

: OFFICIAL PROCEEDINGS :**: OF THE CITY OF PEORIA, ILLINOIS :**

A Regular Meeting of the Joint City Council and Town Board of Trustees of Peoria, Illinois, was held September 8, 2020, at 6:00 P.M. at City Hall, Council Chambers (Room 400), 419 Fulton Street, with Mayor Ardis presiding, and with proper notice having been posted.

ROLL CALL

Roll Call showed the following Council Members were present: Ali, Cyr, Grayeb, Jensen (Arrived at 6:04 P.M.) Kelly, Montelongo, Moore, Oyler, Riggerbach, Ruckriegel, Mayor Ardis - 11. Absent: None.

ELECTRONIC ATTENDANCE

In accordance with Governor JB Pritzker's Executive Order 2020-43 which continues to limit any gatherings of more than fifty people, and Executive Order 2020-44 requiring the provision of video, audio or telephonic access to meetings – and the CDC recommending social distancing of at least six feet between persons, City Hall is implementing changes and restrictions for the City Council Meeting on September 8, 2020 while complying with the Open Meetings Act.

The Council Meeting will be conducted in person with members of the Council present in Council Chambers with plexiglass barriers, with Department Heads in their offices and some City Staff in room 404 with the ability to remotely answer questions while maintaining a six foot distance. Fifteen members of the public and one member of the media will be present inside Council Chambers. Temperature screenings are required upon entry to City Hall and face coverings are always required while inside.

Members of the public and media are invited to watch through the live stream, YouTube, Television Channel 22 or through WCBU Radio. Submissions for Public Comment were received through the City Clerk's Office. The agenda, minutes and video podcast of the meeting will be available online through the City website.

INVOCATION & PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mayor Ardis requested a moment of silent prayer or reflection and then led the Pledge of Allegiance.

PROCLAMATIONS AND COMMENDATIONS

CWTC 60TH Anniversary
Hunger Action Month

MINUTES

Council Member Ruckriegel moved to approve the minutes of the Regular City Council Meeting held on August 25, 2020, and the Special City Council Meeting held on September 1, 2020, as printed; seconded by Council Member Grayeb.

Motion to approve the minutes of the Regular City Council Meeting held on August 25, 2020, and the Special City Council Meeting held on September 1, 2020, was approved by roll call vote.

Yeas: Ali, Cyr, Grayeb, Jensen, Kelly, Montelongo, Moore, Oyler, Riggerbach, Ruckriegel, Mayor Ardis - 11;

Nays: None.

PETITIONS, REMONSTRANCES & COMMUNICATIONS – TOWN OF THE CITY OF PEORIA

(20-223) REQUEST from the Town Officials to APPROVE the AUGUST 2020 ACTUAL EXPENDITURES and to APPROVE the SEPTEMBER 2020 ANTICIPATED EXPENDITURES for the Town of the City of Peoria.

Trustee Grayeb moved to approve the August 2020 Actual Expenditures and to approve the September 2020 Anticipated Expenditures for the Town of the City of Peoria; seconded by Trustee Kelly.

Approved by roll call vote.

Yeas: Ali, Cyr, Grayeb, Jensen, Kelly, Montelongo, Moore, Oyler, Riggerbach, Ruckriegel, Chairman Ardis - 11;

Nays: None.

PETITIONS, REMONSTRANCES & COMMUNICATIONS – CITY OF PEORIA

CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS BY OMNIBUS VOTE, with Recommendations as Outlined

(20-224) Communication from the City Manager and the Chief Information Officer/Assistant City Manager for a SOLE SOURCE CONTRACT with OAKSTAR CONSULTING to Lead Concurrent ADSi Implementations of CAD and RMS Upgrades for the Dispatch and Police Organizations, Support for the Final Phase Implementation of Tyler and Planning with the IS Team Leaders, in an Amount not to Exceed \$50,000.00, which was included in the Capital Budget for Computers and Technology.

(20-225) Communication from the City Manager with a Request to APPROVE an INTERGOVERNMENTAL AGREEMENT Between the City of Peoria and the COUNTY of PEORIA for FULL-SERVICE ANIMAL CONTROL SERVICES, at a Rate of \$2.20 Per Capita from July 1, 2020, through December 31, 2020, \$2.30 Per Capita for 2021, \$2.40 Per Capita for 2022, and \$2.50 Per Capita for 2023 and 2024.

(20-215) Communication from the City Manager and Director of Community Development with a Request to ADOPT ORDINANCE NO. 17,791 Amending Appendix A, the Unified Development Code, Relating to TATTOO, PALMIST, PSYCHIC OR MEDIUM, OR MASSAGE PARLORS.

Mayor Ardis questioned if the Council wished to have any of the Consent Agenda Items removed for further discussion.

