

MINUTES
Eveleth City Council Workshop Meeting
9:30 a.m., May 12, 2020
Council Chambers, City Hall, Eveleth, MN

Councilor John Rauzi, Present
Councilor Brad Hadrava, Present
Councilor Brian Lillis, Present
Councilor Joseph Koivunen, Present (arrived at 10:10 a.m.)
Mayor Robert Vlasisavljevich, Present

Also present: City Clerk Administrator Jackie Monahan-Junek; Deputy City Clerk Stephanie Friebe; City Attorney Mitch Brunfelt; Police Chief Tim Koivunen, Public Works Director Jerry Rosati

Mayor Vlasisavljevich called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m.

1. Discuss Governor Walz Executive Orders affecting local businesses

Mayor Vlasisavljevich said the Stay at Home Order has included selective enforcement when you hear of the big box stores being open. Vlasisavljevich referred to the State of Alabama. Alabama has come up with a common sense approach which outlines businesses from retail, dentist, hair salon, etc. They have set up guidelines to start letting businesses open up. Hair salons have customers waiting by appointment only. Restaurants may have disposable dishes which the customer drops in the trash. Vlasisavljevich said our economy will be destroyed if something is not done.

Vlasisavljevich said he is not seeing a lot of leadership from behind the mask. He recognized that no one has ever had this type of situation, but stated we need to get proactive and save the community. He voiced his concerns that the mine layoffs on the Iron Range are going to add more fuel to the fire. Vlasisavljevich said the City of Bloomington has passed a resolution taking a stance against the Governor's violation of the 14th Amendment. He disagreed with the ban on camping in the Boundary Waters while there are tents all over Minneapolis used by the homeless. Vlasisavljevich implored that something must be done for the small businesses in town.

Vlasisavljevich said the City of Duluth is preparing for future bar openings by allowing bars to use sidewalks to increase their space. Councilor Rauzi said he liked the idea of turning downtown Eveleth into a Paris café atmosphere by allowing businesses to expand on to the sidewalks. Rauzi favored helping the businesses in any way possible to maintain social distancing and allowing them to reopen.

Councilor Hadrava suggested the City and downtown businesses work together to split the cost and set up some hand sanitizing systems from A1 in front of the entrances. He said we can put up some signs, wear your mask, and let's start the show.

Police Chief Koivunen said he is very supportive of opening businesses. He pointed out that if the Council made a resolution stating the City will not be following the Governor's Stay at Home Order, the City would be authorizing local law enforcement not to enforce the law. He also voiced his concern that the State could penalize liquor license holders and restaurants. He said the City can open up, but the State or County could come down on these owners.

Councilor Lillis asked if the City has any legal authority to override the Governor's Order. City Attorney Brunfelt said the City has zero authority and it would be up to the Courts to determine if an individual citizen has an argument against the Governor's Order. Attorney Brunfelt said he believed the Council's heart is in the right place, but from a legal stand point he could not advise the Council to override the Governor's Order.

Police Chief Koivunen asked if the Council would consider writing a letter to the Governor. Attorney Brunfelt suggested a letter could possibly influence the Governor and let him know the Council's feelings towards the unfairness of big box businesses being open while small businesses must be closed. Brunfelt said that people will start going rogue if something is not done. Brunfelt suggested the cities need to ban together through the League of Minnesota or Greater Coalition of Minnesota Cities to look at what can be done if the Governor extends the Stay at Home Order.

Councilor Lillis said is in favor of doing everything possible to help the businesses, but the City needs to obey the law. Chief Koivunen pointed out that the City may be putting the business owners in a predicament if Eveleth does not enforce the law—they may be punished by the State. Attorney Brunfelt and Councilor Lillis both pointed out that disobeying the law may also jeopardize Eveleth Police Officers as there is a difference in using discretion in enforcement and refusal to enforce the law. It could affect the officers' post board license and carry criminal sanctions. Councilor Lillis reiterated that he is all for helping the businesses, but doing it lawfully.

The Council will continue discussions after the Governor's Press conference on Thursday. In the meantime, Mayor Vlasisavljevich will send a letter on behalf of the City Council to the Governor (before he makes his decision on whether to extend the Stay at Home Order) to inform him of the dire situation in Northern Minnesota. Senator David Tomassoni and Representative Dave Lislegard will also be sent a copy of the letter.

2. 2020 budget and discretionary expenditures

This item will be discussed a later date.

Mayor Vlasisavljevich recessed the workshop meeting at 10:39 a.m. The Council will continue this workshop on Thursday, May 14, 2020 at 3:00 p.m

MINUTES
Eveleth City Council Workshop Meeting
3:00 p.m., May 14, 2020
(Continued from May 12, 2020 Workshop Meeting)
Council Chambers, City Hall, Eveleth, MN

Councilor John Rauzi, Present
Councilor Brad Hadrava, Absent
Councilor Brian Lillis, Present
Councilor Joseph Koivunen, Present
Mayor Robert Vlasisavljevich, Present

Also present: City Clerk Administrator Jackie Monahan-Junek; Deputy City Clerk Stephanie Friebe; City Attorney Mitch Brunfelt; Police Chief Tim Koivunen, Public Works Director Jerry Rosati

Mayor Vlasisavljevich reconvened the May 12, 2020 Workshop Meeting on Thursday, May 14, at 3:06 p.m.

Police Chief Koivunen reported that the Governor has received the letter from the Mayor and City Council. The letter has been posted on the Minnesota Chief's website. The City of Gilbert passed a resolution yesterday regarding the Governor's Order.

Discussion took place that the Governor's most recent Executive Order does not really help Eveleth businesses. The order is keeping bars, restaurants, and hair salons closed until June 1st. The Governor's Executive Committee is scheduled to have a plan available by May 20th for these businesses to adhere to in order to open June 1st.

Councilor Koivunen would like to invite the bar/restaurant owners to the Council Meeting on May 19th. This would give the Council and City Attorney the opportunity to explain to them what the City can and cannot do to help.

Discussion took place on the possible ramifications to the Eveleth Police Chief and officers if the City were to override the Governor's Order, and the potential penalties the State could impose on business owners.

The Council also discussed the bridge loan through the City available for small business owners who qualify for state assistance due to the COVID pandemic. The Council would like to continue exploring other possibilities to get money through the City to small businesses who do not qualify for state assistance.

The Council would like to consider a resolution in regards to the Governor's Order keeping small businesses closed at the next Council Meeting. The resolution would establish Eveleth as a

Constitutional and Business Friendly Community and reference the 14th Amendment of the Constitution.

Chief Police Koivunen said plans on underway to help the Eveleth-Gilbert graduating class of 2020 celebrate. They are planning a curbside diploma pickup and small parade through town. He estimated about 70 cars would be involved.

The meeting adjourned at 3:56 p.m.