

City Council met for a Special Called Emergency City Council meeting on March 25, 2020, virtually using Zoom.com and streaming live on the city's Facebook account due to the need to consider matters that are of urgent public necessity, specifically to consider matters directly related to COVID-19, with Mayor Pro-Tem McWaters presiding.

MEMBERS PRESENT ON ZOOM: Councilmember Marilyn Clay, Mayor Pro-Tem Carolyn McWaters, Councilmember Fred Terrell, City Attorney David Olson, Councilmember Danny Lee, Councilmember Jennifer Bergman, City Manager Kelly McDonald and City Secretary Angela Smith

EMPLOYEES: Watching on Zoom were Darrel Broussard, Sean Anderson, Mary Hale, Jennifer Jeude, Mary Cohn, Jeremy Chesnutt, Ashleigh Broussard, and Mary Ann Harrison

Mayor Pro-Tem McWaters called the emergency meeting to order at 10:02 am and stated there was a quorum and that this is a virtual meeting on Zoom and is on the city's Facebook account as a Facebook Live event. The invocation was given by Danny Lee and no pledges given since online.

Public Comments

1. Public Comments

Jim Bloss submitted an email request for public comments. He spoke on Senator Nichols press release that he is not in support of stay home actions.

Discussion and Action

2. Consider council support on the Executive Order of Liberty County Judge Stay Safe Emergency Measures dated March 24, 2020, and authorize the Mayor Pro-Tem to sign document in support of said order.

City Manager Kelly McDonald reviewed the order from the Liberty County Judge Knight that is effective midnight March 24, 2020 to April 3, midnight. The more we can comply the better we are as we only have one confirmed test in Liberty County.

Mayor Pro-Tem Carolyn McWaters spoke that the reason she called this meeting is to get each of the council's opinion on this order and that the judge is asking Cleveland to sign the order with the other two larger cities and that we are in a little different situation since she is just Mayor Pro-Tem.

Councilmember Bergman stated that she has had time to review the order and understands the stay at home position. However council's approval on this order is not necessary and has zero meaning. All local businesses had closed but did not have time to do anything. There has been no point of contact to answer questions they have. Just not in favor of doing something we (as council) have no control over. She encourage people to follow the order set by the judge.

Councilmember Lee understands the judge's order and has been in his house already. His heart goes out to those businesses but better safe than sorry so he would be good to go with the judge's order.

Councilmember Clay – would like to go with the judge and the numbers are low. Do what they are telling us and stop the spread and be patient.

Councilmember Terrell –He is good for judge’s order. Follow the CDC guidelines.

City Attorney Olson stated that Carolyn McWaters is acting as Mayor and appreciates all council’s opinions. Mayor Pro-Tem McWaters did not want to do anything without council’s review. She also stated that there is no hotline number for Liberty County.

City Manager McDonald said that the test updates are coming back mostly negative at this time. Thanked the public for their help. City facilities are closed to the public but the employees are still here to help the public.

Mayor Pro-Tem stated that the judge was asking for her signature on the order as unity of the county but wanted all of council to agree first.

City Attorney David Olson stated that the signatures of the Mayor Pro-Tem does not affect the order and that the judge must have felt the need to include that on this order but it does not have any legal recourse.

Discussion about COVID-19 testing occurred.

City Attorney Olson reiterated that this is not a council action and that Mayor Pro-Tem McWaters is just looking for a unanimous vote by council if they wish her to add her signature but she has the authority to do so under the disaster declaration.

Councilmember Bergman again stated her not in favor of signing since it had zero meaning and that the judge failed to include other cities in the county. She supports the order.

Roll call on signatures: Clay, Terrell, Lee stating “AYE” with Bergman stating “NAY”. So Mayor Pro-Tem McWaters stated that she will not be adding her signature to the order but still supports it.

Adjourn

Councilmember Terrell made a motion to adjourn with a second from Mayor Pro-Tem McWaters. Meeting adjourned at 10:54 am.

PASSED AND APPROVED this 21st day of April 2020.


Carolyn McWaters, Mayor Pro-Tem

ATTEST:


Angela Smith, City Secretary TRMC