

**MINUTES OF A MEETING
OF THE BOARD OF COUNCIL OF THE
CITY OF FORT THOMAS,
CAMPBELL COUNTY, KENTUCKY, ON
MONDAY, APRIL 6, 2020
VIA ZOOM TELECONFERENCE**

Mayor Eric Haas called the meeting of council to order at 7:00 p.m. on Monday, April 6, 2020 via Zoom teleconference. City Clerk, Melissa Beckett called the roll and the following council members were present: David Cameron, Ken Bowman, Mark Collier, Jeff Bezold, Roger Peterman and Adam Blau. Staff members in attendance included: City Administrative Officer Ron Dill, City Clerk Melissa Beckett, Assistant City Administrator/Finance Director Joe Ewald, and City Attorney Jann Seidenfaden.

A Message from Mayor Haas regarding Covid 19: Mayor Haas thanked everyone and has been happy and impressed on how citizens have been living up to all of the regulations that have been ordered by the Governor.

Mayor Haas encouraged parents to talk to their kids about being in groups and to try not to congregate and keep distance from each other. Mayor Haas thanked Ron Dill for all that he has done during this pandemic. He also thanked the police and fire departments for dealing with this every day. "We are very blessed in Fort Thomas, we have great staff following the guidelines and we are making every attempt to keep things as close to normal for citizens as we can. We will get through this, keep the social distancing and exercising proper hygiene practices and we will get through this".

Minutes

The minutes from the March 16, 2020 meeting were presented to council for consideration. A motion was made by Mr. Collier and seconded by Mr. Bowman to approve the minutes as written. Upon call of the roll, the following members voted "aye": Mr. Cameron, Mr. Bowman, Mr. Collier, Mr. Peterman, Mr. Bezold and Mr. Blau. Voting "no" none. The motion passed by unanimous vote.

Reports of Officers

City Administrators Report:

Ron Dill on COVID-19: As a city we have tried to adjust as this pandemic moves forward. We have continued to try to do the things by following the guidelines and ask the public to do that as well. As a community and a city, there isn't necessarily a right or wrong answer. We are advising based on factual information. We are collaborating with the NKY Health Department, the V.A., the Department of Emergency Management, Campbell County Office of Emergency Management and St. Elizabeth. We are also working with the Chamber of Commerce, Tri-ED, and the Ky. League of Cities. St Elizabeth and the V.A. center are the facilities for the patients with Covid-19, however, this does not affect the city or put us at greater risk. We have closed all of our facilities but are trying to offer business the best that we can. The parks remain open, we just encourage that everyone practice social distancing. Public events for April and May are cancelled.

Mark Collier asked what the protocols were for staff excluding the police and fire. Ron noted that we are working in staggered shifts but most department heads are reporting on a daily basis. Our lobby is closed to the public but there are drop boxes available to the public so there is no face to face contact with citizens.

We are not yet in demand mode for PPE, we do have a supply and we have been able to manage that. Jeff Bezold asked what their situation was with gloves and masks. He had some masks that he donated to

them and asked if you have any around your house, please donate them because they can always use them. Ron indicated that the KLC has worked with the city to help find vendors for these items if we need them. Campbell County Emergency Management has also delivered supplies. At this time we are not lacking these resources.

Roger Peterman said that St. E. is limiting patients and they were able to prep the facility for patients and have converted rooms for patients. They are well positioned for a “worse case situation”.

Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA): - The city has complied with the terms of this federal legislation and instituted supporting policy for employee use effective April 1, 2020. This legislation establishes additional sick days (80 hours) and extended FMLA leave conditions (partial pay) under certain conditions (COVID infection, Quarantine, child care, etc.). At present, there is no appropriation for recovery of these expenditures in the federal recovery bill for local governments.

HB 484 – Pension Separation Bill: This legislation passed the KY House & Senate this week and is awaiting signature by Gov. Beshear. This is an important piece of legislation for cities/counties in that it creates a separate oversight board for the CERS portion of the pension system. As reported many times, CERS is the most funded portion of the KY Retirement System (KRS), however, there was only 11% representation on the “Board”. The Board is responsible for decisions of investment, actuarial accounting/projection, setting rates to local jurisdiction, etc. This is not a total divestiture of CERS from the oversight under KRS, but it does provide for cities and counties to have more decision-making on the investments within the pension system. It will result in potential better return and subsequently less burden on required pension contributions directly from the cities/counties.

