

## **CITY COUNCIL MEETING**

### **Wednesday, March 18, 2020**

An emergency meeting of the Paxton City Council was held on Wednesday, March 18, 2020, at 6:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers at City Hall.

Mayor Ingold called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Roll call showed the following aldermen in attendance: Evans, Geiken, Johnson Anderson, Pacey, Satterlee, Wilson and Withers. Also, in attendance were: Mayor Bill Ingold, Treasurer/Comptroller Tammy Jensen, Public Works Assistant Director Bob Carleton, Police Chief Coy Cornett, City Attorney Marc Miller, EMA Director Ed Hanson, and members of the audience and press.

Mayor Ingold led everyone in saying the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

Mayor Ingold read a statement to the Council regarding the COVID-19 virus.

Carol Thilmoney hopes that the City doesn't close the parks and is cautious of the powers that the ordinance tonight might grant the City.

City Attorney Miller discussed the ordinance and what it entails. He relayed that this ordinance is not just for this specific incident but should be thought of regarding any emergency event that could take place. This version of the ordinance does not include any restrictions on the purchase of firearms. This ordinance allows the Mayor to be able to pay the bills of the city, purchase items for the City, issue a curfew for parts or the whole of the City, and some other items. After the Mayor, powers would pass to the Mayor-pro-temp, and then the Chief of Police. Any of these designations can be changed if the Council wishes.

City Attorney Miller discussed the Governor's suspension of the Open Meeting Act. Other municipalities are discussing ways to meet virtually.

Alderman Evans asked what will happen if something needs to be paid, but this ordinance wasn't enacted. There are no direct statues that would allow this to happen.

Alderman Pacey verified that the Mayor has the authority to make purchases up to \$10,000. That is the City's practice and policy, but not in an ordinance anywhere. Alderman Pacey asked what, besides paying bills, would be changed by adopting this ordinance? If the State declared an emergency that would impact the City as well.

There was discussion on curfews and the necessity. There was discussion on the use of this ordinance in other emergency issues.

Alderman Geiken spoke regarding some of the problems with the ordinances adopted in Champaign and Urbana. He's concerned about the possibility of shutting some businesses down.

Jonas Hoedebecke, from Accolade, spoke regarding the seriousness of this virus and how this is impacting healthcare.

Alderman Johnson Anderson asked if this could be voted on in April's meeting or if this was needed now to give local authority over these issues. There was discussion on how this is being received at other cities our size. There have been no conversations with the City's insurance company on this issue.

Alderman Wilson spoke about holding another special meeting to discuss a different ordinance to allow the City Council to meet by other means. City Attorney Miller will get an ordinance out to the Council for review tomorrow.

To be clear, this ordinance in discussion is completely different than the ordinances passed in Champaign and Urbana in the powers that are being granted to the Mayor.

There was discussion on specific sections of the ordinance.

There was discussion on meeting virtually and how we allow for public comment at those virtual meetings. City Attorney Miller stated that the City would try to make the meeting available to the public or make public comment available online. If the City could not do that, it would not impact the City's ability to conduct work. There was further discussion on this.

There was discussion on the Mayor's ability to suspend liquor sales as the Liquor Commissioner. He cannot halt liquor sales based on an emergency, only in the event of a violation of rules.

There was further discussion on specific sections of the ordinance.

Alderman Wilson made a motion to **APPROVE ORDINANCE 20-4 AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 34 "EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY" OF THE CODE OF PAXTON**. Alderman Geiken seconded the motion. Roll Call: ayes – Alderman Evans, Geiken, Johnson Anderson, Pacey, Satterlee, Wilson and Withers. Seven ayes, motion carried.

Alderman Wilson would like to call another special meeting to discuss the ordinance to allow for meeting virtually.

The amendment to the Liquor Code would allow for certain package sales by bars and restaurants. Liquor could not be sold in cups, but only in approved containers. There was discussion about supporting businesses and restaurants during this time.

Alderman Pacey made a motion to approve **ORDINANCE 20-5 AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 115 OF THE CODE OF PAXTON TO AMEND CLASS C LICENSE TO ADDITIONALLY ALLOW PACKAGE SALES**. Alderman Withers seconded the motion. There was discussion on this. Tina Digs asked Chief Cornett how these sales would comply with transportation laws. Roll Call: ayes – Alderman Evans, Geiken, Pacey, Satterlee, Wilson and Withers. Nays - Alderman Johnson Anderson. Six ayes, one nay motion carried.

Ford County Public Health Director Lana Sample was in attendance and answered questions. There was a question raised about how restaurants are taking orders if they have a small waiting area. Restaurants are required to enforce social distancing.

At 7:01 p.m. Alderman Pacey made a motion to adjourn tonight's special meeting of the Mayor and City Council. Alderman Withers seconded the motion. All ayes - motion carried on a voice vote.

Respectfully Submitted,

Gwen Smith  
City Clerk