

The Greenbush City Council held a special meeting at 8:00 am on March 23, 2020 to discuss and make decisions on any matter related to the COVID-19 Pandemic. The council also discussed the requested Wiktel easements. This meeting was held via a video conference due Governor Walz's Peacetime State of Emergency declaration concerning the COVID-19 pandemic. Due to the pandemic face to face meetings pose a health risk to the public.

Members present: Council Members Brenda Sather, Dennis Filer, Christine Foss, Eric Etherington, Shawn Walsh

Others Present: Ryan Bergeron, Anita Locken

Meeting was called to order at 8:00 am.

Purpose

Purpose- The purpose of this meeting is to discuss and makes a decision on any matter related to the COVID-19 Pandemic. The council will also be discussing the requested Wiktel easements.

COVID-19 Pandemic

The World Health Organization has declared a worldwide pandemic due to the COVID-19 virus. President Trump has declared the COVID-19 outbreak as a National Emergency. Governor Walz has declared a Peacetime State of Emergency due to the pandemic.

THEREFORE, MAYOR BRENDA SATHER OF THE CITY OF GREENBUSH PROCLAIMS, DECLARES, REQUESTS, AND DIRECTS AS FOLLOWS:

1. Under the authority given by Minnesota Statutes, Section 12.29, declares that a local emergency exists within the City of Greenbush, effective March 23, 2020, with all the powers and responsibilities attending thereto as provided by Minnesota Statutes, Chapter 12, and further proclaims that such emergency constitutes a declared emergency as provided by law.
2. Directs City Staff to review ordinance and regulatory requirements, operations, civil and legal proceedings, events, and resources to determine whether the foregoing should be adjusted or suspended, and to make recommendations regarding additional emergency regulations to support the employees and residents of the City of Greenbush.
3. Directs all City departments and offices to operate and support the response to this incident, under the direction and coordination of appropriate city personnel, including implementing new employee protocols, strategies, and processes to ensure that public services are maintained.
4. Directs the appropriate City staff to request and coordinate appropriate aid and resources from surrounding jurisdictions, Roseau County, the State of Minnesota, and the Federal government, as needed.
5. Declares, under Minnesota Statutes, Section 13D.021, that in-person meetings of the City Council, and other advisory commissions of the City of Greenbush are not practical or prudent due to the COVID-19 health pandemic and the peacetime emergency declared by Governor Walz pursuant to Minnesota Statutes, Chapter 12, and hereby directs that meetings of the City Council, and other advisory commissions of the City shall be conducted by telephone or other electronic means, and hereby directs City Staff to take such action as may be necessary to enable such meetings to occur via telephone or other electronic means pursuant to Minnesota Statutes, Section 13D.021, until such time as it is no longer impractical or imprudent for the City Council, and other advisory commission to resume in-person meetings.
6. This emergency declaration shall continue for a period of three (3) days from its effective date of March 23, 2020, unless further extended by or with the consent of the City Council pursuant to Minnesota Statutes, Section 12.29, subd. 1.
7. Orders that this declaration be given prompt and general publicity.

M/S/P Eric Etherington/Shawn Walsh to resolve as follows:

THAT FOLLOWING THE PROCLAMATION BY MAYOR SATHER, THE GREENBUSH CITY COUNCIL RESOLVED TO EXTEND THE EMERGENCY DECLARATION AS FOLLOWS:

8. That pursuant to Minnesota Statutes, Section 12.29, subd 1. the City Council for the City of Greenbush hereby consents that the three (3) day period for the emergency declaration shall be extended until such time that a declaration or resolution is given by the City of Greenbush terminating said emergency declaration.
9. That this resolution extending the emergency declaration shall be given prompt and general publicity and that it be filed promptly by the City Clerk-Treasurer.

Roll call responses in Favor- Brenda Sather, Dennis Filer, Eric Etherington, Shawn Walsh

Council member Foss was not attending the meeting until after this resolution was pass therefore had no vote.

Council next discussed the notice that would be going out to the public concerning this pandemic. The notice council approved of the notice that Mayor Sather, Council Member Walsh and Clerk-Treasurer Locken worked on. The notice to the public states:

Greenbush Residents,

As you are aware, daily life has shifted significantly due to the COVID-19 outbreak. The City of Greenbush has been working with local, county, and state partners to help protect the health and wellness of both the community and employees during the rapidly changing coronavirus outbreak. As transmission has changed in Minnesota from travel-related to community spread, the city is making changes to processes while still ensuring it can provide essential services to residents.