2020 Street Resurfacing Program: Staff is working on a revised timeline for this program. There are several factors affecting the program including scheduled work on two of the streets by other utility companies and the COVID-19 issues affecting our previously scheduled public hearing. We are working through these issues and are confident we will be able to move forward with a revised schedule.

Update on Alexander Circle and One Highland Projects: Work still continues on Alexander Circle. One Highland has ceased construction; the removal of the fill has been completed in Highland Park. They will begin work once the covid-19 crisis is over.

2020-2021 Budget Development: Staff is working toward our regular budget cycle with anticipated adoption in meetings in June. There are obvious issues related to the COVID situation that are being factored into the development. Normal protocol would be for review with Finance Committee in mid May and we are hopeful the crisis issues will have settled enough to account for effects.

Update on Union Negotiations: All three collective bargaining agreements expire July 1, 2020. We had initiated discussions with these representatives, however, due to the immediate needs of our staff to react to the COVID issues they are currently delayed. When we can resume, we will be able to factor into the budget development.

New Business

Consideration of property transfer for a portion of Right of Way – Huntman Lane: At our last council meeting this subject was considered and voted on to “vacate” the right of way off Huntman Lane to be assumed by owners, Fort Thomas Partners LLC, through the order approved by council. To review, this portion of right of way was given to the city when the KDOT rebuilt Huntman Lane to adjust for construction of I-471. It carried the provision that if the city “vacated” any portion of said right of ways, the state would have to approve the transaction. Subsequent to this time, the state has apparently revised

their procedural requirements to have the city “deed” the property back to the state and then they will process further potential transfers.

Essentially, the action now required of the city is to authorize the mayor to prepare and execute the deed necessary to transfer the deed of the property directly to the KY Dept. of Transportation. KDOT would then execute any subsequent transfers.

A motion was made by Mr. Peterman and seconded by Mr. Bezold to approve the property transfer of the right of way on Huntman Lane to the Kentucky Department of Transportation. Upon call of the roll, the following members voted “aye”: Mr. Cameron, Mr. Bowman, Mr. Collier, Mr. Bezold, Mr. Peterman and Mr. Blau. The motion passed by a unanimous vote.

Consideration of Business Assistance “Grow Grant” Program: This is a continuation of the discussion presented at the last council meeting that requested a review of the Grow Grant funds to be considered for reapportioning to allow for disbursement to businesses during the COVID-19 crisis that has emerged.

The issue is layered in that there are no immediate funds designated, there are applications already submitted for the next cycle, and there was no existing criteria established to guide disbursement under emergency conditions, etc. Staff did work toward addressing these issues and create a new program, however; it was apparent that a continued discussion among the members was necessary before moving forward.

Mr. Bezold indicated that he thought it was incredible for the city to put the loan program out there to help businesses. He also stated that we need to get the grant money out in a timely manner; he is in full support to get this money out to the Fort Thomas businesses. Mark Collier asked how many people applied for the Grow Grant program. Ron Dill didn’t have specific information but he indicated that there have been multiple businesses already apply. Ron noted that there would have to be a budget amendment to offer the grant money quickly. Mr. Bowman said he would be in full support to use this money to help our businesses. Mr. Peterman noted that the program should be suspended so that the money could be available to small businesses at some time in the future if needed. He voiced that the public sector (banks or utility companies) should probably step up to help businesses as well. Mr. Blau indicated that he is in favor of using this grant to help businesses but feels that they should have an actual need for the money and not just a “want” for this money. Mr. Collier stated that he works with the Fort Thomas Business Association and feels the business community will understand and react properly to a grant program.

Mr. Peterman also indicated that the city should be very careful in spending public money and make sure that it is a use that will benefit the public. The Kentucky Law is clear that public money is not supposed to go for private purposes. This purpose would be to ensure that the businesses stay opened but there need to be criteria for this. Mr. Blau asked if we can start the process today so that the city can get the money out as soon as possible. Mr. Peterman made a motion to suspend the Grow Grant program of granting the money under the current criteria and develop additional criteria based on the specific needs because of this health emergency. It was seconded by Mr. Collier. Ron Dill indicated that the funding is presently not available in the budget, the city could create a budget amendment for the funding and make the money available sooner. This will create additional discussion to get over the issues to make sure we are meeting all of the state law obligations. We do have applications pending under the current Grow Grant, but we are not sure that those businesses would be in a financial position to do the work on their business under the grant at this time. Mr. Cameron amended the motion to suspend the current grow grant funds and amend the current budget to include next years funds to be refunded when the Grow money is available on July 1st. Mr. Peterman accepted this as part of the motion. Discussion continued regarding criteria for the businesses to receive these funds. Mr. Peterman asked staff to put together the criteria and send to council for review. Upon call of the roll, the following members voted “aye”: Mr. Cameron, Mr. Bowman, Mr. Collier, Mr. Bezold, Mr. Peterman and Mr. Blau. The motion passed by a unanimous vote.

