

City of Tamarac
Special City Commission meeting - Minutes
Thursday, March 19, 2020

CALL TO ORDER: Mayor Gomez called the Thursday, ~~September~~[March] 19, 2020, Special City Commission meeting, being held in Commission Chamber at 7525 NW 88th Avenue, Tamarac, Florida, 33321, to order at 4:03 p.m.

ROLL CALL: Mayor Michelle J. Gomez, Vice Mayor Marlon Bolton, and Commissioner Debra Placko were in attendance. Commissioner E. Mike Gelin and Commissioner Julie Fishman joined the meeting via telephone.

Also present were City Manager Michael C. Cernech, City Attorney Samuel Goren and City Clerk Jennifer Johnson.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: Mayor Gomez led the Pledge of Allegiance.

1. Status of Current Operations

Mayor Gomez turned the meeting over to City Manager Michael Cernech. City Manager Cernech outlined the two items on the agenda. First, the City Commission Workshop and Meeting that are scheduled for next week as well as future meetings that will need to be cancelled due to COVID-19. Secondly, Department Directors will be providing an update on what is happening operationally in their respective departments.

Cernech stated there would be modifications to work schedules, including alternating schedules and telecommuting. City facilities are currently closed to the public however employees are still working.

a. Coronavirus Update

Department Directors provided information, or a presentation related to plans for the City, which is available in the City Clerk's Office. Following each of the presentations, Department Directors answered questions from the members of the Commission.

Building Department – Chief Building Official Claudio Grande

Mayor Gomez asked about residential inspections?

Grande responded they are not conducting residential inspections that require an inspector to enter a home. For commercial inspections, if a business is open to the public, inspectors will not be conducting inspections. Inspections that require interacting with customers have been cancelled and contractors notified of the cancellation and are asked not to reschedule until further notice. Grande also stated all interior inspections are going to be canceled.

Commissioner Placko asked what will happen to residential customers with roof inspections.

Grande stated roofing inspections will continue. He further stated that all exterior residential for example driveway, fencing and reroofing will continue.

Commissioner Placko asked about residents who are in the middle of remodeling.

Grande stated those situations will be looked at on a case by case basis and the City will accommodate depending on the need.

Commissioner Placko asked what the cutoff date for interior inspection is.

Grande responded, yesterday.

Commissioner Placko asked how long residents would not be able to schedule interior inspections

Grande responded, until March 31st, and at that point an analysis will be done as the situation is constantly changing.

Parks and Recreation Department – Director Greg Warner

Mayor Gomez noted the vulnerable population needs are low now, but asked if things pick up, if we will be ready to respond?

Warner responded, yes.

Vice Bolton asked what part the P.A.R.O.T [Parks & Recreation Foundation of Tamarac] foundation is playing with disseminating information to the community or how will they be helping the community?

Warner stated the foundation can provide financial support.

Vice Mayor Bolton asked what will be done for classes and events that have been paid for, if funds will be refunded?

Warner responded yes, and individuals will have the choice of requesting a full refund or have a credit apply towards a future class or event.

Vice Mayor Bolton asked what about staff hours? Will phones be transferred to employees' cellphones?

Warner stated the department is working as a skeleton crew; however, staff will be answering phones. Warner stated summer camp packets are available and ready and can be accessed online or by contacting Parks and Recreation.

Vice Mayor Bolton asked how are we migrating services that are predominantly available onsite to online?

Warner stated staff is looking into ways that residents may have access to some of these activities online.

Commissioner Gelin stated he was glad to see the parks will remain open for now.

Mayor Gomez asked whether there will be a decision now, or in the near future, whether to keep the parks and restrooms opened?

Warner stated the situation is being monitored.

Broward Sheriff's Office – Captain Jeff Cirminiello

Captain Cirminiello advised the Commission of preparations established by Sheriff Tony.

- Nonessential employees will be telecommuting
- Temporary suspension of all training and community engagements
- All 911 calls are screened for indications of COVID before crews are dispatched
- Distribution of PPE [personal protection equipment] gear to deputies and first responders
- Established a hotline to ensure information reaches all the employees at the same time.

Cirminiello stated, currently there are no issues with illness and division is working at full capacity. We are encouraging the public to utilize online resources and noted that additional staff has been added to the office to assist with phone calls. Cirminiello warned there are individuals posing as Centers of Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Department of Health workers. He stated there are no documented cases in Tamarac and this is a scam that should be reported immediately. Cirminiello stated residents should not be afraid if deputies respond to calls wearing mask.

