

CITYOF OPA-LOCKA
"The Great City"

VIRTUAL WORKSHOP (COVID-19)
Thursday, April 30, 2020
5:30 P.M.

AGENDA

1. WELCOME/OPENING REMARKS:

Mayor Matthew Pigatt called the Virtual Workshop Meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. on Thursday, April 30, 2020.

Pursuant to Executive Order No. 20-69, issued by the office of the Governor Ron DeSantis on March 20, 2020, municipalities may conduct meetings of their governing boards without having a quorum of its members present physically or at any specific location, and utilizing communications media technology such as telephonic or video conferencing, as provided by Section 120.54(5) (b) 2, Florida Statutes.

An opportunity was given to the public to email the City Clerk prior to the Virtual Workshop with any questions/comments/concerns. This meeting is streamed live at <https://www.youtube.com/user/CityofOpalocka>.

Since this is a virtual meeting as authorized by the Governor of the State of Florida, again, members of the public wishing to address the commission have been offered the opportunity to do so. Public comments will be included as part of the public record for this Virtual Workshop.

The members of the City Commission appearing remotely were: Mayor Matthew Pigatt, Vice Mayor Chris Davis, Commissioner Sherelean Bass, Commissioner Alvin Burke, and Commissioner Joseph L. Kelley. Also appearing remotely were: City Attorney Burnadette Norris-Weeks, City Manager John E. Pate, and City Clerk Joanna Flores.

2. INVOCATION:

The invocation was delivered by Commissioner Joseph Kelley.

3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited in unison.

4. PUBLIC COMMENT:

Clerk Flores stated the protocols for public participation in virtual meetings. There were no public comments.

5. DISCUSSION ITEM:

- **City's response to the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)**

Mayor Pigatt stated that there is currently a very serious rate of infection in the City of Opa-locka. He called upon staff to provide an update regarding the City's response and also for the Commission to brainstorm and think through ideas, and make sure everyone is on the same page when it comes to responding to the crisis.

Manager Pate stated that as of today, the City of Opa-locka has approximately 198 COVID-19 positive cases, self-reported or reported through hospital facilities where individuals were admitted, based on address and zip codes provided by the patients. He emphasized that more likely than not, the actual positive cases are higher than 198, and we will not know until the City starts their own testing and self-testing program. He stated that as of Wednesday, Miami-Dade County opened green spaces and parks per the County Mayor. The cities are allowed to be more restrictive as far as the reopening of green spaces and parks, and other municipal government entities. The City of Opa-locka has made the determination to keep the green spaces closed because of the COVID-19 positive rate, as well as stay-at-home and curfew related issues which the City is dealing with collectively. He stated that while in contact with the County and State Department of Public Health, they were discussing coordinating testing at senior facilities and the village, and updates on this matter are being awaited. Private entities have also been contacted in regards to the cost of independent testing, for the City to consider sponsoring such testing, and the responses have been 6-12 people per hour at a rate of \$100 - \$120 pp, which would cost the City \$18,000 per day if the City would take on financing testing themselves. The manager requested the input of the Commissioners in regards to the following subjects:

- a.) Looking at current emergency orders to see if the City of Opa-locka wants to be more restrictive than the current County and State order effective May 6, such order for reopening specifically excludes Miami-Dade, Broward and Palm Beach counties, due to the high COVID-19 positivity rates. There are concerns about residents wearing masks on an everyday basis, sanitation issues in grocery stores and local businesses.
- b.) What demographic do we want to focus on?
 - Ages 65+ that are symptomatic, as recommend by the State Department of Public Health

Manager Pate stated that the City is strictly enforcing the curfew and the Police Department has been constantly engaging in educating residents about the stay-at-home orders and curfew. The City Manager made a reference to a recent event involving around 30-40 residents in a public confrontation, de-escalated by the Police without the need to incarcerate anyone, but presented an opportunity to educate the residents. He reinforced that we have to get the curfew under control. An order of 2,000 masks was placed to distribute among residents possibly, however the masks are coming in very slowly at about 100 per day due to a shortage of masks.

He further brought up the concern of the Natural Disaster Budget, which the City is currently using funds from while dealing with COVID-19, the majority of which is reimbursable, and as Hurricane Season approaches, the City should be cautious as far as using the funds, while waiting on pending reimbursements. He stated that Chief Dobson was there to speak about the curfew, other subjects and answer questions.

Chief James Dobson of the Opa-locka Police Department reported that with the City Manager's approval, he has assigned 4 new officers working the 10pm to 2am shift, which reported mostly compliance and only a few arrests for violation of the curfew from repeat offenders not willing to abide by the curfew. Last week, two bars had to be closed down because they were attempting to serve customers indoors. There has been traffic after the curfew, but only passing through the City. Overall, residents and businesses have been in compliance, and we have gone back to a zero tolerance with loitering.

