

City of North Saint Paul
November 12, 2019
Adopted City Council Special Meeting Minutes

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Furlong called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

II. ROLL CALL

Present: Council Member Thorsen
Council Member Petersen
Council Member Walczak
Council Member Sonnek
Mayor Furlong

Staff: City Manager Scott Duddeck, City Engineer Morgan Dawley, Deputy Clerk Jennie Kloos.

III. CITY BUSINESS ACTION ITEMS & RECOMMENDATIONS

City Manager Scott Duddeck requested an additional Agenda Item for tonight's meeting related to Covid-19 and City Operations. The City Council agreed.

A. Canvassing of the 2020 Municipal Election Results

Mr. Duddeck stated the election process went very smoothly considering the large number of ballots that were received in Ramsey County.

Mr. Duddeck reviewed Election Canvass Results as follows:

Jan Walczak – 1,367 votes
John Wahl – 721 votes
Jason Nordby – 833 votes
Tim Cole – 1,888 votes
Laura Greenlee-Karp – 1,208 votes
Arthur Alvarez, Jr. – 556 votes
Steven Anderson – 442 votes
Lisa Wong – 2,368 votes

Highest number of votes: Lisa Wong and Tim Cole

On motion by Council Member Petersen, seconded by Council Member Sonnek, with all present voting aye (5-0), motion carried to adopt Resolution No. 2020-128 Canvassing the Vote and Declaring the Results of the General Municipal Election.

IV. COVID-19 AND CITY OPERATIONS

Mr. Duddeck requested City Council feedback and comment on the potential of closing City Hall again, with most City Staff working remotely. He added the recent spike in Covid-19 cases is

affecting City Staff, with many staff either contracting the virus or isolating themselves due to exposure. He noted he met with department heads to get feedback and comment, as this has become a critical staffing issue.

Mr. Duddeck stated he contacted other local metropolitan area cities to find out what they are doing. He added Oakdale is considering City Hall closure, and the cities of Oakdale, Maplewood, Roseville and White Bear Lake never re-opened after the initial closure in March 2020. He noted the City is proud to be open and serving residents, but some action must be taken. He stressed the importance of doing whatever possible to protect the health and safety of City Staff.

Mr. Duddeck requested City Council feedback and comment on closing City Hall. He added, if there is agreement, City Hall closure would begin on Monday, November 16, 2020.

Mayor Furlong stated he supports Mr. Duddeck's decision. He added his biggest concern is Public Works, and whether there will be enough staff in case of a big snow storm. Mr. Duddeck agreed, adding Public Works will continue to split up into teams so there is no cross-contamination.

Council Member Walczak asked whether there would be staff at City Hall. Mr. Duddeck confirmed this, stating City Hall would be closed to the public, but a few staff would still be working there, while the majority of staff would work remotely. He added Public Works and Police Department teams would be scheduled to ensure there is no cross-scheduling. He noted there are several staff members who are already affected, either through contracting the virus or exposure to it. He stressed the importance of attempting to prevent further spread of the virus.

Council Member Sonnek stated it seems to him that Mr. Duddeck should do whatever he can to support the health and safety of City Staff, as the number of Covid cases in Minnesota has greatly increased, and is exactly what was feared earlier in 2020. He noted the Minneapolis Star-Tribune's Covid Tracker shows increases in positive tests and hospitalization rates, and this is happening all over the country right now.

Council Member Thorsen asked whether the Star Tribune's Covid Tracker indicated whether the increase in hospitalizations is due to Covid-19 or other types of hospitalizations.

Council Member Sonnek confirmed that the Star Tribune's data shows hospitalizations are up due to increased numbers of people who have contracted the Covid-19 virus.

Council Member Petersen stated she supports City Hall closure, as the pandemic is getting worse. She added a lot of people in the community have contracted the virus, including a large number at the Legion, and the virus continues to spread. She noted she supports doing whatever possible to keep the City's work force safe.

Mr. Duddeck stated several City departments have staff members with Covid-19, including the Fire Department and multiple Administration departments. He added the city is starting to lose staffing. He agreed to confirm plans for closure of City Hall with the City Council before they go into effect, which would be Monday, November 16, 2020.

V. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, on motion by Council Member Walczak, seconded by Council Member Sonnek, with all present voting aye (5-0), Mayor Furlong adjourned the workshop meeting at 5:17 p.m.

/s/ Terrence J. Furlong, Mayor

Attest: /s/ Scott A. Duddeck, City Manager / Clerk