

MINUTES OF THE ELECTION REVIEW PLANNING COMMISSION
COMMITTEE MEMBERS PARTICIPATED REMOTELY VIA ZOOM VIDEO
CONFERENCE
CITY STAFF PARTICIPATED FROM THE CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS
July 29, 2020 @ 4:00 PM

Committee Members present electronically via Zoom:

Councilor Crystal Paradis, Chair
Councilor David A. Witham, Vice Chair
Councilor Nancie Cameron
Councilor Matthew Gerding

Administration/Staff present: Bob Belmore, City Manager
 Jonathan Slaven, City Clerk
 Scott Smith, Director of Finance & Administration

Other:

The meeting called to order by Chair Paradis at 4:00 p.m.

Chair Paradis announced:

Due to the State of Emergency declared by the Governor as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and in accordance with the Governor's Emergency Order #12 pursuant to Executive Order 2020-04, this Commission is authorized to meet electronically.

We are utilizing Zoom for this electronic meeting. All members of the Committee have the ability to communicate contemporaneously during this meeting through this platform, and although the meeting is open to the public, the public was encouraged not to attend. The public was encouraged to offer written comment by email, via USPS, or by drop-off at the City Hall Tax Collector drive-thru window.

Manager Belmore announced that **all votes** that are taken during this meeting shall be done by **roll call vote**.

Attendance was taken by roll call vote; members Paradis, Witham, Gerding, and Cameron were present and had no one in the room with them. Councilor Dumont was not in attendance.

Manager Belmore announced who was in the Council Chambers, which is noted above

APPROVE PAST MEETING MINUTES

Councilor Cameron, made a motion to approve last meetings minutes, seconded by Councilor Gerding. Motion passed by roll call vote 4-0.

CITY MANAGER UPDATES

Manager Belmore informed Councilors that we are in the process of setting up a training session with the moderators, election officials and volunteers. He stated we are sending out an ad in the newsletter to continue to push absentee ballots and include the news of the newly approved stipend for election workers. The State has scheduled the PPE delivery for election workers on August 12th. The Fire Chief will pick up the PPE delivered from the State in Dover. The new door for the Ward 5 polling location has been ordered and highway will be fixing a small section of the floor in that Ward's polling location.

Director Smith stated he recently received a report from the Governor's office regarding reimbursement for work being done specifically for COVID issues. He stated that Public Safety payroll (fire, police, etc) may be reimbursed going back to March 1st. He said this would absorb all the money currently available from the State GOFFER funds for the City

Councilor Paradis inquired about reimbursement of funds to help with school opening preparation. Manager Belmore stated the Superintendent would have that information on any separate State GOFFER funds.

Councilor Gerding asked if PPE pickup just for the primary. Director Smith stated the report he received wasn't clear, but seems to be for both since they recommended bringing a large vehicle.

Councilor Paradis stated she noticed the state has added more details for when absentee ballots could be counted.

COMMUNICATION/OUTREACH TO PUBLIC RE: ABSENTEE/IN-PERSON, NEW/UPDATED VOTING PROCESS & LOCATION

Councilor Paradis and Witham recommended posting information about the location changes. Manager Belmore concurred and will complete. Councilor Gerding inquired if the timeline for the General Election would be similar to the Primary timeline. Manager Belmore said the State has been pretty responsive getting things out fairly quick, but we are not totally sure. Councilor Paradis suggested we add the sample ballot to the voting information page and update all polling locations on the website.

REVIEW DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS & COMMISSION REPORT TO MAYOR & COUNCIL

Manager Belmore said the date to present this Commissions' findings is at the next council meeting. He believes the Mayor's charge to the Election Review Planning Commission is reflected accurately. Included in the presentation were items on safety (workers and voters), encouraging absentee voting, and change in polling locations. Councilor's recommendations to the issues were also included. We would have liked to have a central polling location, however were not permitted as per the Secretary of State.

If not provided by State, we will make sure to provide signage etc. for social distancing. The Manager recommended closing the buildings to the public for routine business to cut down on foot traffic, but keeping the drive-thru open for regular City business.

The Commission members reviewed the draft report and made a number of recommendations:

Councilor Witham noted that the listing of the prior locations of the Ward 4 and Ward 5 polling locations were mixed up and need to be corrected.

Councilor Paradis requested that the recommendations in common for each Ward be listed in one single bullet titled “All Wards” and that recommendations to specific Wards be listed separately. She also requested we include putting signs at the prior polling locations of Ward 3 and 4 informing residents of the new polling locations at the Schools, and also where in the Schools the voting would occur. Under “safety of Voters and Election Workers”, in the final bullet add to reduce crowds on election day. Under “Election Worker Recruitment” add a bullet to add more communication updates regarding the additional stipend.

Councilor Gerding requested that in the “Encourage Absentee Voting” section, add a bullet to recommend we include a recommended mail in date, and if residents miss that date, they can deliver their ballots directly to City Hall.

All members of the Commission requested that we include a listing of the PPE being delivered to the City for the upcoming elections.

City Manager Belmore agreed to make the changes to the draft report and get it back out to the Commission members early in the week for another review.

MISC

Councilor Paradis recommended some sort of door protocol, especially at Wards 1 and 2. Maybe they could be propped open or have a volunteer assisting. Manager Belmore stated it was our intent was to at least prop open the doors at City Hall, but this could be worth while to do at other locations. He said the first bullet point on the committees’ review document was about election workers PPE to include a breakdown of what we are doing for the voters, election workers, and what we are doing for the location itself. Manager Belmore will work with the superintendent on the open-door idea.

Councilor Paradis asked about the drop box on the side of the building. Manager Belmore stated that it is not functional. The only functioning one is inside the building. Councilor Paradis asked if the window allows to receive ballot at same time as the application. Director Smith stated this is a timing issue. Staff has been assisting residents in getting the ballot at the same time residents file an application, but if it is busy there are long lines at the drive-thru and processing takes some time so we aren’t able to accommodate residents during those peak times.

Councilor Gerding was curious if there is signage up to guide people through that process. Councilor Cameron said the problem with too much signage is a lot of people aren't reading it.

Councilor Witham said, in regard to the egresses at school, we need to ensure they are handicapped accessible. Councilor Cameron said there are other doors to allow for ADA accessibility. Councilor Gerding said there is an out-ramp from the cafeteria toward the left that connects to the middle school which should allow for ADA. Councilor Paradis inquired if we want to meet again before City Council meeting or review via email. Councilor Gerding said he was happy to review via email. Councilor Cameron agrees it makes sense to review via email. Council reached consensus to review by email.

ADJOURNMENT

Councilor Witham, seconded by Councilor Cameron made a motion to adjourn at 4:50pm. Motion passed by roll call vote 4-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Jonathan Slaven, City Clerk