Hearing no request to remove an item from the Consent Agenda, Council Member Oyler moved to approve the Consent Agenda items as outlined in the Council Communications; seconded by Council Member Ali.

Item Nos. 20-224, 20-225 and 20-215 were approved by roll call vote under the Omnibus Vote Designation.

Yeas: Ali, Cyr, Grayeb, Jensen, Kelly, Montelongo, Moore, Oyler, Riggerbach, Ruckriegel, Mayor Ardis - 11;

Nays: None.

FIRST READINGS

(20-226) Communication from the City Manager and Director of Community Development with a Request to RECEIVE and FILE a FIRST READING of an ORDINANCE Amending Appendix A, the Unified Development Code, Relating to VARIOUS TEXT AMENDMENTS.

Community Development Director Ross Black said the proposed Ordinance provided for various changes to the Unified Development Code, noting all the changes were designed to simplify the development process and to reduce cost. He said it would simplify the understanding of the Code. He said there were several regulatory reductions, and he outlined those changes. He reviewed the fee reductions and the changes that were made to provide more clarity.

Discussions were held regarding whether the proposed changes were in light of COVID-19, and Director Black said the Department had been making various changes over the last couple of years, noting the timing was only coincidental. He commented the reduction in fees and requirements for Special Use were more appropriate right now as businesses were recovering from COVID.

Council Member Kelly expressed his appreciation for making it easier to do business in the City of Peoria. He said he appreciated making the Code simpler for the citizens.

Discussions were held regarding duplexes, and Director Black explained how a duplex could be built in a single-family residential. He said it was an attempt to allow for more variety of infill development. He also commented that duplexes were being used in other communities as an introduction to home ownership.

Council Member Jensen said she had some concerns allowing duplexes in single-family districts. She said she would be willing to use the Special Use process; however, she said she wanted to see some input from neighborhood advocates regarding that part of the proposal.

Director Black said his Department would gather input from those who lived in the R-4 Districts.

Council Member Cyr moved to receive and file the First Reading of an Ordinance amending Appendix A, the Unified Development Code, relating to various text amendments; seconded by Council Member Kelly.

Approved by roll call vote.

Yeas: Ali, Cyr, Grayeb, Jensen, Kelly, Montelongo, Moore, Oyler, Riggerbach, Ruckriegel, Mayor Ardis - 11;

Nays: None.

(20-227) Communication from the City Manager and Community Development Director with a Recommendation from the Construction Commission to RECEIVE and FILE a FIRST READING of an ORDINANCE Amending CHAPTER 5 of the CODE Related to FEES.

Community Development Director Black said this item was a companion item to 20-226, which provided for a series of changes through the Construction Commission. He said it would simplify the fee structure and reduce the cost, particularly with smaller jobs. He reviewed the changes in detail noting residential jobs under \$5,000.00 would not require a permit.

Discussions were held regarding home improvements and the impact those would have on property taxes. Director Black said those questions needed to be directed to the Assessor, and he said he would discuss various situations with the Assessor and bring back the information to Council.

At the conclusion of the discussion, Council Member Moore moved to receive and file a First Reading of an Ordinance amending Chapter 5 of the Code related to fees; seconded by Council Member Rickenbach.

Approved by roll call vote.

Yeas: Ali, Cyr, Grayeb, Jensen, Kelly, Montelongo, Moore, Oyler, Rickenbach, Ruckriegel, Mayor Ardis - 11;

Nays: None.

(20-228) Communication from the City Manager and Corporation Counsel with a Request to RECEIVE and FILE a FIRST READING of an ORDINANCE Amending CHAPTER 20 (Chronic Nuisance Property), CHAPTER 17 (Fair Housing Commission) and CHAPTER 5 (Buildings and building Regulations) of the CODE of the City of Peoria, as Part of Its Litigation Settlement with Hope Fair Housing.

Interim Corporation Counsel Chrissie Peterson provided an overview of the proposed Ordinance stating the Council approved a settlement with Hope Fair Housing, which included terms of the City amending its Nuisance Ordinance consistent with the terms agreed upon with Hope. Corporation Counsel Peterson reviewed the Ordinance changes outlined in the Council Communication.

Council Member Rickenbach moved to receive and file a First Reading of an Ordinance amending Chapter 20 (Chronic Nuisance Property), Chapter 17 (Fair Housing Commission) and Chapter 5 (Buildings and Building Regulations) of the Code of the City of Peoria, as part of its litigation settlement with Hope Fair Housing; seconded by Council Member Moore.

Approved by roll call vote.

Yeas: Ali, Cyr, Grayeb, Jensen, Kelly, Montelongo, Moore, Oyler, Rickenbach, Ruckriegel, Mayor Ardis - 11;

Nays: None.

