

**DRAFT MINUTES
CITY OF LAKE ALFRED
CITY COMMISSION MEETING
MONDAY, APRIL 20, 2020
CITY HALL**

Call to Order: Mayor Nancy Daley

Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance: Police Chief Art Bodenheimer

Roll Call: Those in attendance were Mayor Nancy Daley, Vice Mayor Jack Dearmin, Commissioner Charles Lake, and Commissioner Brent Eden,

Absent: Commissioner Albertus Maultsby.

Staff in attendance: City Manager Ryan Leavengood, Assistant City Attorney Seth Claytor, City Clerk Ameé Bailey, Public Works Director John Deaton, Fire Chief Wallace Nix (via Zoom), Police Chief Art Bodenheimer, and Parks and Recreation Director Richard Weed (via Zoom).

City Manager Announcements:

City Manager Leavengood stated that Commissioner Maultsby chose to stay home for tonight's meeting due to health issues. He then provided an update on the staff's response to the current state of emergency in the City. He discussed the County and State conference meetings and how the conversation has changed over time. The discussions moved from the present closings to what the City will look like when the pandemic is over. Changes have been made in all departments, employees are wearing masks, and other precautions are being taken. There is a collaboration between cities, through conference calls and contacts throughout the County.

City Attorney Announcements:

No comment.

Commissioner Lake moved to excuse **Commissioner Maultsby**, seconded by **Vice Mayor Dearmin**. A unanimous voice call vote approved the motion.

Recognition of Citizens:

No one came forward.

Consent Agenda:

Commissioner Lake moved to approve the Consent Agenda, seconded by **Commissioner Eden**. A unanimous voice call vote approved the motion.

Agenda:

1.) Emergency Ordinance: 1434-20: Public Meeting Schedules & Procedures (Covid-19)

Mayor Daley asked for clarification regarding the advertising requirements for this ordinance.

Assistant City Attorney Claytor stated that the City Charter allows emergency ordinances to be a first and only read.

Assistant City Attorney Claytor read Ordinance 1434-20 title into the record.

City Manager Leavengood stated in response to the Covid-19 pandemic the City of Lake Alfred has canceled public meetings and events. The city offices are closed to the public, and operations have been reduced following the CDC recommendations and executive orders issued by Governor DeSantis.

On the March 16, 2020, regular meeting, the City Commission ratified the decision to cancel public events and meetings through April 17, thereby canceling the first regular commission meeting in April. Section 2.08 of the City Charter requires the Commission to meet regularly once per month.

Governor DeSantis has issued a series of executive orders setting aside rules, procedures, ordinances, and other laws that interfere with the prescribed response to this emergency (i.e., Stay at Home & social distancing). Executive Order 2020-69 states that for the duration of the state of emergency, Florida's statutory laws requiring that a quorum of any local governing body is physically present or that the meeting be held at a specific place has been suspended.

The proposed emergency ordinance has a duration of sixty (60) days from the date of passage and gives the City Manager the ability to cancel/call meetings during that time. The proposed ordinance also allows the City to utilize communications media technology (CMT) as needed for those meetings.

Other cities have implemented procedures to conduct remote meetings through teleconferencing and other media or a hybrid approach with limited access in chambers, remote sites, or public comment through phone, email, or platforms such as Zoom with mixed results.

We do not have a backlog of agenda items that need to move forward at this time and can comfortably hold off on resuming meetings until June. If the declared state of emergency extends into or through June, we can call special meetings as needed to address required action items and look to implementing CMT elements at that time.

Staff recommended approval of Ordinance 1434-20 on final reading.

Commissioner Eden asked if a special meeting would be needed to return to a regular meeting schedule.

City Manager Leavengood explained the flexibility within the emergency ordinance, stating the way it was written the City could return to regular meetings or call special meetings, whatever the need dictates. When the City resumes business, there will be advertising requirements, and the first meeting may be light by necessity.

Mayor Daley asks how citizens will know when the City Commission meetings have restarted. She also expressed concern that the City would resume activities, and another wave of the virus would show up.

