

**Observer:** Betty Hayford

**Aldermen present:** All

**Meeting started:** 5:30

**Meeting ended:** 11:25

Alderman Wilson moved to suspend the rules to allow for a remote meeting. The motion was seconded and passed. The meeting was conducted over Zoom.

**Announcements.** The Mayor provided a sober Covid report urging people to avoid risks. Numbers of cases and hospitalizations have increased. The City Manager had no announcements. The City Clerk announced that petitions have been filed for the spring elections and primaries will be held for the Fourth Ward and for Mayor.

**Public comment.** 32 comments. 20 spoke on the proposed HACC development at 1900 Sherman; 14 opposed because of size, too few affordable units and lack of consultation with Perlman residents, and 6 supported as important contribution to affordable housing. 6 spoke on the budget, asking for no tax increase, reduced spending and defunding the police. Others asked the city to support small businesses or thanked city employees for helping distribute fresh produce.

**Special orders of business. (SP1) Approving the 2021 Proposed budget.** The City Manager explained that further staff cuts had been made to reduce the proposed tax increase to 4.5%. Alderman Fleming asked for more cuts to avoid any tax increase. A long discussion followed. Alderman Rainey urged the City to collect more money from Northwestern to cover costs of fire services. Alderman exchanged views about the possibility or danger of reducing payments to the pension fund or to the reserve fund. The City Manager suggested reducing payment to cash reserves and social services to limit the tax levy increase to 3.6%. Braithwaite suggested reducing vehicle purchases. Public Works Director Stoneback outlined the need to replace some vehicles, particularly the heavy duty vehicles for the Public Works Department. After more discussion it was agreed to purchase public works vehicles, some with bonding, and postpone purchases of others City staff will develop a plan. Braithwaite moved to bond \$500,000 purchases and reduce others by \$400,000. This motion was seconded and passed 9-0. Fleming moved to keep the pension payment flat, reducing the proposed increase. The motion was seconded and failed, 5-4, with Braithwaite, Wynne, Wilson, Revelle and Fiske voting no. Rainey moved to eliminate \$500,000 contribution to the reserve fund. The motion was seconded and passed, 5-4, Wynne, Wilson, Revelle, Fiske voting against.

At 9:45 Council took a ten minute recess because the recording tape needed to be replaced. Following the recess, the City Manager provided a recap of the situation: The revised budget included a 1% tax increase to cover \$1.7 million expenses. Braithwaite asked Fleming if she could accept this. He encouraged her to push Districts 65 and 202 to manage their budgets and avoid tax increases. Rue Simmons urged her colleagues to continue to make reductions. Fiske said she is concerned about rebuilding the reserve fund. She suggested moving forward with the sale of city assets and dedicating proceeds to rebuilding reserves. Wynne moved to approve the budget, it was seconded. The motion failed, 5-4, Fleming, Fiske, Suffredin, Rue Simmons, and Braithwaite voting no. The City Counsel said the state required a budget before the end of the year and the City Manager said staff would be hard pressed to manage a budget approved in December.

Fiske said she wanted a commitment to rebuilding reserves. Wynne supported her suggestion to use funds from sale of assets for the reserve. Fiske moved to reconsider the vote on the budget. Braithwaite seconded and the move to reconsider passed 6-3, Rue Simmons, Suffredin and Fleming voted no. Fiske asked for future discussion of planning rebuilding of reserves and Wynne expressed agreement. Wynne moved to approve the budget. It was seconded and passed 5-4, Rue Simmons, Suffredin, Fleming, Braithwaite voted no.

**(SP2) Approving the Tax Levy.** City staff clarified the revised numbers for a tax levy increase of 1%. It was moved and seconded and passed 8-1, Fleming voted no.

**(SP3,4,5,6,7,8) Approving tax levy for General Assistance Fund, Library, and Four Special Services Areas.** Each was moved and seconded and passed 9-0.

**(SP9) Authorizing the City Manager to sign a memorandum of understanding with Cook County to House City Staff and Evanston residents during the Covid crisis.** Passed 9-0.

**(SP10) Approval of CDBG-CV Funding to Address Food Insecurity.** This provides funding of \$150,000 for Curt's Café to provide up to 1500 boxes of food, each to feed a family of four. This will be 500 boxes a month for three months. This passed 9-0.

**Consent agenda.** At 10:45 Council turned to the consent agenda. Items removed from the consent agenda were A4, A6, P3, R1. Rue Simmons moved the consent agenda which was seconded and passed 9-0.

A4. Purchase of vehicles. Alderman Wilson moved to amend, reducing the cost by \$900,000 as discussed earlier. The amendment passed 9-0. The motion as amended passed 9-0.

A6, Authorizing the City Manager to enter an agreement for electricity pricing, was finalized with cost information today. It was moved and seconded and passed 9-0.

P3, Amending the Zoning Map to Rezone 1900 Sherman Avenue for a planned development. Cook County Housing Authority is proposing a 16 story 138 unit development which will include affordable housing as well as market rate housing. Alderman Fiske explained she will abstain because of a possible conflict. Sarah Flax announced that the proposal exceeds the number of affordable units required by city ordinance. The motion passed 8-0, Fiske abstaining.

R1, Setting compensation for City Council. Rainey proposed an amendment allowing aldermen eligible for single insurance coverage to have the option to receive compensation to purchase their own insurance instead of using city insurance. The amendment was seconded and passed 8-1, Suffredin voting no. The ordinance, as amended, passed 9-0.

The meeting adjourned at 11:25.