**CAROLINA BEACH**

Town Council Special Meeting Minutes

Monday, March 16, 2020 @ 6:00 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 16, 2020, at 6:00 PM at Council Chambers.

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

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

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

**2. DISCUSSION ITEMS – COVID-19**

a. COVID-19 Update by Town Manager Bruce Oakley

Mr. Oakley gave an update on the issues facing our community as well as an action plan. He discussed several specific efforts related to the pandemic, including some that Council should consider for formal action: encouraging the public to watch the meetings via live stream instead of coming to Town Hall, canceling committee meetings unless they involve time-sensitive or very important matters, keeping Town Hall open to the public but strongly encouraging people to do business online or via phone to limit exposure, and suspending disconnection of Town water utility accounts.

Council Member Garza asked whether all employees are still reporting to Town Hall versus allowing as many as possible to work remotely. Mr. Oakley said most Town staff members are still coming to the office, but remote work would be an upcoming possibility for those who are not considered essential personnel.

Tim Buckland, Intergovernmental Affairs Coordination for New Hanover County, gave current statistics about COVID-19 in our area, including no positive cases reported in the county so far. He also discussed new guidelines regarding the size of gatherings and reported that the county had not yet activated its Emergency Operations Center but was rather operating on a monitoring status. He gave information about a county hotline, (910) 798-6800, that would operate 7:30 AM-6 PM daily.

b. Exposure Procedure Presented by Fire Chief Alan Griffin

Chief Griffin reviewed exposure procedures for Town emergency responders. He said he has been working closely with the county via a task force of emergency responders to develop modifications for dispatch protocols and staff education. He also said the Town is not yet at activation level for its Emergency Operations Center. He emphasized that the pandemic situation presents challenges because emergency responders are treading in areas they haven’t been previously.

Council Member Garza recommended the use of videos on the Town website and Facebook page to disseminate messages about public safety. He said people react better to that type of presentation than simply words alone, and many are looking for reassurance.

Mayor Pierce asked Chief Griffin to look into updating the list of special needs individuals living in the Town who might need extra help.

Council Member Barbee asked about the measures being done to protect Town staff. Mr. Oakley said they are exploring online meetings and implementing increased sanitizing.

c. Governor's Executive Order Regarding Mass Gatherings Presented by Police Chief Chris Spivey

Chief Spivey reviewed the Governor's Executive Order Number 117 on Mass Gatherings. He said the Police Department has the authority to enforce this, which bans most gatherings of more than 100 people in a single room or single space at one time. He also reviewed situations that the order does and does not cover.

Chief Spivey said the Police Department has changed the way officers respond to 911 calls as a result of COVID-19. Officers will not be responding to medical calls for which their presence is not necessary, and they may not respond in-person at all for some situations, such as a resident reporting a bike theft just discovered from weeks ago. He said the goal is to keep officers healthy by following best practices.

Mayor Pro Tem Healy asked if increased crime was a concern. Chief Spivey said no because he believes people will be able to self-regulate and are primarily concerned about taking care of their families.

Mayor Pierce asked whether house parties, such as large weddings at a residence, would go against the mass gatherings order. Chief Spivey said his interpretation is that such an event would not be an exclusion and would violate the order.

d. Resources and Links Presented by Bruce Oakley

Mr. Oakley reviewed available resources and helpful links. He said the Town would be updating its website daily to provide current information about closings, ways to avoid in-person business, and how to submit questions.

Mayor Pierce commended Mr. Oakley and other Town staff members for their hard work over the weekend to stay ahead of the curve. She urged everyone to come together as a community and said people should prepare, not panic.

Council Member Garza encouraged the public to say thank you to employees of the island’s three grocery stores. He also asked people to look out for their neighbors, especially the elderly and other vulnerable populations.

Assistant Town Manager Ed Parvin said Town staff was looking for Council to take action on a number of items related to COVID-19.

**ACTION:** Motion to have Council meetings continue with enhanced live streaming and virtual correspondence, cancel committee presentations at the March 17 Council workshop, suspend committee meetings to a future date unless time-sensitive issues are involved, keep Town Hall open but encourage people to limit their visits by promoting online and phone transactions, and suspend disconnection of Town water utility accounts

Motion: Mayor Pierce

Vote: UNANIMOUS

**3. NON-AGENDA ITEMS**

None.

**4. ADJOURNMENT**

Mayor Pierce made a motion to adjourn at 6:45 PM. Motion passed unanimously.

Submitted by:

Kimberlee Ward

Town Clerk