Vice Mayor Bolton asked if there are no documented [scam] cases in Tamarac, can you tell of a documented case elsewhere?"

Cirminiello stated he did not have that information at this time but will follow up with the Vice Mayor.

City Attorney Goren clarified that even though there is not a specific place on the agenda for public comments, under Florida state law, you provide for public comments. The public may or may not be sending in emails or request for consideration. The Clerk may be receiving something and to that extent she receives them, I urge you to at least read them into the record and try to have staff respond through the Manager as appropriate. Mayor Gomez stated that public comments will be done after the Department Director's update.

Public Services Department – Director Jack Strain

Strain advised the Commission on the following:

- Water Distribution are only performing emergency maintenance only. In the event there will be maintenance work done and affected residents will be notified in advance.
- Facilities division is installing or replacing all non-sensor facets in all city facilities with sensor facets.
- All City facility bathrooms are now being cleaned twice per day.

Vice Mayor Bolton asked, before Coronavirus, how were we sanitizing our bathrooms? Strain stated that cleaning staff would clean only in the evening and now they have added a cleaning at noon.

Vice Mayor Bolton asked if there were any changes in the schedule for garbage pick-up. Strain stated the schedule remains the say until further notice.

Vice Mayor Bolton asked Community Development Director, Maxine Calloway, if the First-Time Homebuyer's Program Application window would be pushed back due to the coronavirus?

Calloway stated for now the window will remain the same and depending on the amount of applications received, an extension may be considered.

Vice Mayor Bolton asked if the First-Time Homebuyer's Workshop was recorded? Calloway stated no. Vice Mayor stated the workshop was very beneficial to the public, and suggested the meetings be recorded and made available online to the public. Calloway stated it is something to consider for the next time.

Commissioner Placko asked Ms. Calloway for the First-Time Homebuyer's schedule. Calloway did not have the dates readily available, and Mayor Gomez asked Calloway to provide the information to the Commissioners when available.

Financial Services Department – Interim Director Christine Cajuste

Cajuste advised the Commission on the following:

- The City has decided to suspend water shut-offs due to non-payment, however, shut-off services will continue if service has been terminated
- The City has suspended penalties that would be in place because of non-payment
- Public Services will still read meters for now. However, that may change to estimates soon, as the department is operating with a skeleton staff.

Vice Mayor Bolton asked if a timeframe been established regarding to the suspension of water shut offs? Bolton stated cities, such as Miramar, has a time certain established. City Manager Cernech stated a 90-day timeframe will be added and a reassessment done at the end of the 90 days.

Vice Mayor Bolton asked when the 90 days will start? Cajuste stated that the 90-days started as of Monday, March 16, 2020.

Vice Mayor Bolton stated that some of the questions he has asked are attributed to the Susan Homer-Strump, the owner of Menchie's, Marie Gutierrez, a resident, and his wife [Carla Bolton].

Mayor Gomez asked if the questions read by Vice Mayor Bolton were sufficient for the record or does the Vice Mayor need to provide documentation of these questions? Attorney Goren stated the Vice Mayor attributed the questions to specific individuals on the record and that is legally sufficient.

Maxine Calloway stated, the question asked previously by Commissioner Placko, relating to the opening period for the First-Time Homebuyer's Program will be opened April 13 and closes April 24 at 5:00 p.m. City Manager Cernech stated that if there are any changes in reference to the opening period, we would advise the Commission.

Commissioner Gelin asked if the 90-day extension is for residents and businesses? Cajuste stated both.

Commissioner Gelin asked if there any other bills or fees that were going to be relaxed?
City Manager Cernech stated not at this time.

Commissioner Gelin asked Captain Cirminiello if there will be a temporary reassignment of Tamarac deputies to meet other demands?
Cirminiello stated there are no indications of that right now.

Commissioner Gelin asked if there is someone disinfecting equipment at the parks?
Warner stated we do not have the capacity do that and is the reason why the parks will be closed starting tomorrow.

Tamarac Fire Rescue – Fire Chief Percy Sayles and Community Education Preparedness Specialist Van Schoen

Commissioner Placko asked what are we looking for when we visit the assisted living facilities?

Sayles stated it is to ensure they have and are adhering to the CDC guidelines and also to see if there is resource need.

Vice Mayor Bolton asked if he had heard that people who died from the coronavirus have all had ibuprofen in their system? Is this a myth?
Sayles stated he did not know if there is a correlation.