Manager Pate requested that Public Works Department Director, Mr. Austin provide an update on flooding in the City, how gutters are being cleaned and how the City is maintaining the streets and its infrastructure during this time.

Public Works Director Mr. Airia Austin stated that essential folks are being kept on pump stations, dealing with water leaks as they are reported from Miami-Dade County, as they continue with the meter replacement program. He stated that the pothole patching program has been temporarily suspended due to time constraints. There are currently two items related to flooding which he would like to complete after he receives a full assessment from the contractors.

Manager Pate further requested that Mr. Austin update the City on the extended RFPs, with regards to the City's infrastructure plan. The City still needs to have progress in regards to its infrastructure.

Mr. Austin said that the RFPs will be closing in mid-May and that he will be receiving them electronically, and via Zoom. The applications are pouring in and he is hopeful qualified individuals will be selected to get these projects going.

Manager Pate opened the floor for any questions and stated that the City is looking at a phased re-opening of City Hall. The IT Director is looking into temperature scanners that can be mounted on the door to be able to do mass temperature screenings to people coming into the building. Due to budget constraints, the City is evaluating its personnel in order to maintain the proper social distancing within the building; as everyone knows there are employees working 4-hour shifts, in order to make sure we do not have a large number of individuals in the building at once. The City has been covering 40 hours of payroll per employee except for essential services since March, and that will be coming to a conclusion in mid-May because the City will not be able to sustain that. This was done on a temporary basis as others cities have done, in order to not affect employees further, but the City is looking at potential furloughs, potential reduction in workforce, and potential down-grading of status, from full-time to part-time status in order to make sure there is proper manpower in the building and staffing is reduced due to COVID-19. The main priority is to have staff working and avoid furloughing staff. Creative ideas to avoid such mishaps for the City's employees are being discussed, such as providing formal notice to the Union, providing

staff enough time to file their unemployment claims, and getting additional funds and revenue prior to implementing these changes. Also, he needs to make sure the City will have adequate staffing to operate. The Manager reminded everyone attending that this is the time to discuss any ideas to deal with these situations.

Mayor Pigatt thanked City Manager Pate and expressed appreciation for the updates from Chief Dobson and Mr. Austin. He said he would reserve his comments until after the commission has discussed the matters. He provided a quick review of the topics to make sure everyone was aware, as to how the City will respond to the opening up that is taking place at the federal, state and local level and what this means to the City of Opa-locka.

Commissioner Bass asked for clarification as to why the pothole program was suspended and further asked about the number of applications received for the consulting positions.

Mr. Austin explained that the pothole program was temporarily suspended because it would not be sustainable to try to collect asphalt, which takes an hour and a half from the time they start working, as the City is only working restricted hours. He said that he receives emails daily of candidates applying for the RFQ, but it has not been quantified and he will get back to Commissioner Bass with that information.

Commissioner Bass thanked Mr. Austin and said she was grateful that there were so many contractors interested in being part of the City of Opa-locka. She addressed Manager Pate regarding the reopening of the City, which must be done, and these decisions need to be made almost overnight.

Commissioner Kelley addressed the pothole issue and requested confirmation of what he understood for the reasoning of the suspension, in regards to the time constraint due to restricted working hours.

Mr. Austin confirmed the reason for the temporary suspension of the pothole program.

Commissioner Kelley addressed Manager Pate and reminded him of the importance of continuing the pothole program, in particular due to the Hurricane Season, and requested to have it done at least once a week while in this crisis. He stated that there is a lot of rain and further asked that the City Manager revisit those working hours. He said that making some progress with pothole patching is important.

City Manager Pate thanked Commissioner Kelley for the question and stated that the City is looking at the new normal and it is his intention to have regular working hours back in the next two weeks. He said he will take Commissioners Kelley's comment into consideration and asked Mr. Austin to develop a plan to do pothole patching at least once a week moving forward, until the City is back to working regular hours sometime this month.

Mayor Pigatt asked if Public Works employees are considered non-essential.

Manager Pate stated that certain Public Works positions are considered essential. Public Works Employees are working 4-hour days but some staff work more than 4 hours. Schedules are being adjusted. His biggest concern is the access to PPE and adjustments are being made as far as hours and staff. He stated that the concern of the PPE is being brought up by the Union as well, and that is everyone's priority.

Mayor Pigatt addressed the reduced working hours for Public Works employees while they are essential, and are being paid for full-time work while only doing part-time work.

