and the actions which will be needed as a result of the census.

Discussion: 5.2 Impressionistic Summary - An Opportunity for the Council to Comment on the Retreat

Councilman Loos suggested conducting August meetings remotely and considering looking at other platform options, particularly for executive sessions. Mayor Henry agreed that staff needs time to look at options and suggested Council members can meet with the City Manager individually. Concerns about security were expressed. As the results of the Council's individual reviews were already compiled, it was decided that the Mayor and Councilmember Doherty would share those findings with the City Manager and discuss it with him.

Council members shared their thoughts about the retreat and the issues discussed. The possibility of a meeting dedicated to the parks discussion was raised. Waiting for the auditor's review of the records of the materials provided by the Park District prior to holding such a meeting was suggested. Further, there was discussion about topics of concern and focus, such as declines in enrollment.

6. Executive Session

Action: 6.1 Vote to Enter into Executive Session to Conduct the Semi-annual Review of Closed Meeting Minutes and to Discuss the Appointment, Employment, Compensation, Discipline, Performance, or Dismissal of Specific Employees of the Public Body

Council did not exit open session.

Action: 6.2 Motion to Return to Open Session

Action: 6.3 Approval of the Executive Session Meeting Minutes from August 13 and October 22, 2019, and February 11 and February 25, 2020; Declare Whether the Need for Confidentiality Exists, in Whole or in Part, for Closed Meeting Minutes from March 17, 1998, through February 25, 2020; and Authorize the Destruction of Audio Recordings of Executive Session Meetings That Were Conducted More Than 18 Months Ago for Which Minutes Have Been Approved

The City Attorney advised the Council about acting on the semi-annual closed meeting minute review. It was decided to take such action without entering into executive session.

MOTION: Approve the minutes from August 13 and October 22, 2019, and February 11 and February 25, 2020, to declare that the need for confidentiality exists in whole or in part to keep minutes from March 17, 1998, through February 25, 2020, and to approve the destruction of

audio recordings of executive session meeting that were conducted more than 18 months ago for which the minutes have already been approved. Motion by Jeff Doherty, second by Carolin Harvey.

Final Resolution: Motion Carries

Yea: Adam Loos, Jessica Bradshaw, Jeff Doherty, Lee Fronabarger, Tom Grant, Carolin Harvey, John M Henry

7. Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the public body, the meeting was declared adjourned at 11:41 a.m.

Jennifer R. Sorrell, City Clerk

Date