REGULAR BUSINESS ITEMS, with Recommendations as Outlined:

(20-229) Communication from the Mayor and Corporation Counsel with a Request to APPROVE the DECLARATION OF LOCAL STATE OF EMERGENCY.

Council Member Rickenbach moved to approve the Declaration of Local State of Emergency; seconded by Council Member Ruckriegel.

Discussions we held regarding a Report Back of COVID-related expenses to date, and City Manager Urich said a list would be provided to the City Council.

Motion to approve the Declaration of Local State of Emergency was approved by roll call vote.

Yeas: Ali, Cyr, Jensen, Kelly, Moore, Oyler, Riggerbach, Ruckriegel, Mayor Ardis - 9;

Nays: Grayeb, Montelongo - 2.

(20-230) Communication from the City Manager and Community Development Director with a Request to Concur with the Recommendation from the Planning and Zoning Commission to ADOPT an ORDINANCE, or the Recommendation of Staff to DENY an ORDINANCE, Approving a SPECIAL USE for a Massage Parlor for the Property Located at 4241 N BOULEVARD AVENUE (Parcel Identification Numbers 14-28-226-017 & 14-28-226-018), Peoria, IL. (Council District 3)

Council Member Riggerbach said the Petitioner requested a two week deferral, and he moved to defer this item until the September 22, 2020, Regular City Council Meeting; seconded by Council Member Moore.

Motion to defer to the September 22, 2020, Regular City Council Meeting was approved by roll call vote.

Yeas: Ali, Cyr, Grayeb, Jensen, Kelly, Montelongo, Moore, Oyler, Riggerbach, Ruckriegel, Mayor Ardis - 11;

Nays: None.

(20-231) Communication from the Mayor and City Manager with a Request to DISCUSS a FIRE PROTECTION and POLICE PROTECTION TAX.

A handout entitled "Police and Fire Protection Tax Levies and Public Safety Pensions" dated September 8, 2020, was distributed to all Council Members.

Mayor Ardis said this item was before the Council to have a discussion on whether to place an item on the ballot in February regarding a property tax increase in support of a Fire Protection and Police Protection Tax, noting that a portion of the discussion related to the Police and Fire Pensions. He said the Council needed to make such a determination by early December for it to appear on the ballot in February. He said this would provide constituents an opportunity to provide input.

City Manager Urich reviewed the handout which reflected the City's personnel headcount beginning in 2002 and ending in 2021 stating, overall, there had been a significant reduction in City personnel over the last 20 years. He provided an example of how a tax dollar was divided among several entities reporting the City received 12% on the dollar. He said all the City's property taxes were going towards road construction with the majority going toward public safety pension costs. He reported a decline in property taxes due to a decline in home values and a shrinking tax base. He said, under Illinois Law, the City could levy a property tax for Police and Fire protection up to a specified amount without having to take the matter to referendum; however, he said anything above that amount would require voter approval. He reviewed the responsibilities of the State, the Pension Boards, the Actuaries and the City stating it was the State of Illinois who established the benefit levels for Public Safety employees. He continued to say it was the State who determined how the Pension Boards could invest those dollars, with restrictions. Under Illinois Law, he said the Police and Fire Pensions needed to be

90% funded by 2040, and he remarked on the challenge of trying to meet that requirement. He reviewed the City's future obligations and contributions toward pensions between 2020 and 2023, which would have an impact on the City's General Fund and City services. For 2020, he said the City would have to transfer money out of its General Fund in order to meet its pension contribution obligations. It was this issue, he said, that caused the City to cut City operations and services in order to balance the budget.

Mayor Ardis stated the Illinois Municipal League had taken up the public safety pension issue with the State Legislators in Springfield over the last several years with minimal positive movement other than the consolidation of Downstate Pensions. He said a reform was needed, which only could be done in Springfield. He inquired whether the Council would like to put an item to the citizens on the spring ballot for the citizens of Peoria to provide input regarding a tax increase to support the City's Police and Fire.

Council Member Kelly expressed a concern about the increasing public safety pensions and the City's need to address the situation. He said the City needed to embark on a program of real growth and to examine different options, noting Springfield was not going to help.

Mayor Ardis said the proposal to put an item on the ballot was to seek input from the citizens, noting the importance of giving them an opportunity to voice their opinion on how to handle the budget situation.

In response to Council Member Ali, City Manager Urich said the General Fund provided for the general operating budget, which included all City Departments. He explained all taxes, such as sales taxes, state shared revenues and other local revenues, went to the General Fund. He said some of those monies were for operations, some paid debt, and some went towards pensions. He said when there were more revenues coming from property taxes, those went toward operations. Over the years, he said, the Council made the policy decision not to raise the property tax rate and to let it grow or shrink according to the assessed value, and over time, contributions to the General Fund had decreased. He explained there were direct levies that went towards pension costs for City employees. He referred to a graph showing how the City property taxes were dispersed stating that the City was not generating the kind of revenue to sustain the same operations that was provided two decades ago. He said there was no direct money going toward employee salaries, but rather, the money was going toward pension contributions for the employees.