Ordinances, Resolutions, and Orders

Ordinance No. O-03-2020: Second Reading of an Ordinance changing the time for alcohol sales on Sunday in Fort Thomas from 11:00 am to 9:00 am. A motion was made by Mr. Blau and seconded by Mr. Bowman to approve ordinance O-03-2020. Upon call of the roll, the following members voted “aye”: Mr. Cameron, Mr. Bowman, Mr. Collier, Mr. Bezold, Mr. Peterman and Mr. Blau. The motion passed by a unanimous vote.

Ordinance No. O-04-2020: Second Reading of an Ordinance amending the annual Retail Drink License fee from \$1000 to \$830. A motion was made by Mr. Peterman and seconded by Mr. Bowman to approve ordinance O-04-2020. Upon call of the roll, the following members voted “aye”: Mr. Cameron, Mr. Bowman, Mr. Collier, Mr. Bezold, Mr. Peterman and Mr. Blau. The motion passed by a unanimous vote.

Municipal Order MO-07-2020: Appointing Casey Kilgore to the position of Police Chief effective April 7, 2020. The KRS Pension Board has officially authorized that Casey Kilgore is eligible for rehire to the position of Police Chief. As discussed, Mayor Haas is recommending this hiring and this will bring the department back to full staffing at this critical time. Brent Moening is resigning his position as chief to reassume his duties as Lieutenant. Brent has filled in admirably in the interim and should be commended for his effort.

A motion was made by Mr. Bezold and seconded by Mr. Peterman to approve municipal order MO-07-2020. Upon call of the roll, the following members voted “aye”: Mr. Cameron, Mr. Bowman, Mr. Collier, Mr. Bezold, Mr. Peterman and Mr. Blau. The motion passed by a unanimous vote.

Executive Order EO-11-2020: An Executive Order naming Brent Moening to the position of Lieutenant in the Police Department was presented to council with no action necessary.

Municipal Order MO-08-2020: A Municipal Order reappointing Jerry Noran as a member of the Fort Thomas Planning Commission for a four (4) year term.

Municipal Order MO-09-2020: A Municipal Order reappointing Tim Michel as a member of the Fort Thomas Planning Commission for a four (4) year term.

Municipal Order MO-10-2020: A Municipal Order reappointing Larry Schultz as a member of the Fort Thomas Planning Commission for a four (4) year term.

Municipal Order MO-11-2020: A Municipal Order reappointing Jeff Mohr as a member of the Fort Thomas Tree Commission for four (4) year term.

Municipal Order MO-12-2020: A Municipal Order reappointing Mike Rice as a member of the Fort Thomas Tree Commission for four (4) year term.

Municipal Order MO-13-2020: A Municipal Order reappointing Mike Federle as a member of the Fort Thomas Board of Ethics for a three (3) year term.

Municipal Order MO-14-2020: A Municipal Order reappointing Mary Brown as a member of the Fort Thomas Board of Ethics for a three (3) year term.

All Municipal Orders were voted on at one time. A motion was made by Mr. Bezold and seconded by Mr. Collier to approve all Municipal Orders. Upon call of the roll, the following members voted “aye”: Mr. Cameron, Mr. Bowman, Mr. Collier, Mr. Bezold, Mr. Peterman and Mr. Blau. The motion passed by a unanimous vote.

As authorized by executive order in response to COVID-19 crisis since the last council meeting:

Executive Order EO-08-2020: Extension of payment deadlines for certain fees taxes and waiver.

Executive Order EO-09-2020: Providing leave under the Families First Response Act

Executive Order EO-10-2020: Regarding loans to businesses in the city

With no further business to come before council, a motion was made by Mr. Bowman and seconded by Mr. Collier to adjourn.

APPROVED:

Eric Haas, Mayor

ATTEST:

Melissa K. Beckett, City Clerk