

CITYOF OPA-LOCKA

“The Great City”

CLERK’S ACTION SUMMARY MINUTES

VIRTUAL WORKSHOP (COVID-19)

Thursday, May 7, 2020

5:30 P.M.

1. WELCOME/OPENING REMARKS:

Mayor Matthew Pigatt called the virtual meeting to order at 5:44 p.m. on Thursday, May 7, 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 Commission Meeting with any questions/comments/concerns on items we will hear on this evening’s Regular Commission Meeting agenda. This meeting is being 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 meeting and will be considered by the City commission prior to any action taken.

2. ROLL CALL:

The members of the City Commission appearing remotely were: Mayor Matthew Pigatt, Vice Mayor Chris Davis, Commissioner Sherelean Bass, and Commissioner Alvin Burke. Also appearing remotely was: City Attorney Burnadette Norris-Weeks, City Manager John E. Pate, and City Clerk Joanna Flores. Commissioner Joseph L. Kelley was not present during this meeting,

3. INVOCATION:

The invocation was delivered by Commissioner Sherelean Bass.

4. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by Commissioner Alvin Burke.

5. PUBLIC INPUT:

(Agenda items only)

City Clerk Flores stated there were no public comments for the meeting and briefly explained how residents can participate virtually.

6. DISCUSSION ITEM:

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

Mayor Pigatt requested City Manager Pate to start the discussion by providing a report of the City's response to COVID-19.

Manager Pate reported that enforcement has been lowered and businesses have been kept close. Those businesses not in compliance were shut down. He reported that cases are slowly going up and spiking on the day of the meeting. He explained the City didn't foresee the numbers going down anytime soon and it is important to comply with social distancing and other rules and regulations including COVID-19 regulations. A report will be released sometime later on that evening. He provided a short summary regarding giving out masks and how the City currently stands with that equipment to be given out to law enforcement and administrative staff. He reported having issues with law enforcement not answering adequately to calls related to COVID-19. He stated he had exhorted to Chief Dobson the importance of enforcing COVID-19 related issues. He then requested Chief Dobson provide a report.

Chief James Dobson of the Opa-locka Police Department reported that the police department had assisted with numerous amounts of food giveaways; crossing guards were actively assisting with ensuring the parks were vacant; and 4 new officers have been assisting with enforcing curfew, social distancing and masks mandate from 10 pm to 2 am. He said there were a few businesses operating over hours and people not wearing masks, nonetheless, 1 to 2 businesses did not abide by the mandates and they were closed down by the police department. He stated the department received 2100 masks, 1700 gloves and sanitizing liquid from Miami-Dade County Operations Center.

Mayor Pigatt asked Chief Dobson if he believed he had enough personnel to enforce the emergency orders from the County and the City.

Chief Dobson stated "Yes".

Mayor Pigatt was concerned about continuing to enforce the new guidelines. He further asked Chief Dobson how the City was assisting businesses to help enforce the orders.

Chief Dobson said the businesses were offered to contact 305-953-2877 to request assistance.

Mayor Pigatt requested for the number provided to be advertised on social media and any other form of advertisement for the businesses to be supported. He asked Chief Dobson whether the police department has received an uptick on calls related to enforcing the mandates.

Chief Dobson stated that the department had not received calls related to enforcing the masks mandate.

Mayor Pigatt stressed the importance of being helpful to businesses to assist them in enforcing the mandate.

Vice Mayor Davis asked Chief Dobson whether the police department had done any outreach to distribute masks to the residents and educate them.

Chief Dobson said that City Manager Pate had requested a quote for mask; however, the police department had not been given masks to provide to residents.

Airia Austin, Director of Public Works reported that as of May 4 the public works department resumed regular working schedules of 8 hours a day. He asserted the pothole program was going to resume the following day and reported a low number of potholes across the City with 90% of patched filled thus far. He explained pump station number 5 was being lined and it should have been ready by the middle of the current month. He projected having 2 more pumps ready, for a total of three before the rainy season begins in the month of November.

Commissioner Bass commended the report of Mr. Austin and the work done by his department.

Vice Mayor Davis requested that Mr. Austin provide an update regarding the bus benches.

Mr. Austin reported he was waiting for City Attorney Norris-Weeks to review a document to move forward with a vendor.

Mayor Pigatt commended the work of the Public Works Department. He further requested Mr. Austin for an update on pavement projects.