City Manager Urich explained the proposed Police and Fire Protection Tax was presented to the Council as a result of conversations held during the budget restructuring over the last few months, which led to the discussion of seeking other options other than service reductions. He said the proposed tax was another tool the Council could utilize.

Council Member Riggerbach said this item would provide the Council with another perspective to review the issue. He said there was consistency within the Council with half saying a property tax increase was off limits and another half saying public safety was a priority. As discussions continued about meaningful public input and Town Hall meetings, he said this would be the ultimate Town Hall Meeting. He said bringing this to the people would allow the citizens, who pay these obligations, to weigh in on the issues. Clearly, he said, this would elevate the discussion, and if there was a binding referendum, it would resolve the issues. He said bringing this to the constituents would prevent Council Members from relaying messages from their constituents regarding property tax increases or public safety cuts. He said he received numerous emails from citizens daily; however, he questioned how many of those were constituents and how many of those lived outside the City or the County. He said bringing this

to a referendum would clarify those it impacted, stating it would only be the citizens of Peoria who would vote. He said the State created this mess; however, no one wanted to belittle the work and dedication of the City's Firefighters, Police Officers, Public Works Snowfighters, and Community Development Employees. He said those employees were working harder than ever before, and he noted the 32% reduction of Staff over the years. Taking this issue to referendum, he said, would be the ultimate Town Hall Meeting wherein the constituents of the City of Peoria would be able to weigh in and provide the direction needed once and for all.

Council Member Jensen expressed a concern that this item was not brought to the Council to consider several months ago. She said there had been ongoing COVID budget discussions, noting the Council had already voted to decommission two Fire Engines, lay off 22 Firefighters and close two Fire Houses. She said this was a worthwhile conversation to have and the Council was obligated to consider it. She said the City cannot continue to provide basic City services that was needed with the amount of taxes and pension obligations the City needed to cover. She said this option needed to be considered, however, she expressed a concern that it was before the Council now after terrible cuts to the Fire Department had been made.

Discussions were held regarding the Public Safety Pension Fee and whether an increase in real estate taxes could have a sunset clause should Springfield provide for a pension reform. City Manager Urich explained the Public Safety Pension Fee was due to sunset in 2021. Regarding a levy for public safety pensions, he said there was no limit and could be implemented immediately. In previous discussions with the Council, he said there had been no interest in increasing the rate to meet those costs. He said there could be an advisory referendum regarding an increase in property taxes, noting a decision needed to be made by December in order to get it on the Spring ballot.

After additional discussions with the City Manager, Council Member Jensen said she was interested in exploring the option of putting a referendum to the constituents. She said the pension obligations were going through the roof and needed to be taken to the voters.

In response to the issue of holding the discussion on this proposal several months ago, Mayor Ardis said four months ago the City was barely into a month of COVID damage control and a property tax levy was not even considered. For 2020, he said the City had a balanced budget wherein money was being put into reserves. He said any Council Member had the ability to make a motion at a Council meeting to raise property taxes. He said discussions were now being held because the City Manager showed the Council the state of the General Fund and its revenues. He said the Council could provide their constituents an opportunity at the next Municipal Election to give their opinion. At any time during the process, he said any Council Member could have brought up a property tax increase. He said even if an opportunity was not provided to their constituents; a motion could have been made at any time to increase property taxes up to \$0.075 without going to referendum.

Council Member Jensen said a property tax increase or potential referendum could have been brought prior to this meeting. She said she was not aware Council could have done a Police and Fire Protection Tax. She said had the information been provided earlier it could have been on the November ballot.

Council Member Grayeb reflected on the recommendations that were presented to the Council last spring. He said he tried to stop those recommendations because of the potential impact they would have on the City. He said the entire Council wanted to avoid making severe cuts. He expressed his appreciation for the information brought forth reflecting the full dimension of the cuts made through the years to balance the budget. He said the City continued to make

cuts, which greatly impacted older neighborhoods. He said he would like to review these options only if some other considerations were rejected by the Council, and he asked for other alternatives.

Council Member Moore said she was interested in hearing from the constituents on this matter, commenting there was nothing left for the Council to cut from the budget. She said she spoke with a City employee who had to take furlough days, which impacted the household budget, and she recognized Department Heads who also had to take furlough days. She said she wanted to hear more from all constituents, stating she would like to have a referendum on the ballot to see what the citizens thought and what they wanted the Council to do.