Manager Pate requested that Mr. Austin address the Mayor's concern.

Mayor Pigatt further stated that his reason for bringing that up is that roads, streets and infrastructure projects are essential functions of a government and something that the city needs to respond to, and Public Works employees are the main force for doing that.

Manager Pate explained that projects, remodeling, and various activities are still taking place. The things that were suspended such as the pothole patching program, were due to time constraints and moving the workforce to do other necessary things that have arisen such as the food drive on Tuesdays, dealing with illegal dumping, as well as other facility related issues. The biggest issue at Public Works was PPE and a determination had to be made as a result. He stated that essential items are being handled, such as pump stations maintenance, water break reparation, and the City still has full services. The pothole program was suspended temporarily. The City is going through a phasing process making sure that employees have the proper PPE.

Mr. Austin explained that the purpose was to limit the exposure of the employees and taking employees to do the food drive with a 4-hour window to get things done.

Mayor Pigatt said he is still confused as to how PPE is affecting the working hours, and is asking for clarification and details on this issue. He said he does not want work undone.

Manager Pate understood the Mayor's concerns and requested Mr. Austin to elaborate on the PPE. While it is a general policy to have 4-hour work days, others are required to work more, and the majority are working more than 4 hours.

Mayor Pigatt asked for clarification from the City Manager in regards to this general policy of the City of Opa-locka to work 4 hours a day during an emergency, and whether this applies to non-essential employees only or essential employees as well.

Manager Pate advised that this policy is specifically due to COVID-19 and its guidelines, regarding PPE and social distancing. These were the front-line worker guidelines at hand which were given to the Police Department and others. This was a decision made based on the circumstances and the information given. The City is moving in a phase-in process through which full working hours will be re-established, while ensuring employees are safe. The lack of PPE available to the City is occurring at a national level. He understands the Mayor's concerns and reinforced to him that these issues are being addressed; the work days will be extended and public work activities will be re-prioritized.

Commissioner Kelley addressed Chief Dobson in regards to the curfew and other incidents that keep coming up that should be addressed effectively, however, they are not. He said there are repeat situations that need to be dealt with. He suggested that the guidelines be enforced on a consistent basis. He requested documentation in regards to the financial challenges that would impact the City, in order for the commissioners to weigh in on that decision. He also raised a concern regarding food distribution not done by the City, which could be causing a strain on the City's police staff and this cost needs to be addressed in his opinion, as it is making police response to be slower than normal, especially on certain days. He discussed the COVID-19 related expenses and reimbursements, and asked whether most of those expenses were reimbursable.

Manager Pate confirmed that most of the COVID-19 related expenses are reimbursable.

Vice Mayor Davis expressed his concerns relating to the masks and the City's current status as it relates to the issue of PPE. He reinforced testing being a priority and further spoke about housing assistance that should be considered by means of the CRA. He provided examples of other cities such as North Miami Beach and Hialeah.

Commissioner Burke expressed his concerns relating to the situation of the school crossing guards which are apparently getting one (1) pair of gloves and one (1) mask per week. He asked if that was true.

Manager Pate addressed Commissioners Kelley concerns as far as reimbursable funds. The 40 hours of staff time is not reimbursable, but overtime, any meals, supplies, PPE, signage and infrastructure related to COVID-19 are all reimbursable. Both Mr. Austin and the Budget Director will be attending training with FEMA related to COVID-19 guidelines, and more money will be available for City assistance. The City is currently waiting for the State of Florida distribution and what will be provided to the counties and smaller cities. The City is currently in the bidding process with the county.

He continued by addressing Vice Mayor Davis questions regarding masks. The City just placed a new mask order for 30,000 masks, which the Commission will be ratifying at the Special Commission Meeting. The City will distribute these masks to residents. The CRA budget can be used to support COVID-19 efforts, but it has to be amended, and the CRA board has to make those decisions. He stated that any special stimulus related programs require legislation. In regards to Commissioner Burke's concern, he requested Chief Dobson to provide a response.

Chief Dobson stated that the supervisor was provided with enough masks for each crossing guard. About 5-10 masks and gloves are provided per week per person and these are distributed on Mondays.

Mayor Pigatt briefly addressed the priorities in regards to COVID-19.

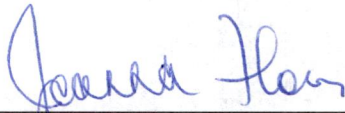
6. ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business to come before the City Commission, it was moved by Commissioner Kelley, seconded by Vice Mayor Davis to adjourn the meeting at 6:33 p.m.



Matthew A. Pigatt
Mayor

Attest:



Joanna Flores, CMC
City Clerk