For the safety of our employees, starting March 23rd, all city facilities will close to the public until further notice. These facilities include city office, community center, fire station, skating rink, and public works shop. The City Clerk-Treasurer will be continuing normal work from home. You may still call the city office at 218-782-2570 to reach her. She is also available to the public through email at greenbush@wiktel.com. If you need to meet with her, a video conference can be set up. If you need assistance with resources due to the outbreak, please contact her.

Public works staff will continue to work in a limited capacity to provide essential city services. Currently, the recommendation is that city employees do not enter homes unless you are experiencing an emergency with your utilities. You are encouraged to connect with city staff through the citizen engagement on the city website, by phone, and by email. The shop phone number is 218-782-2941, and the shop email is greenbushshop@wiktel.com.

The fire department will respond to all calls as normal. At this time, they are implementing extra methods of cleaning.

Utility payments can be dropped off in the utility drop box outside the city office door or sent to PO Box 98. You may also sign up for online payments through the city website or have your payments switched to automatic payments through the bank. If you want to switch to automatic payments, contact the clerk-treasurer by phone or email. You may also call the city office to make a credit card payment. If you are experiencing difficulty paying your utilities due to this outbreak, contact the city office.

Anyone that has scheduled to use the community center will be left on the calendar in case the community center would open in time for your event. At this time, we do not have any direction as to when this opening may be so appreciating your understanding and encourage you to stay in touch with us. If you have any questions on your reservation, please contact the Clerk-Treasurer.

At the time of this notice senior meals, are still being served on a take-out basis from the Rockin 50's Café. You can call the café at 218-782-5791 for the latest information on meals. While the city office is closed senior meal tickets can be purchased at KC's Country Market. As soon as the city office opens again sale for tickets will be discontinued at the store.

Visit www.greenbushmn.govoffice2.com to learn more about the closures.

Council also discussed temporary policies that need to be put in place to address personnel issues that could and have arose from this situation. The policy includes Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and MN Department of Health (MDH) guidance on how to reduce the risk of spreading the virus and what symptoms of the virus to look for. Employees are not travel for city business unless it is deemed an emergency. All meetings are to be held via electronic methods or be cancelled. The city office is to work remotely. Public Works employees are to observe the 6-foot social distancing recommendation and for that reason are not to ride in a vehicle together. They are not to enter resident's homes unless that resident is experiencing an emergency with their utility service. The part-time custodian is to stay home through this and will be paid while they are not allowed to work. The Families First Conoravirus Reponse Act (FFRCA) requires that the city provide 80 hours of sick leave for any individual that may need to be quarantined due to COVID-19 exposure, contract the virus, be caring for an individual with the virus, or taking care of their children due to school closures. The legislation allows for businesses to be reimbursed through tax credits should an employee need to use this leave, unfortunately the city is not allowed to use these tax credit so there would be no reimbursement of those expenses. The policy allows for employees to "borrow" sick time from the city should they need more leave than the FFRCA leave, or sick leave they already have banks. Employees are to be reimbursed for phone and internet use while they are working from home. No late fees will be added to utility bills through this pandemic. The fire department is to respond as they normally would while also implementing social distancing when practical.

M/S/P Eric Etherington/Shawn Walsh to approve the temporary policies as presented.

Roll call responses in Favor - Brenda Sather, Dennis Filer, Christine Foss, Eric Etherington, Shawn Walsh

Wiktel Easements

Council reviewed the easements that Wiktel would like the city to sign in order for fiber optic cables to be installed on city property. As these easements are written they are giving Wiktel a blanket easement for the whole property that is listed on the easement. Clerk-Treasurer Locken does not recommend that council sign these easements as written. Council member Walsh talked with Wiktel representative Ben Beito concerning these easements. Mr. Beito said the easements are vague on purpose because they don't know where the line will be installed on the individual properties. Wiktel plans on talking with homeowners about placement of the cables once they are ready to install that line. If individuals do not sign the easement, they will not get fiber optic cables installed. This matter was tabled for another special meeting or for the next regular council meeting.

Upcoming Meetings:

- Regular Council Meetings: at 5:30 pm, April 20th, May 18th and June 15th

Meeting was adjourned at 8:23 am.

Brenda Sather
Mayor

Anita Locken
Clerk-Treasurer