Council Member Ruckriegel said this was not new information; however, seeing it in a different format reiterated the situation. He said the City had to use money from the General Fund in order to pay public pensions. Even though there had not been a property tax increase for quite some time, he said there had been several fines, fees and other taxes implemented or increased over the years. He commented fines and fees produced revenue, but also had other consequences in how it treated the person paying those fees. He asked for all fine, fee and tax increases since 2008. He said putting this issue on the spring ballot would provide time for citizens to get involved and to learn information about the proposal. He remarked on the importance of hearing from their constituents, stating their voice on the issue would provide the Council with direction.

Council Member Montelongo concurred with the recommendation to listen to the opinions of their constituents and to provide an opportunity for the Council to communicate this information to them. He remarked on the importance of being able to explain exactly what a tax increase would provide prior to meeting with their Districts. He expressed a concern placing this on the spring ballot, noting the primary elections had a low turnout of voters. He encouraged other Council Members to meet with their constituents in the next couple months in order to educate and to gather feedback.

Council Member Ali said she was concerned with a referendum, stating it appeared as though the City was singling out a group of employees and would send them the wrong message. She agreed there needed to be a different approach to the problem, stating the City could not tax its way out of a problem of unfunded pensions.

Council Member Oyler said he consistently communicated a tax increase was not a solution to the City's issues, noting there were underlying structural problems as a municipal body. He said no one could afford a tax increase and it would not solve the City's problems; however, he said the citizens should be afforded an opportunity to weigh in on the matter. He said the City continuously made cuts or raised taxes without making any long-term fixes. He said he was open to alternative or new ideas, but he said there had not been any new ideas or suggestions provided. Should this go on a referendum, he said there would need to be a dollar amount that would impact the gap in the City's budget as well as a dollar amount the public would be able to understand.

Council Member Cyr said he concurred with Council Member Ali and her analysis of the situation. He expressed a concern for the morale of City employees. He said prior Councils had ignored actuarial advice and chose to underfund the public safety pensions for years. Since he had been in office, he said the City implemented a pension fee, a stormwater utility fee, increased the motor fuel tax and increased the sales tax. He remarked on the number of fees that had been implemented that were confusing the citizens of Peoria. Now, he said he had to go to his constituents to discuss a potential increase in property taxes, and he expressed a concern for the direction the City of Peoria was going.

Mayor Ardis said the biggest challenge the City faced was it was in the State of Illinois and was not getting any assistance from the State. As a reminder, he said the Council did not come up with a solution to get through the dramatic impact COVID-19 had on the budget. He said prior to the pandemic the City was putting money into reserves. He said the Council had been having ongoing budget discussions since April and no one offered a solid proposal for handling the situation in a "different way." He said the City was limited in many ways because of being in the State of Illinois, noting it was not easy to attract new employers. He said there needed to be another solution. In another month, he said the Council would begin regular budget discussions just two months before it would need to be adopted for 2021. While the Council continued to have these budget discussions, he said the City continued to deplete its reserves. He said the purpose of the item was to gather feedback from the Council. He commented that it would be good for Council Members to hold meetings in their Districts, but the Council had to have its own discussion and provide the citizens the opportunity to express themselves. He said the spring election would reflect whether there was support for such an increase, stating it may send more people to the polls to vote.

Council Member Riggerbach moved to direct the City Manager to gather additional information about a potential real estate increase referendum and to bring that information back to the City Council in 30 days for additional discussion; seconded by Council Member Jensen.

Council Member Moore recommended contacting the National League of Cities to see what other cities were doing in similar situations and to determine if what they were doing was working for them. She also recommended contacting the Illinois Municipal League as well in order to bring something tangible back for Council discussion.

Council Member Kelly recommended contacting Better Cities as well, stating that organization typically had a different way of looking at things.

Motion to direct the City Manager to gather additional information about a potential real estate increase referendum and to bring that information back to the City Council in 30 days for additional discussion was approved by roll call vote.

Yeas: Ali, Cyr, Grayeb, Jensen, Kelly, Montelongo, Moore, Oyler, Riggerbach, Ruckriegel, Mayor Ardis - 11;

Nays: None.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS (Including but not limited to motions to reconsider items, if any, from the previous Regular Meeting)

- (20-125) Communication from the City Manager with a Request to APPROVE the Recommended 2020 - 2021 BUDGET RESTRUCTURING as a Result of the COVID-19 Pandemic.**

Motion on the Floor: Council Member Oyler moved to freeze all capital expenditures that were unspent, aside from the stormwater utility projects that had a dedicated funding source; seconded by Council Member Riggerbach.

Council Member Oyler moved to amend the motion to pay any outstanding invoices for work performed in capital to date and to freeze all capital expenditures that were unspent with the exception of stormwater utility projects that had a dedicated funding source, design work on roadways and any grant funding that required the City to meet its contractual obligations; seconded by Council Member Riggerbach.

