

Observer: Betty Hayford

Aldermen present: All; two came late.

Meeting started: 6:50 pm

Meeting ended: 8:55 pm

Alderman Wilson moved to suspend the rules to allow having a virtual meeting following emergency guidelines from Governor Pritzker because of the pandemic. The motion was seconded and passed 7-0.

Announcements. The Mayor reminded Council that he had missed the last meeting because of a colonoscopy, and encouraged all Evanstonians to maintain their regular schedule of preventive medicine. He then congratulated Northwestern for its victory in the Citrus Bowl. He then praised the generosity and sensitivity of an Evanston employee who contributed his paycheck to the Jackson family that had lost everything in a fire, and asked Jauron to describe how he had helped the family in numerous ways. Then he expressed condolences to the victims and relatives of the shooting event on Saturday. He praised Evanston police for their bravery and skill in confronting the shooter and avoiding further harm. He called on EPD Chief Cook who reported that the Department of Justice had approved their revised Use of Force policy and also commended the officers who had been engaged in the shooting incident. Alderman Rainey expressed thanks to EPD for ending the rampage. The Mayor then provided an overview of the Covid situation and asserted that the pandemic remains dangerous and all precautions should be continued. He outlined plans for vaccinations. Ike Ogbo, Director of Health and Human Services outlined vaccine priority groups.

The City Manager expressed great appreciation for the work of EFD Chief Brian Scott as he plans to retire. Several Aldermen also expressed their gratitude for his excellent work.

The City Clerk outlined plans for the elections.

Public comment. 11 comments. 4 people spoke on budget issues, need to reduce spending and not commit to reserve fund; 2 concerned with racial harassment; others asking for better dialogue with council, support for affordable housing, and thanks for city-wide support for fire victims.

Special orders of business. (SP1) Approval of \$500,000 CDBG-CV funding for Rent Assistance and Support for Small Landlords. This is funding for Connections for the Homeless for rental assistance particularly in census tracts most affected by Covid. Council was strongly supportive and approved the measure 9-0.

(SP2) Resolution Committing to Funding General Fund Reserves by 2025. The Resolution reaffirms Council's previous commitment to a reserve fund of 16.6% of General Fund expenses. Aldermen were reluctant to support this. Rainey said we only once met this level and it was not useful to support the resolution unless we have a plan for making the fund payments. Fleming agreed that the resolution does not include specific steps to achieve the goal. Suffredin said it is not appropriate for this Council to make a commitment for the new Council elected in April to fulfill. The City Manager said it is important for Council to make this commitment. Rating agencies will examine whether the City is committed to fiscal responsibility. Everyone recognizes that 2020 was a bad year, but the City needs to demonstrate a commitment. Aldermen Wynne and Wilson urged Council to send a signal to rating agencies with this resolution. Council agreed to table the resolution to the next regular meeting, and asked staff to identify

steps to enable contributing to the reserve fund, either by identifying new revenue or cuts in expenses. The motion to table passed 8-0.

Consent agenda. Aldermen removed items from the consent agenda: A2, A3, A6, A15, A16, H1.

(A2) Approval of BMO Harris Amazon Credit Card Activity. It was moved and seconded and the motion passed 8-0-1, Alderman Suffredin abstained.

(A3) Authorization of Contract for Ice Refrigeration Maintenance Services at Robert Crown Ice Rink. Staff explained that these are specialized services. The item was moved and seconded and approved 9-0.

(A6) Approval of Change Order to the Agreement for the Citywide Parking Study. The change order will extend the initiation date from April 2020 to April 2021, with no change in cost. The motion was approved 8-0, one alderman stepping out of the room.

(A15) Authorizing the City Manage to Execute a Lease with Enterprise for Commercial Space in the Maple Avenue Garage. This is a new space, with a ten year lease. The item was moved and seconded, for Introduction and Action, and approved 9-0.

(A16) Authorizing the City Manage to Execute a Lease Agreement with MedMen for commercial space at 1800 Maple Avenue. This is a ten year lease for commercial space for operation of a cannabis dispensary. It was moved and seconded for Introduction and Action and passed 9-0.

From **Human Services, (H1)**, Contract with AMITA Behavioral Health for Critical Health Services. This is an extension of a contract for 24 hour crisis line access and mental health crisis intervention. This item was held at the December 14 meeting to clarify some language. Alderman Fleming expressed continued concern with some of the language, particularly related to liability related to confidentiality issues. The City Attorney explained that new language had been drafted as Fleming had requested, but was not yet fully reviewed. The language would be ready for the next meeting. It was agreed to table the item until the next meeting when the language was complete, 9-0.

Call of the wards. Alderman Wilson expressed concern for increasing incidents of racial hostility, in Evanston and elsewhere. He also made a reference to the Rules Committee, asking the committee to consider how to achieve better dialogue with citizens, leading to a better deliberative democracy.

Alderman Suffredin made a referral to Administration and Public Works to better educate citizens on the costs of sewer repair.

Alderman Rainey asked that invoices for fire and rescue services be submitted to Northwestern. The University should pay for these services since it does not pay property taxes.

Alderman Fleming urged additional recognition to the city employees who had helped the Jackson family after their fire.

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