City Manager Leavengood stated there is a possibility for a reoccurrence of the virus, which supports the need for communications media technology. The City has already been using a Zoom platform for conference calls with other City Managers, Polk County operational personnel, and department heads. As we gear back up, the City may use different technologies to conduct meetings. Adoption of this ordinance will alleviate the requirements of a specific place and in-person meetings.

Mayor Daley stated by design, the agendas will be lighter, and there will be less public participation at each meeting.

Assistant City Attorney Claytor stated the City has the means to hold a virtual meeting if it is needed.

Mayor Daley stated the City has the means for a virtual meeting, but she is unsure the residents will have a way to take advantage of a virtual meeting. She asked if there were any city staff that had been furloughed.

City Manager Leavengood stated that no one had been furloughed, discretion has been given to department heads to meet the intent of the Governors order. What has changed is the interaction between City staff during the day. There is more of a delineation between shifts, breakrooms are closed, and a rotation of employees has been implemented. If the Department Head sends someone home, that employee will be on administrative leave, the same as if the City was dealing with a hurricane.

Commissioner Eden asked if all employees are receiving their full paycheck.

City Manager Leavengood stated everyone is receiving their full pay. There were a few employees that applied for the FMLA, but that was at the onset, and the City was still at regular operation.

Mayor Daley opened the public hearing, seeing no one closed the public hearing.

Commissioner Lake moved to approve emergency Ordinance 1434-20, seconded by **Vice Mayor Dearmin**. A unanimous voice call vote approved the motion.

Mayor Daley asks the City Manager to expand on the financial issues associated with the current state of emergency and asked for a consensus for the City Manager to draft a letter to the Governor regarding financial aid for smaller cities.

Assistant City Attorney Claytor stated the emergency order provides the City Manager the opportunity to pursue financial assistance.

Commissioner Eden asked what revenue items will be affected by the shutdown.

City Manager Leavengood stated the City would likely see revenue losses in user fees, late fees, rental fees, and state revenue sharing items such as sales tax, franchise fees, and the gas tax. The City may become a sub-recipient of the County. They may deal with the Federal Government and receive funds to distribute to the smaller cities. The City will be cutting costs on discretionary spending for the rest of the fiscal year and pay attention to the revenue totals in July.

Commissioner Lake asked if there is a possibility of raising homeowners' taxes. He also asked if there has been a lot of late fees and will they be added to the past-due accounts.

City Manager Leavengood stated he would be very cautious of raising homeowners' taxes if the economy is damaged. The last thing the City would not want to exacerbate the taxpayers' situation. Finance Director Deaton reported earlier that there were approximately 240 delinquent utility accounts.

Mayor Daley stated the question for the City is how we are going to handle the delinquent accounts. She asked if the City will be able to come up with some type of payment plan.

City Manager Leavengood stated it would depend on how long the stay home order continues. The City may come up with some type of payment plan to help residents get caught up on their past due accounts. The City will start sending reminders out to let everyone know if their bill is late.

Commissioner Lake asked if the City has waived past due fees, will residents be billed for the late fees along with the unpaid balances, and on what will the payment plan be based.

City Manager Leavengood stated the late fees would not be collected as part of the payment plan.

Commissioner Eden suggested residents being able to make payments over 12 months to catch up on their utility account, for those that qualify.

Recognition of Citizens:

Chief Bodenheimer reminded everyone of the graduating seniors, asking if anyone has the chance to do something special for them, please do so.

Commissioner Questions and Comments:

Vice Mayor Dearmin thanked the City Manager, staff, and first responders for their work.

Mayor Daley stated she is grateful for the financial state of the City. She appreciates everything the City has done and would like to continue helping the citizens as much as possible.

Commissioner Eden asked about personal protection equipment for the first responders and encouraged the City to provide as much information and communication as possible to the community.

City Manager Leavengood stated if there is a consensus, he would like to draft a letter from the Mayor and Commissioners to send to the residents detailing the efforts of the City along with a positive message.

Commissioner Lake stated he had not heard any complaints, and he is spreading the City messages via his Facebook page. He also prints out the article and posts it at his subdivisions mailbox kiosk. The City is doing a great job, and he appreciates it.

Mayor Daley announced that the June Ridge League Dinner had been canceled

With no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:30 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,



Mamie Drane
Deputy City Clerk

Reviewed by,



Ameen Bailey
City Clerk