In response to Council Member Ali's question on whether a freeze would impact the City's ability to conduct business, City Manager Urich said the amended motion would freeze capital projects until 2021, noting there were funds in the capital accounts that needed to be settled for projects in progress. He said the amended motion would still allow design work to continue with the larger road projects. He said the freeze would impact equipment purchases and facility-related work until 2021. He explained the freeze would not create a sweep or elimination of capital projects funds, but provided a delay between now and the end of 2020.

Regarding Council Member Grayeb's question as to how the capital budget freeze would impact certain street projects, City Manager Urich said Western Avenue would not be affected because it was still in the design phase and the bidding process. Regarding Sheridan Road, he said the City had an agreement with ICCI for payments to begin in 2021, and the Glen Avenue Project would not be affected because it was still in the design phase.

Council Member Grayeb stated he would not vote in favor of this item until he was provided with an itemized list of projects that would be impacted by a capital budget freeze.

Council Member Moore expressed her appreciation for the amended motion; however, she said she was concerned about what projects that motion would impact. She said she wanted a list specifying which projects the freeze would directly impact, stating the Council did not want any unintended consequences. She said if there were specific projects that were not needed at this time, then those projects should be cut. She said she would not be able to vote on the motion until she was provided with a list outlining the specific projects that would be impacted.

Council Member Ruckriegel commented on the unique situation the City was in due to COVID-19. He said the City Manager provided the best financial forecast he could in this type of situation. With the understanding that a freeze on capital projects was a way to conserve some cash, he said it would provide the Council with an opportunity to discuss the second half of the budget cycle for 2021. He encouraged saving cash, noting it would not stop any projects, but would pause the projects until the Council had a better understanding of what was to come for 2021.

Council Member Oyler said he appreciated the need for a list of affected projects; however, he said the City still had the issue of increased positive COVID test results with the potential of additional restrictions implemented on the Region. Should that occur, he said the City would be in a more difficult financial position than it was currently. He commented there had been warnings for months of an expected resurgence, which could shut the economy down for a second time. He remarked on the need for the City to manage its cash until it got through the latter part of the year, noting in January the Council would know where the City would be with the COVID situation and the impact it would have on the economy. He said this was a cash flow issue and the City's ability to remain solvent through the remainder of the year.

Discussions were held on what would happen if the Council did not approve to freeze the capital budget and the impact it would have on the City's reserves. City Manager Urich said implementing a freeze would allow the City to keep its reserves until the end of 2020.

Mayor Ardis expressed a concern for the City's financial position, noting it was burning through its cash reserves. He said the amended motion on the floor would not prohibit the City Manager from doing his job and would conserve cash, stating it was an emergent situation with so many future COVID unknowns. He said placing a freeze on capital projects would allow the City to conserve cash.

Discussions were held regarding the Declaration of Local State of Emergency and the rights it afforded the Mayor and City Manager. Mayor Ardis said the Declaration provided the opportunity for himself and the City Manager to make budgetary decisions only when there was an emergent situation where the City Council was unable to gather to make budgetary decisions. However, he said since the beginning of COVID, the City Council had been involved in every opportunity to make budgetary decisions.

Motion to pay any outstanding invoices for work performed in the capital to date and to freeze all capital expenditures that were unspent with the exception of stormwater utility projects that had a dedicated funding source, design work on roadways and any grant funding that required the City to meet its contractual obligations was approved by roll call vote.

Yeas: Ali, Cyr, Jensen, Kelly, Montelongo, Oyler, Riggerbach, Ruckriegel,
Mayor Ardis - 9;

Nays: Grayeb, Moore - 2.

Discussions were held about Council Member Grayeb's recommendation of increasing the City's credit line of borrowing from \$10 million to \$20 million, and City Manager Urich stated anything above \$10 million would require a dedicated repayment source such as an increase in property taxes.

Council Member Grayeb stated he felt it was worth careful thought to protect reserves next year.

(20-198) Communication from the City Manager and Corporation Counsel with a Request to Consider ADOPTING an ORDINANCE Amending Chapter 18 of the CODE of the City of Peoria Pertaining to BODYWORK ESTABLISHMENTS.

Council Member Jensen requested a two week deferral, and she moved to defer this item to the September 22, 2020, Regular City Council meeting; seconded by Council Member Moore.

Motion to defer this item to the September 22, 2020, Regular City Council meeting was approved by roll call vote.

Yeas: Ali, Cyr, Grayeb, Jensen, Kelly, Montelongo, Moore, Oyler, Riggerbach,
Ruckriegel, Mayor Ardis - 11;

Nays: None.

NEW BUSINESS**Census 2020 Event – Saturday, September 5, 2020**

Council Member Moore announced that the Tri-County Regional Planning Census Group, the PCCEO and Illinois State Representative Jehan Gordon-Booth would be hosting an event on Saturday, September 5, 2020, from 11:00 A.M. to 2:00 P.M. at Martin Luther King, Jr. Park with the purpose of making a last big sweep for the 2020 Census. She remarked on the importance of participating in the Census stating it would determine how much Federal money would come to the City for the next 10 years.

