

SPECIAL CALL ED MEETING - October 23 , 2020

The Mayor and City Council meet in regular session on Friday, October 23, 2020 at 6:00p.m. in the Council Chambers of City Hall at 114 West Sycamore Street. Mayor Ed Hatley called the meeting to order. The following members were in attendance:

WHITE WATSON EADDY JETTON

Mayor Hatley called the meeting to order and asking those in attendance to stand for the Pledge of Allegiance.

Prior to opening the floor for discussion, Mayor Ed Hatley allowed Mr. Madden with the Health Department, to speak to on the latest COVID-19 developments. Mr. Madden gave a detailed update, via speaker phone, on the current numbers and the way things are trending. He spoke to the unpredictability and uncertainty of the Coronavirus and the high risk it poses to the community. Mr. Madden spoke to the way cases are being reported, what the numbers look like in the corporate city limits and the source control measures that help prevent the spread of the virus. Mr. Madden stressed the importance of focusing on the source control measures, stating that face coverings are a protective barrier to protect others, and identifying social distancing as being the most effective way to slow the spread.

There was a brief discussion regarding General Statue 130A-19 and 130A-20 and the difference between imminent hazard and public health nuisance. He also stressed the importance seeking the advice of the city attorney. Questions as to which statue applies to the issue at hand.

Mayor Hatley continued the meeting, providing council members with more information about the increasing COVID-19 cases. Lincolnton has been identified as a “hot Zone” by the Governor’s office, who has, as a result, made arrangements for one of his teams to partner with the Health Department and help with contact tracing.

Discussion was generated among Council members regarding the conflicting reports and information from healthcare experts, which is a point of contention for some residents. Projections regarding the increasing number of cases were discussed, with Mayor Hatley asked members for suggestions of what they feel can be done to stop the spread. Councilman Eaddy mentioned several observations regarding the matter, and asked if any action has or will be taken by the County Commissioners. City Manager Steve Zickefoose informed that according to County Manager Kelly Atkins, Commissioners have given no indication of any action to be taken.

Councilman Roby Jetton voiced his concerns for some main street business owners that have contacted him who are against enforcement of the current restrictions as they feel it would destroy their business. The governing body continued the discussion, pointing out the different views regarding face coverings, social distancing and mass gatherings. At the suggestion of Councilman Jetton, the Mayor and Council members agreed to hold a public forum at the November 5th Regular meeting and allow citizens the opportunity to be heard and voice their concerns Mayor Hatley briefly address the recent letter received from the NC Department of Health and Human Services and Sample Ordinance Language A and Sample Ordinance Language B. He reminded that any action taken will require detailed discussions and multiple decisions by the board. Chief Rodney Jordan and Captain Rodney Jordan spoke to the issue, providing information from a law enforcement point of view point and expressing some of the concerns and issues with any type of enforcement attempts. Chief Jordan did caution the governing body, informing that all of the necessary legal components need to be in place if they are looking at any action regarding an ordinance. He also reiterated the information the Health Director shared regarding enforcement and stressed the need for very clear direction for anything put in place.

Councilman Watson and Eaddy both spoke to the benefits of the precautions and how following the guidelines is for the common good of all citizens. Mayor Hatley expressed his appreciation to the press for being present and requested their help in communicating with the citizenry. Councilman Eaddy suggested that some simple steps be taken to ramp up the education component of this issue. Councilman Watson suggested Councilman Jetton's idea of bringing in small business owners and/or small groups together and have a conversation about this. Councilman Jetton expressed that he liked the idea.

In conclusion, Council decided to take several directed staff to schedule a meeting with the Chamber of Commerce and the Downtown Development Association for input on this issue.

ADJOURNMENT :

Councilman Jetton made the motion to adjourn the meeting. Members voted 4-0 in favor of the motion.

**DAPHNE INGRAM
CITY CLERK**

**ED HATLEY
MAYOR**