SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING
MARCH 16, 2020

Mayor Casavant called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

Roll Call: William Emhiser, John McCurry, Jr., Stephen St. Cyr, Amy Clearwater, Norman Belanger, Michael Ready, Doris Ortiz, Marc Lessard

Robert Quattrone, Jr. was excused.

The Council, and all who were present, recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

There were no adjustments to the agenda.

Orders of the Day:

2020.15 IN BOARD OF CITY COUNCIL..MARCH 16, 2020

BE IT ORDERED, that the City Council of the City of Biddeford does hereby authorize an Emergency Declaration for the City of Biddeford. This Emergency Declaration includes, but is not limited to:

- Discontinuance of **all** ***City Governmental*** public meetings until further notice.
- Council authorization for the continuation of normal and necessary City operations that typically require Municipal Official approval. This includes, but is not limited to:
  - Payroll
  - Issuance of permits and licenses
  - Issuance of financial warrants
- The closure of all City-owned public buildings to the public, ***to the extent determined by the City Manager.***.

The order further empowers the City Manager or his designee to take all reasonable actions in order to carry forth the daily operations of the City, however, all decisions will be made in consultation with the Mayor and Council President.

This order may be modified based on changing circumstances and as new information dictates. The order shall remain in effect until revoked, amended or otherwise administratively changed.

The Mayor and Council President may call a Special Council Meeting at their discretion.

NOTE: This order does not include the approval of any amendments to the City's Code of Ordinances.

Motion by Councilor McCurry, seconded by Councilor Clearwater to gran the order.

City Manager, James Bennett explained the reason for this Order. Staff, in consultation with the Mayor and Council President have been working on coming up with the best strategies to address the coronavirus pandemic affecting our community. A Declaration of Emergency has been drafted to assist Staff and the Municipal Officers to address this pandemic and be responsive to the needs of the community and City employees. The City needs to be proactive in assisting to flatten the curve – to help with the curbing of the spread of the virus. Numerous measures have been taken thus far, including:

- To date, there is no longer public access inside the public safety buildings. Folks can still access the lobby areas of the Police and Fire Departments, but no further inside than the lobby.

- A special phone number has been set up that folks can call to get information on changes in City operations. The number is: (207) 284-9020.

- Human Resources has identified the at-risk employees and are working with them to come up with the best way to keep them working while keeping them safe.

- The Community Center has been closed, with the exception of Meals on Wheels, which will continue their service to the City's shut ins.

- Cleaning practices have been changed, and hand sanitizers have been installed throughout City Hall.

- A drop box will be utilized for folks to drop off payments.

- MMA has been asked to identify ways to continue to hold meetings off site and/or virtually.

The intention is to keep Staff whole during this process. Staff is still expected to work the typical 40 hours a week, with exception for those who are ill or have childcare issues due to the closure of the schools.

Motion by Councilor Lessard, seconded by Councilor McCurry to move into Executive Session, per 1 MRSA 405(6)(D) – Labor Contracts.
Vote: Unanimous. Time: 5:47 p.m.

Motion by Councilor Clearwater, seconded by Councilor Lessard to move out of Executive Session.
Vote: Unanimous. Time: 6:09 p.m.

Motion by Councilor Clearwater, seconded by Councilor Lessard to amend the order, third bullet, by adding, "**to the extent determined by the City Manager**."
Vote: Unanimous.

Motion by Councilor Clearwater, seconded by Councilor Belanger to amend the order, first bullet, by specifying **City Governmental** public meetings.
Vote: Unanimous.

Motion by Councilor Belanger, seconded by Councilor McCurry to amend the order by adding at the end of the order, "**The Mayor and Council President may call a Special Council Meeting at their discretion**."
Vote: Unanimous.

Vote on order, as amended: Unanimous.

Committee-of-the-Whole: Discussion of Bond Referendum Questions and Amounts for June 9, 2020 Election
Motion by Councilor McCurry, seconded by Councilor Clearwater to move into Committee-of-the-Whole.
Vote: Unanimous. Time: 6:30 p.m.

The assumption is that the Council will be able to meet on March 31, 2020 for the first reading, and then on April 7, 2020 for the second reading to send the bond referendum(s) to the voters.

The Council was generally in favor of the School Department Bond Referendum.

Councilor Lessard suggested coming up with a list of possible bond items, get it out to the public, and let citizens contact their Councilor and communicate what items they feel are most important and that they'd like to see the Council support for bonding.

Councilor St. Cyr is not convinced that this is the best time to go out with such a large bond package - especially with respect to the current pandemic situation.

Councilor Clearwater is in favor to get the ball rolling, to have the conversation, at a time that seems to be convenient.

It was discussed that the interest rates are so low right now, that it seems like the right time for the City to go to bond for many of the proposed projects.

Councilors Belanger and Ready suggested including city buildings in the bond. City Manager, Jim Bennett suggested maybe starting with $10 to $12 million for City buildings.

Councilor Belanger threw out the number of $17 million to cover all the buildings that had been discussed in the City Manager's memo.

Councilor Lessard would take the number to $20 million, knowing that the number will more than likely be brought down.

A majority of the Councilors were in favor of going with $17 million for the bond package, which is the direction the City Manager was given.

Jim suggested that the bond be worded in such a way that city buildings and other city facilities would be included in the bond packet. The Council agreed

Motion by Councilor Lessard, seconded by Councilor Clearwater to move out of Committee-of-the-Whole.
Vote: Unanimous. Time: 7:04 p.m.

Other Business:
Councilor McCurry: announced that in light of the school closures, the Biddeford School Department is offering bag lunches to children up to 18 years old at BMS, JFK, the Library and the APEX (the former Community Bike Center).

Councilor Ready: announced that Seeds of Hope is currently closed to the public; however are offering curbside food service from 9:00am to noon.

Councilor Belanger: wished everyone a Happy St. Patrick's Day.

Councilor Clearwater: encouraged everyone to sign up for the *Biddeford Beat* to help stay informed; and/or to call the special number set up by the City for informational purposes – 284-9020.

Councilor Ready: suggested that the City use Public Access as a way to get information out and keep citizens up to date with the measures being taken by the City.

Motion by Councilor McCurry, seconded by Councilor Lessard to adjourn.
Vote: Unanimous. Time: 7:09 p.m.

Attest by:_____
Carmen J. Morris, City Clerk