Consideration for Fines, Fees or Late Charges on Real Estate Taxes

Council Member Cyr said the hospitality industry had been hit hard by the pandemic, and he asked if there would be any consideration to waive fines, fees or late charges for late real estate taxes. He recommended giving additional time to pay those taxes. City Manager Urich said the real estate tax amnesty was provided for by the County Treasurer, and he said he would reach out to the County to see what could be done.

Seeking a Reduction in Contracts with City Vendors

Council Member Jensen requested a list of City vendors and she recommended reaching out to those vendors to see if they would be willing to take a voluntary reduction in their contracts for the next year or two during the pandemic. City Manager Urich said a list of vendors was provided in Report Back 10 and would be discussed at the next City Council meeting.

Update from the Health Department Regarding the Pandemic in Region 2

Mayor Ardis said he and the City Manager had a conversation with Public Health Administrator Monica Hendrickson, County Board Chair Andrew Rand and Peoria County Administrator Scott Sorrel regarding the status of Peoria and the pandemic. He expressed a concern for the increase in COVID-19 positivity rates. With the recent increase, he said there was a potential for mitigation efforts to be placed on the region. He said the Public Health Department indicated no issues with the restaurant industry, stating they were observing the protocols that were in place. Generally, he said there were no issues with most of the bars, but said there were some that posed a problem in the region and statewide. With college students, he said there was more of an opportunity to increase transmission, which was currently being seen. He asked the public to refrain from large gatherings, both public and private. He said there were discussions to involve the Peoria County Sheriff and the City of Peoria Chief of Police with addressing those situations. He encouraged anyone who was sick to stay home, recommended everyone to get a flu vaccine, and asked for everyone to get tested for COVID-19. He said the City of Peoria was doing well and provided many opportunities for testing. He made an appeal to the community to abide to the guidelines set forth by the Public Health Department in order to prevent the Region from having additional restrictions and guidelines implemented.

CITIZENS' OPPORTUNITY TO ADDRESS THE CITY COUNCIL/TOWN BOARD

Hearing no objection, Mayor Ardis granted Privilege of the Floor to those citizens wishing to address the City Council/Town Board.

Kelly Peterson, a resident of the Second District, expressed a concern for the community gardens that were located on Main Street. He remarked on the lack of upkeep and the homeless population that used the location. He commented on the panhandling activities that took place and the negative reactions displayed, which impacted the safety of his family. He said he was disappointed about the negative impact the garden had on the neighborhood and on Moss Avenue and the surrounding neighborhoods.

Hearing no objection, Mayor Ardis asked City Clerk Beth Ball to read the citizen comments into the record as follows:

Collin Krause, a citizen of Peoria, expressed a concern regarding the demolition of the community gardens on Main Street and the treatment of the homeless citizens of Peoria. He outlined issues regarding the City's methods and process for demolition; however, he stated the property owner had the right to use the property as he deemed fit.

Conrad Stinnett III, a concerned citizen, remarked on the Renaissance Park Community Garden stating it was originally an asset to the West Bluff and was maintained by the Renaissance Park Community Association. However, he said maintenance of those gardens had waned over the years and become a detriment to the area. While he expressed a concern for the situation, he said the actions of the property owner were appropriate.

Marcus Fogliano, a concerned citizen, said the current and founding boards of Peoria Proud came together to admonish the City for acting against the homelessness in the destruction of Renaissance Park. They called upon the City to address the root issues of homelessness and addiction.

Marcella Teplitz, a citizen of Peoria, said she was concerned with the issues of Renaissance Park stating its demolition was appropriate. She expressed her appreciation to Council Member Grayeb for his efforts on the matter.

Kelli Fiedler, a concerned citizen, voiced a concern for the homeless and their need for public restrooms. She recommended the City place porta potties in areas populated by the homeless and public sinks for hand washing in order to prevent the spread of disease.

Federated Sanctity, a concerned citizen, said they were upset over the destruction of Renaissance Park Community Garden on Main Street. They said the park was a place for homeless people to find food, seek shelter and safety.

Vikki Hibberd, a citizen of Peoria, said her experience with Renaissance Park was less than ideal, and she provided many examples. She said she supported the gas station owners for demolishing the park, and she said she supported Council Member Grayeb in his efforts on improving West Main Street.

Jackie Armich, an Uplands Neighborhood Resident, said they were surprised to see the demolition of Renaissance Park, noting that not a single member of the Renaissance Park Community Association was contacted prior to it happening. They also expressed a concern that several homeless people were uprooted from their encampment. They expressed their displeasure with the Second District Council Member and commented that their District deserved better.

