**CAROLINA BEACH**

Town Council Special Meeting Minutes

Monday, March 23, 2020 @ 4:00 PM

Council Chambers

1121 N. Lake Park Boulevard

Carolina Beach, NC 28428

**ASSEMBLY**

A Special Meeting of the Town of Carolina Beach Town Council was held on Monday, March 23, 2020, at 4:00 PM at Council Chambers.

PRESENT: Mayor LeAnn Pierce, Mayor Pro Tem Jay Healy, Council Member Lynn Barbee, Council Member Steve Shuttleworth, and Council Member JoDan Garza

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ALSO PRESENT: Town Manager Bruce Oakley, and Town Clerk Kim Ward

**1. MAYOR PIERCE CALLED THE MEETING TO ORDER**

**2. COVID-19 UPDATE**

Mr. Oakley gave an update on the latest executive order form Gov. Roy Cooper, which closes schools until May 15, drops the maximum number of people allowed to gather from 100 to 50, and closes a variety of other businesses, including gyms, movie theaters, hair and nail salons, and barbershops effective March 25. He said there is a conference call between Gov. Cooper and elected officials on March 24 at 2:30 PM, which may provide more direction.

Regarding Town staff, Mr. Oakley said the Police Department has locked access to its front door and has adjusted schedules to limit exposure and discussed protocols for what to do if there is exposure. He also said remote work has increased among other Town staff.

Council Member Barbee asked for an update from both chiefs about any concerns they have. Police Chief Chris Spivey said things have been quiet so far and people seemed to be self-regulating and taking the situation seriously. He also said call volume, arrests, and citations have been low. Fire Chief Alan Griffin said his staff continues to work toward modifying dispatching protocols on medical calls to minimize exposure, but overall there has been an uptick in medical calls because people are nervous. He said 911 dispatchers are doing a good job screening calls and only sending units that are necessary. Council Member Barbee asked Chief Griffin if his staff had sufficient personal protective equipment (PPE). Chief Griffin said no, but his staff has been receiving medical guidance about which items can and can’t be reused if it becomes necessary. He said if call volume stays limited, they will have enough supply.

Council Member Shuttleworth asked Town staff and first responders to continue working on a plan for additional steps, including bridge closure and curtailing short-term rentals. He said it’s important for Council and the community to understand any ramifications these measures would have so an informed decision can be made if additional action is necessary. He said he has heard from those who live just north of the bridge about their need to travel to the Town for essential services such as groceries and medicine, and he does not want to jeopardize them.

Mayor Pierce asked if a shelter-in-place order would address short-term rentals. Mr. Oakley said he was not sure if that would be included unless there is a travel ban.

Mayor Pro Tem Healy said he had concerns about crowds gathering at parks and playgrounds in the Town. He mentioned incidents with two lacrosse teams over the weekend that had been addressed but said more situations like this could occur.

Council Member Garza said two Council members had witnessed the lacrosse teams but did not try to address the matter directly. He said they should all be giving friendly reminders instead of taking photos and reporting incidents to Town staff.

Mayor Pierce said Council’s job is not to police the Town. She said that is for the Police Department to handle.

Council Member Garza said Council was creating hysteria by taking restrictive actions without trying to directly address and educate the public about social distancing and other protective measures.

Mayor Pierce said she was interpreting Council Member Garza’s words as panic, which is the opposite of what Council has been promoting to the public.

Council Member Barbee said of all the people in the room, he only hears one hysterical person.

Council Member Garza said Council Member Barbee had cut him off multiple times.

Mayor Pierce said she wanted to hear more from Mr. Oakley about what Council needs to do when they see people not engaging in social distancing or otherwise not following rules and guidelines.

Council Member Shuttleworth expressed frustration with Council Member Garza. Council Member Garza replied that he wanted to talk about a complaint regarding Council Member Shuttleworth. Mayor Pierce asked them to stop so Council could proceed with hearing from Mr. Oakley. She said the meeting had veered off course from its intent.

Mayor Pierce asked Mr. Oakley how to proceed when they see people breaking rules and guidelines. She said she personally does not feel comfortable approaching them herself.

Mr. Oakley said the safest thing to do is contact the Police Department or other Town staff who might be in charge of the facility where the offense is occurring. He said because people are tense, it might be more appropriate for it to come from someone in uniform and/or with authority. Chief Spivey also encouraged Council to call on the Police Department for these types of issues.

Council Member Garza said he disagreed with this and thinks Council should feel free to approach someone doing something wrong. He said the entire Town was a family, and people will respect it if Council tries to educate them.

**3. NON-AGENDA ITEMS**

Council Member Garza said he had a non-agenda item to discuss. He inquired about an email sent by a resident to Council regarding what the resident considered an altercation with Council Member Shuttleworth after the March 20 meeting. Council Member Garza said no one had responded to the email, and he considered it an issue that there had been no reply. Mayor Pierce said she implored all members of Council to behave professionally and pointed out that the resident who sent the email was Council Member Garza’s business partner or employer. Council Member Garza became upset and told Mayor Pierce to stop cutting him off. Mayor Pierce said he had talked more than anyone during the meeting and owed everyone an apology.

**4. ADJOURNMENT**

Mayor Pierce made a motion at 4:30 PM to recess the meeting until 4:00 PM March 24. Motion passed 4-1 (Council Member Garza opposed).

Submitted by:

Kimberlee Ward

Town Clerk