

**Observer:** Betty Hayford

**Aldermen present:** Seven. Suffredin and Fleming were absent because of power failure.

**Meeting began:** 5:20 (on time!)

**Meeting ended:** 8:55

**Announcements.** The Mayor provided an update on the Corona virus and warned up of an uptick in cases and the need to continue precautions. He announced a new rent assistance program. He read a proclamation celebrating the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Votes for Women and the role of Evanston women in the process, thanking the League of Women Voters and the Evanston History Center for their efforts. He called on Lori Osborne who outlined the long tradition of active Evanston women and mentioned several related events over the next month, including an exhibit at the Evanston History Center opening on August 26.

The City Manager called attention to the agenda item to shore up the damaged lake front and asked Lara Biggs to explain the problem and the remedy. Biggs explained the need for immediate repairs to Greenwood Beach and Eliot Park costing \$750,000, although more substantial repairs will be needed when money is available.

The City Clerk introduced his assistant to propose a policy for the Rules Committee to allow on-line public comment even after in person meetings became possible.

**Public comment.** Two speakers addressed the need to reduce spending as the budget process neared and asked for more information about any plans to sell City assets.

The Mayor suggested passing the **consent agenda** and items taken off the agenda before reviewing Special Orders of Business. He asked aldermen to identify items to take from the consent agenda. Aldermen named (A1), (A2), (A4) which was withdrawn by staff, (A10) and (ED1). It was moved and seconded to approve the remaining items on the consent agenda. The motion passed 7-0.

(A1) Bills and payroll. Alderman Wilson moved to amend the item to remove an invoice related to payment for a staff member of the City Clerk. Wilson referred to a previous Council discussion about the Clerk trying to hire staff during the hiring freeze after Human Resources informed him he did not have permission to hire. The City Manager reiterated that the hiring was not approved. The Clerk claimed he has the authority for purchase decisions and this is equivalent to a purchase. Alderman Fiske said it is not comparable to a purchase and new staff must be approved by the City Manager and HR. The Clerk argued about his authority. Alderman Wynne said this had been discussed before and he was told not to hire; she will not support payment. There was quite an extended and contentious discussion. The motion to remove the item from bills passed 7-0. The motion to approve the item as amended passed 7-0.

(A2) BMO Amazon Credit Card Bill. Passed 7-0.

(A10) City of Evanston Joining Amicus Brief on Supreme Court case related to case concerning gay couples as foster parents. Aldermen asked where the request originated. A City Attorney explained that a national organization of municipal legal staff asked municipalities to join in. The motion passed 7-0.

(ED1) Approval of Entrepreneurship Emergency Grants. Three grants were proposed for \$2500 or less. Alderman Rue Simmons recused herself because of a relationship with one of the grantees, and said she was very pleased to see the grants providing needed assistance to small businesses. The motion passed 6-0.

**Special Orders of Business. (SP1) Approval of \$70,000 of CDBG-CV Funding for Micro-Enterprise Assistance Program.** This is a new program for Evanston low-and moderate- income micro-business loans to help mitigate the economic impact of Covid 19. The motion passed 7-0.

**(SP2) 2020 Budget Update.** Hitash Desai and Kate Lewis-Lakin provided an update on current budget projections. The decrease in revenue seems consistent with earlier estimates. Reductions in expenses had been made. Particularly in personnel costs, including reductions in police overtime. They continue to work to manage an anticipated deficit of about \$2 million. Lewis-Lakin explained the schedule for the 2021 budget which will be presented to Council in early October. They expect a continued revenue decline of \$4-6 million. Managing staff vacancies will be important, but they also need to maintain services. They may consider sale of city assets. Hagerty asserted that he did not believe assets should be sold to fill budget gaps. The City Manager agreed, but noted that assets might be sold to provide new investments or new directions. She noted that the sale of city bonds that day had a very favorable price, generating savings from transforming older more expensive bonds. Lewis-Lakin said there will be three public discussion meetings to elicit views on the budget in early September.

**(SP3) Com Ed Franchise Agreement Expiration.** Kumar Jensen, Sustainability Officer, explained the recommendation of the ComEd Franchise Committee not to negotiate an extension of the agreement. Com Ed is required to continue service and maintenance even without an agreement. The City is concerned about the impact of the current corruption investigation on Com Ed. Although Com Ed currently provides free electricity for some City Buildings, the committee believes they may be able to provide electricity to the City buildings at lower cost. He recommended Aldermen vote "Aye" to approve the termination of the agreement. The motion passed 7-0.

**Call of the Wards.** Several Aldermen expressed their condolences for the death of Madelyn Ducre, a long time activist who regularly commented at Council meetings.

Alderman Revelle pointed out that the Human Relations Committee will meet August 17, 24 and 31 to discuss issues related to 911 calls and police operations, although the meetings are not on the calendar.

The meeting adjourned to Executive Session at 8:55 pm.