Adam Gasper, a West Bluff resident, said he was heartbroken and appalled at the destruction of Renaissance Park and the way it was handled. He said there was no prior notice to the organization who oversaw the park. He expressed a concern on the impact it had on the homeless population and he encouraged the City to work with organizations such as JOLT and LULA to help the homeless.

Paul Day, a Second District resident, said he passed by Renaissance Park daily, and he expressed his appreciation for cleaning the area. He said the garden was a great idea and was effective 10 years ago; however, volunteer support fell off and the gardens began to be overrun with weeds. He commented on the activities that took place in the park that made it unsafe. He said Council Member Grayeb continued to be an excellent advocate and representative for the Second District, for Main Street businesses and for the City of Peoria.

Andrea Render, a concerned citizen, said she was upset to learn of the demolition of Renaissance Park, stating it was a home and a source of food for the homeless. She remarked on the need to provide the homeless a safe space in order to prevent them from living on the streets.

Mike Dugard, a concerned citizen of the Second District, said he would like the Council to find appropriate garden space in the West Bluff. He recommended having the project spearheaded by residents and others who wanted to supply produce for those in need.

Sean Critz, a citizen of Peoria, expressed a concern for the demolition of Renaissance Park, with little to no communication prior to doing so.

Sheila Stokowki, a citizen of Peoria and a member of the Peoria Proud Board of Directors, expressed a concern regarding the City's action of demolishing Renaissance Park. They said it reflected poorly on the way the City handled the eviction crisis post-COVID-19. They said the park was utilized by many in the community, including people experiencing homelessness, and they called upon the City to address the issues of homelessness and addiction.

Randall Anderson-Maxwell, a citizen of Peoria, expressed his appreciation for the recent action taken at Renaissance Park. He said the park was initially a great idea; however, the reality was a nightmare. He said whoever managed the space had abandoned it a long time ago. He said closing the park was a necessary step in securing the health and safety of the neighborhood.

Jessica McGhee, a business owner on West Main Street in Peoria, said she and her husband were founding members of the Renaissance Park Community Association. She expressed a concern for the treatment she had received from the Second District Council Member, which was instrumental in closing their business. She said the homeless community was being targeted and noted that population was growing. She asked the Council to look for solutions to the epidemic of homelessness.

Theresa Lansberry, a concerned citizen, said the City had contracted to have the Renaissance Park removed without notifying anyone in the community. She said destroying the park was a move of contempt toward the people who lived in the West Main Street area and worked to make it a diverse and welcoming place.

Liz Soville, a concerned citizen of Peoria, expressed a concern with how the demolition of Renaissance Park was done and the long-term damage that would come of it. She voiced a concern for the homeless community who saw the park as a safe place for rest.

Hannah Ramlo, a resident of the Second District, said she was displeased with the way the Renaissance Park was removed and handled by Council Member Grayeb and the City. She asked the Council and City Staff to consider how to speak and act empathetically to the homeless population. She urged the Council to look for ways to increase the amount of quality, dignified, affordable housing options in the City.

Rick Burdette, a concerned citizen, remarked on the efforts of City officials who were fighting to improve the Main Street corridor. He said many improvements had been made, but more was needed. He said the Renaissance Park may have once been a place for wholesome activities; however, he said it became an eyesore and a nuisance. He said that corner desperately needed redevelopment.

Anthony Walraven, a citizen of Second District, expressed his concern regarding the recent decision to decommission two Fire Engines and accompanying Fire Staff from the City's budget. He urged the City to find progressive ways to raise revenues so working, middle class Peorians, who were highly taxed, were not asked to pay in reduced services or higher taxes. He commented on the need to stop migration of Peorians out of the City, and he reviewed the reason why citizens were leaving.

Dannette Rumsey, a West Main business owner, said she had been helping with the Renaissance Park for six years. She said the garden had been a place for the neighborhood to gather, share art, food, books and community spirit. She expressed a concern that the park had been demolished without any notice.

Chris Schaffner, a concerned citizen, voiced his dissent for the demolition of Renaissance Park and the lack of transparency in doing so. He said homelessness was a complex issue and displacing individuals without coordinated care and support should not have occurred.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

It was determined that an Executive Session was not needed at this time.

ADJOURNMENT

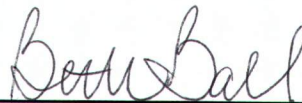
Council Member Ruckriegel moved to adjourn the Joint City Council and Town Board Meeting; seconded by Council Member Ali.

Approved by roll call vote.

Yeas: Ali, Cyr, Grayeb, Jensen, Kelly, Montelongo, Moore, Oyler, Riggensbach, Ruckriegel, Mayor Ardis - 11;

Nays: None.

The Joint City Council and Town Board Meeting was adjourned at 9:52 P.M.



Beth Ball, MMC, City Clerk
City of Peoria, Illinois