Mr. Austin stated that the projects on 139 Street and 141 Street were completed except for beauty enhancements, for which landscaping was projected to be performed.

Mayor Pigatt requested that the pictures of the completed roads be uploaded to social media.

Commissioner Burke commended Mr. Austin for the work on NW 139 Street and NW 141 Street. He shared his concerns for an issue with the cement trucks using the road.

Mr. Austin advised that efforts had been made to let the drivers of the trucks take an alternate road, and he said signs will be put out for drivers to heed by the requests.

Commissioner Burke shared the concerns for a drain being completely covered.

Mr. Austin explained that was done deliberately by his department in order to prevent illegal dumping of toxic liquids.

Mayor Pigatt requested for an update on the budget.

Budget Director Robert Anathan stated that he provided a memo the day before, regarding expenditures related to COVID-19 of roughly \$131,000.00. He further provided a breakdown of where the expenditures were made: \$110,000.00 for police overtime, \$10,000 for laptop computers for essential employees working from home, \$7,500.00 for police meals, and the remainder in PPE.

Mayor Pigatt said that in the past two months, \$117,000.00 of extra expenses were for the police department alone. He asked if that was a correct statement.

Mr. Anathan stated that it was.

Mayor Pigatt voiced his concern regarding the extra expenses reported and stated they were not sustainable. He requested City Clerk Flores to provide the date the Emergency Order began.

City Clerk Flores she was going to look it up and let him know.

Manager Pate stated it was two months ago.

Mr. Anathan explained the first two weeks after the emergency order caused a great deal of police overtime. He explained the police have scaled down significantly to a more sustainable level and he asserted that those funds were reimbursable through FEMA.

Mayor Pigatt acknowledged Mr. Anathan's statements. He still advocated for seeking public aid to support enforcing the guidelines and writing citations as an alternative.

Commissioner Burke agreed that was a large sum of money.

Vice Mayor Davis stressed the importance of having detailed report outlining expenditures related to COVID-19.

Mr. Anathan stated that the report had already been made and it will be made available to the Commission.

Mayor Pigatt requested the detailed report expedited. He further emphasized on recommendations for handling COVID-19 related enforcement along with a physical analysis and related projected costs.

Manager Pate explained most of the things mentioned were considered. He advised that Mr. Anathan was currently putting together the information and he will make it available to the Commission as soon as he had reviewed it.

Commissioner Bass requested to know what percentage of the expenses related to COVID-19 were reimbursable to the City.

Mr. Anathan stated that after qualification, FEMA will reimburse 75% and possibly another 12% from the State.

Commissioner Bass stressed the importance of being mindful with the resources of the City.

Mayor Pigatt requested to know who was handling the documentation for FEMA reimbursement purposes.

Manager Pate said that Mr. Anathan was handling the documentation along with his assistant Airia Austin.

Mayor Pigatt said the city could hire external consultants, if needed, in order to avoid missing out on reimbursements for a lack of documentation. He agreed with Commissioner Bass.

Manager Pate reported the City's cases for COVID-19 were rising.

Mayor Pigatt requested that the City Manager provide an update on the positive cases of COVID-19 in the City.

Commissioner Bass stated it was 238 for the day prior and that was the latest information.

Manager Pate continued with his report, he stated that an update on the cases were going to be provided later that day. He stated some businesses were closed for lack of compliance with the COVID-19 guidelines.

Mayor Pigatt moved the meeting to discuss the priorities of the administration and the masks mandate.

Commissioner Bass voiced her support for face coverings mandates across the City.

Vice Mayor Davis asked if the information on COVID cases related to Zip Code 33054 were taken as a whole taking into account that it goes outside of the boundaries of the City of Opa-locka or if the data was correctly appropriated to only represent the number of cases within the city boundaries.

Mr. Anathan explained he has not been able to separate the data.

Mayor Pigatt moved the discussion to the topic of masks. He explained the State and the County were requiring people entering businesses to wear masks. He suggested a law mandating all residents in public to wear masks.

Commissioner Bass advocated for having a law mandating masks to the residents as a manner of precaution before the risks of COVID-19.

Vice Mayor Davis agreed the law was necessary. He voiced concerns in regards to enforcing the law and the cost associated with it to the City.

Mayor Pigatt requested to review the penalties for violating the mask mandate, which were up to \$250 in fines and how it would be enforced.