Vice Mayor Bolton asked Chief Sayles to repeat the website provided earlier? Chief Sayles responded floridahealthcovid19.gov.

Vice Mayor Bolton asked if we have any residents in Tamarac who have tested positive for COVID?
Sayles stated yes, at University Hospital. However, to speak directly of a Tamarac resident testing positive, I would not know that.

Vice Mayor Bolton asked if Chief Sayles knew the amount of people tested positive there?
Sayles stated he did not. City Manager Cernech stated the hospital referred out 78 tests. They received 11 results: 10 negative and one positive. City Manager Cernech stated the hospital did not provide information on whether the individual is a Tamarac resident.

Vice Mayor Bolton asked if we have any shortage of supplies?
Sayles stated yes.

Vice Mayor Bolton asked if there is a shortage of supplies, are the Firefighters having to reuse any supplies that they are currently using? And if so, what are the health risks?
Sayles stated no.

Vice Mayor Bolton asked, do you foresee that there will be a problem because there is a shortage of supplies in the future where our Fire Department is not going to be able to sufficiently do their jobs because they probably don't have enough supplies and not getting any anytime soon?

Sayles stated the situation is hypothetical, but there are supplies to last 60-to-90 days. The challenge is finding PPE and that is a universal issue. The Governor has made Broward County a priority and, in the event, there is less than a 5-day amount of supplies, then the state would rush supplies.

Vice Mayor Bolton stated, so we will not have a problem of our Fire Department not having the necessary supplies?

Sayles stated he hoped not, but could see the challenge, and so far, we're not having a problem.

Vice Mayor Bolton asked if the smoke detector installation that was coming up in his district has been rescheduled? And if there is a new date.

Sayles stated it hasn't and that each person on the sign-up list will be called once there is a date. Vice Mayor Bolton requested he be informed of the new date.

Vice Mayor Bolton asked where the three testing sites are and if he was at liberty to say?

Sayles stated there is the difference between a collection and a testing site. Sayles used the analogy of a doctor's office being a collection point where samples are taken and then sent to a laboratory or testing site for testing. There are 3 central testing sites, located in north, central and southern parts of the state.

Commissioner Gelin asked if you are ordering your staff that are nurses, not to take up their second jobs? Or are they going to be available to support other hospitals that may have a shortage?

Sayles stated he had not ordered his staff not to take up their additional jobs as nurses. Commissioner Gelin clarified, since there are no restrictions, are they going to be taking extra precautions to ensure that they are not contracting the disease and then bringing it back to the Fire Department? Sayles stated that the Department has been following the guidelines implemented through the Florida Fire Chief's Association and the Professional Association of Firefighters. These guidelines outline that a first responders must check their temperatures before going to work. If their temperature is 100 degrees or higher than they are restricted from work. Additionally, employees are screened at 8 a.m. and 8 p.m. daily. If employees exhibit any flu-like symptoms, they are excluded from working.

Commissioner Fishman commended the Department Directors for the thorough explanations regarding continuity of services.

Mayor Gomez provided information regarding supplies, mobile field units, and Broward County being one of the primary counties for assistance. She highlighted public private partnerships taking place to provide more testing done, and people's concerns about how long individuals should self-quarantine. She stated she hopes the process of testing will move quicker as more services and funds becomes available.

Commissioner Gelin asked, if you think you have COVID, how do you truly prevent your family from getting it? Is it better to send the rest of the family to a hotel or you go to hotel and self-quarantine?

Sayles suggested following the CDC guidelines as well as to self-isolate and help prevent the spread. Sayles stated he would suggest keeping family at home but keep the recommended six feet of distance.

Economic Development Department – Economic Development Manager Lori Funderwhite

Funderwhite advised the Commission of the following:

- Reaching out to restaurants to gather information on who is opened and the services they are offering, whether delivery or takeout. She outlined that the aim is to get the word out on who is open for business with the services they are offering.
- Most business owners have conveyed that they are suffering. Some has gone down 80 while other were temporarily closed.
- The City is doing its part to promote those restaurants that opened, by adding a list to our website. She also asked that if there is a restaurant that is opened and missing from the list, to contact her.
- The Governor [Ron DeSantis] mandated limits for restaurants across the state: restaurants filling only 50 percent capacity and seating six feet apart.
- With things are changing rapidly at the federal level; she is keeping an eye out for information that relates to businesses.
- Loan opportunities have been announced by the Small Business Administration (SBA) and the State of Florida Department of Economic Opportunity to help small businesses. Links to these programs, to gather more information and details, are posted on the City's Economic Development website.
- The State of Florida Department of Economic Opportunity business assessment survey. She stated because the programs rolled out by the federal and state government will not fit everyone's needs, this survey will be used to track damage assessment and evaluate programs as things moves forward.

