

SPECIAL MEETING-ROANOKE CITY COUNCIL

March 27, 2020

2:00 p.m.

A special meeting of the Roanoke City Council was called to order on Friday, March 27, 2020 at 2:00 p.m., in the Council Chamber, Room 450, Noel C. Taylor Municipal Building, 215 Church Avenue, S. W., Roanoke, Virginia, with participation by Members of City Council by electronic communication as permitted and authorized by Virginia Code Section 2.2-3708.2 (A)(3) and pursuant to Resolution No. 41698-031620 adopted by the Council on Monday, March 16, 2020; with Mayor Sherman P. Lea, Sr., presiding, pursuant to written notification by the City Manager dated March 25, 2020.

PRESENT: Council Members Michelle L. Davis, Djuna L. Osborne, Anita J. Price, Patricia White-Boyd, William D. Bestpitch, Joseph L. Cobb and Mayor Sherman P. Lea, Sr.-7.

ABSENT: None-0.

The Mayor declared the existence of a quorum.

OFFICERS PRESENT: Robert S. Cowell, Jr., City Manager; Daniel J. Callaghan, City Attorney; and Cecelia F. McCoy, City Clerk.

Mayor Lea advised that the purpose of this Special Meeting of Council was to address the state of emergency declared by Governor Ralph S. Northam on March 12, 2020 pursuant to Executive Order Number Fifty-One regarding the COVID-19 pandemic disaster, and supplemented by Executive Order Number Fifty-Three issued on March 23, 2020. This Special Meeting will allow City Council to consider measures in response to the COVID-19 pandemic disaster, including the continuity of City government pursuant to Virginia Code Section 15.2-1413, as set forth below:

EMERGENCY ORDINANCE: Council Member Davis offered the following emergency ordinance effectuating temporary changes in certain deadlines, modifying public meeting practices and procedures to address continuity of operations associated with the pandemic disaster, authorizing the City Manager to set the dates and times of public hearings for the FY 2021 Budget and other matters, establishing an effective date:

(#41703-032720) AN EMERGENCY ORDINANCE effectuating temporary changes in certain deadlines; modifying public meeting and public hearing practices and procedures to address continuity of operations associated with pandemic disaster; authorizing the city manager to set the dates and time of public hearings for the FY 2021 budget and other matters; establishing an effective date; and dispensing with the second reading of this emergency ordinance by title.

(For full text of ordinance, see Ordinance Book No. 81, page 1.)

Council Member Davis moved the adoption of Ordinance No. 41703-032720. The motion seconded by Council Member Osborne and adopted by the following vote:

AYES: Council Members Davis, Osborne, Price, White-Boyd, Bestpitch, Cobb and Mayor Lea-7.

NAYS: None-0.

REPEALING RESOLUTION NO. 41698-031620: Council Member White-Boyd offered the following emergency ordinance to establish repealing Resolution No. 41698-031620, adopted on March 16, 2020; and adopting a restated written policy for participation in City Council agenda meetings through electronic communication:

(#41704-032720) A RESOLUTION repealing Resolution No. 41698-031620, adopted on March 16, 2020; and adopting a restated written policy for participation in City Council agenda meetings through electronic communication.

(For full text of resolution, see Resolution Book No. 81, page 5.)

Council Member White-Boyd moved the adoption of Resolution No. 41704-032720. The motion seconded by Council Member Bestpitch.

Council Member Bill Bestpitch asked for a brief explanation of the difference between the current Ordinance and the Ordinance adopted on March 16, 2020; wherein, the City Attorney stated that the change arose from a statement made on March 16 with regard to limitation of participation at meetings; and advised the original Ordinance was not clear on the limitation of two meetings per year, and the restated Ordinance clarified the concern.

Additionally, Council Member Bestpitch questioned in terms of maintaining the continuity of the government, and whether it was unsafe for Boards to assemble for a meeting.

Mr. Callaghan responded that the first measure (3.a.) addressed some of those issues in terms of allowing some remote types of meetings and adjusting the ability of the body to either have some remote meetings and other issues. He further stated that City administration will not schedule public hearings for the month of April and noted that the City Manager previously provided City Council with a schedule advising a Public Hearing would have occurred on April 30, that public hearing will now be at the determination of the City Manager and likely to occur in May.

There being no additional questions and/or comments by the Council Members, Resolution No. 41704-032720 was adopted by the following vote:

AYES: Council Members Davis, Osborne, Price, White-Boyd, Bestpitch, Cobb and Mayor Lea-7.

NAYS: None-0.

SUSPENSION OF FARES FOR TRANSIT SERVICES: Council Member Price offered the following ordinance ratifying and approving the suspension of fares for transit services provided by Greater Roanoke Transit Company d/b/a Valley Metro:

(#41705-032720) AN ORDINANCE ratifying and approving the suspension of fares for transit services provided by Greater Roanoke Transit Company (GRTC) d/b/a/ Valley Metro; authorizing the City Manager to take certain actions; and dispensing with the second reading of this ordinance by title.

(For full text of ordinance, see Ordinance Book No. 81, page 7.)

Council Member Price moved the adoption of Ordinance No. 41705-032720. The motion seconded by Council Member Davis.

Council Member Price thanked Council for taking action to provide this service to the ridership of Roanoke Valley and pointed out that this service and suspension of fares begins on March 27, 2020; asked if there was an impact on the bus routes; and thanked bus drivers, operators and staff for going beyond the call of duty.

The City Manager replied that currently all routes were running on schedule and April 24, 2020 was the anticipated end date.

Council Member White-Boyd inquired about the number of riders allowed per bus; whereupon, the City Manager replied that currently there were no changes in the number of riders on the bus and reiterated the main reason was to accelerate boarding processes so there was no congregation at the doors.

Council Member Davis commented that the City received an unexpected grant funding from the Department of Rail and Public Transportation to cover loss of fares and a temporary relief as an emergency effort; and asked whether there was a limit on how much could be drawn from the grant source either in duration of time or total amount.

Sherman Stovall, Assistant City Manager for Operations, explained that the funding was not a grant, it was a special allocation of funding from the Department of Rail and Public Transportation that was allocated to all transit systems within the Commonwealth of Virginia to help offset losses, and it was a fixed amount.

There being no additional questions and/or comments by the Council Members, Resolution No. 41705-032720 was adopted by the following vote:

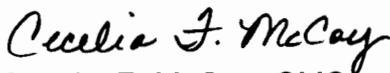
AYES: Council Members Davis, Osborne, Price, White-Boyd, Bestpitch, Cobb and Mayor Lea-7.

NAYS: None-0.

There being no further business to come before the Council, Mayor Lea declared the special meeting adjourned at 2:26 p.m.

A P P R O V E D

ATTEST:


Cecelia F. McCoy, CMC
City Clerk


Sherman P. Lea, Sr.
Mayor