Manager Pate explained the mandate would cause a change in the code. He expressed that this would be a permanent law on the books.

Mayor Pigatt reiterated the question in regards to the penalties and the cost to the City in enforcing this law.

Manager Pate explained it would cause the need for more police officers and 100% of the penalties of \$250 were going towards the City coffers.

Mayor Pigatt further requested information on how the process will look like prior to citing a resident.

Manager Pate stated it will be a \$250 local citation for violating the order. He suggested a tirade system, with first offense being penalized at \$200, the second at \$250 and the third at \$300.

Vice Mayor Davis expressed his concerns relating to having the ability to retreat or amend the ordinance at a later date.

Manager Pate said that the Commission can always retreat or amend an ordinance. He further explained that the language of the ordinance means it only applies while a worldwide pandemic is in place.

Commissioner Bass requested Manager Pate to clarify what were the consequences for not paying the \$250.00

Manager Pate stated it will most likely be doubled to \$500 and the debt will be sold to collections.

Mayor Pigatt asked whether not paying the fine would prevent a resident from getting a driver's license, city services or anything else?

Manager Pate said it would probably prevent residents from getting a driver's license or any benefits from the City of Opa-locka.

Mayor Pigatt requested that information to be clearly written and established.

Commissioner Burke voiced his concerns for residents who would not be able to afford the \$250 penalty.

Mayor Pigatt shared the concerns of Commissioner Burke and wanted to make sure the Commission and everyone is clear on the consequences of the law and its penalties.

Commissioner Bass suggested that the city enforce the law in a manner in which the residents would think twice before violating it.

Commissioner Burke suggested a more lenient consequence, such as doing community service hours in the City for those who could not afford the penalty. He suggested using the language from a previous ordinance known as the saggy pants law.

Mayor Pigatt requested City Clerk Flores to find the ordinance referenced by Commissioner Burke to consider using the same or similar language as it relates to the fines.

Commissioner Bass said that the city should be holding the residents of the City of Opa-locka to a high standard and to expect them to intentionally abide by the laws.

Vice Mayor Davis acknowledged both sides of the issues. He stated a penalty was needed but not too severe to hinder the residents financially.

Mayor Pigatt asked Chief Dobson to discuss the saggy pants penalties based on his recollections.

Chief Dobson stated he had been working with the City since 2014 and he recalled only two instances of violations that were punished. The penalties imposed were community service hours.

Mayor Pigatt requested a clear report from the administration including: (1) how will residents be penalized, (2) fiscal impact of enforcing the mask law, and (3) how will the City inform the residents. He suggested replacing the signs of the saggy pants law with the masks law as he felt they were strategically placed. He provided an opportunity to the Commission for any final thoughts on the masks law.

Commissioner Burke stated he had great respect for his fellow residents. He stated, however, he understood the struggles of some residents.

Mayor Pigatt requested Manager Pate provide an update regarding the projects of: online engagement strategy, virtual healthy living practices, wellness calls to seniors and a call center.

Manager Pate stated those items were currently in budget review and a report will be made available at a later time. He reported the steps the administration has taken to move forward on the items mentioned.

Mayor Pigatt concluded with emphasizing the importance of letting the residents know the steps the City is taking to better their standard of living and protect them. He requested City Clerk Flores to give an overview of the penalties regarding the saggy pants ordinance.

City Clerk Flores briefly provided the information regarding the saggy pants law and its penalties.

Mayor Pigatt requested City Clerk Flores share the information with the Commission for discussion at the next meeting. He asked if any of his colleagues would be interested in co-sponsoring the item. He suggested amending the item to add the penalty steps used for the saggy pants law.

Commissioner Bass and Vice Mayor Davis both agreed to co-sponsor the item.

Mayor Pigatt requested the Commission review the saggy pants law in order to integrate the language for penalties in the mask mandate. He briefly concluded by thanking everyone for their support and efforts to respond to the needs of the residents.

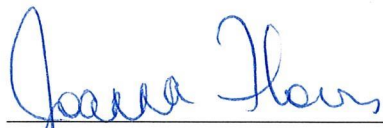
7. ADJOURN:

There being no further business to come before the City Commission, it was moved by Commissioner Burke, seconded by Vice Mayor Davis to adjourn the meeting at 7:24 p.m.



Matthew A. Pigatt
Mayor

ATTEST:



Joanna Flores
City Clerk