Mayor Gomez asked if the information presented is also being sent out by the Tamarac North Lauderdale Chamber?

Funderwhite stated yes.

Vice Mayor Bolton stated the Governor talked about restaurants and bars and asked if Funderwhite could tell us more about bars? Is it the same requirements for restaurants? In adherence to closures or the six-foot separation, is there a fine?

Attorney Goren stated, the state gets to enforce the Governor's orders, but it appears based on the statue that the local government police powers allow the local police department to also enforce.

Vice Mayor Bolton stated, you talked about cities, for example Fort Lauderdale, they set up that all restaurants should close for 30 days. Is that something the City of Tamarac can do?

Attorney Goren stated he could not give a clear answer to whether or not you have the unequivocal, unabated authority to do what some cities are doing. If the Commission were to take action to support what has been done in Fort Lauderdale or other places, I would defend you to the best of my ability. However, I cannot give you that trajectory into an answer.

Vice Mayor Bolton asked, specifically to Tamarac, what does the Governors Order say about places of worship and how would it be interpreted in the City of Fort Lauderdale? Attorney Goren stated there is nothing in the Fort Lauderdale proclamation or the declaration of emergency regulations by the Mayor and there is nothing expressly provided for in the Governor's executive order.

Vice Mayor Bolton stated he had been asked by other pastors, should they be opened on Sunday? Your suggestion would be to follow the CDC guidelines? And is that no more than 10 people or is it 10-to-50 people?

Mayor Gomez and Commissioner Placko stated they had heard from members of the church community and most will be conducting online sessions.

2. Discussion and possible motion to cancel the March 23, 2020 City Commission Workshop and March 25, 2020, City Commission Meeting

Mayor Gomez called for a motion on the discussion and possible cancelation of March 23, 2020 City Commission Workshop and March 25, 2020 City Commission Meeting. Commissioner Placko motioned to approve. Vice Mayor Bolton seconded.

There was no discussion by the Commission, and Mayor Gomez requested the Clerk call the roll.

City Clerk Johnson conducted a roll call vote on the motion to cancel the meetings. The motion carried unanimously 5-0.

3. TR 13240 – Delegating authority to the City Manager to cancel future City Commission Meetings.

A Resolution of the City Commission of the City of Tamarac, Florida, delegating authority to the City Manager to cancel future Commission meetings due to the Coronavirus "COVID-19"; providing for conflicts; providing for severability; and providing for an effective date.

City Attorney, Sam Goren, read the title for the record.

Mayor Gomez called for a motion on the item, Commissioner Placko motioned to approve. Vice Mayor Bolton seconded.

Mayor Gomez opened for comments from the public.

Horatio Brian, of 6194 Laurel Lane, Tamarac, thanked the Commission for their dedication and hard work.

There being no further comments, Mayor Gomez opened for comments from Commission.

Discussion by the Commission ensued related to how long the delegated authority would last. City Attorney Goren clarified it is only to cancel future Commission meetings that are due to the Coronavirus and no other times of crisis.

There being no further comments, Mayor Gomez asked the Clerk to call the roll.

City Clerk Johnson conducted a roll call vote on the motion to approve. The motion carried unanimously 5-0.

OTHER

None.

There being no additional business to discuss, Mayor Gomez adjourned the meeting at 6:20 p.m.

Minutes respectfully transcribed and submitted by Assistant City Clerk, Kimberly Dillon.

Kimberly Dillon
Assistant City Clerk

Michelle J. Gomez, Mayor

Note to the reader: The above signature is the City Clerk, of the City of Tamarac, Florida. If the minutes you have received are not signed, or completed as indicated above, they are not the official minutes of the Tamarac City Commission meeting held Thursday, March 19, 2020.

Pursuant to Chapter 286.0105, Florida Statutes, if a person decides to appeal any decision made by the City Commission with respect to any matter considered at such meeting or hearing, he may need to ensure that a verbatim record of the proceedings is made which record includes the testimony and evidence upon which the appeal is based.

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