



# CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

Richfield, Minnesota

## Regular Council Meeting Virtual Meeting held via WebEx

**April 14, 2020**

**CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Maria Regan Gonzalez at 7:00 p.m. via WebEx.

*Council Members Present:* Maria Regan Gonzalez, Mayor; Mary Supple; Ben Whalen; Edwina Garcia; and Simon Trautmann

*Staff Present:* Katie Rodriguez, City Manager; Mary Tietjen, City Attorney; Chris Regis, Finance Director; Jane Skov, IT Manager; Blanca Martinez Gavina, Executive Analyst; and Kelly Wynn, Senior Office Assistant

*Others Present:* Brian Reilly and Rebecca Kurtz with Ehlers Inc.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Mayor Regan Gonzalez led the Pledge of Allegiance

**OPEN FORUM**

No speakers

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

M/Whalen, S/Trautmann to approve the minutes of the (1) Emergency City Council Meeting of March 18, 2020; and (2) City Council Meeting of March 24, 2020.

Executive Analyst Martinez Gavina took roll call vote:

Regan Gonzalez: AYE  
Supple: AYE  
Trautmann: AYE  
Whalen: AYE

Council Member Garcia was having technical issues and was unable to provide a vote.

Motion carried 4-0

<b>Item #1</b>	<b>APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA</b>
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M/Supple, S/Whalen to approve the agenda

Executive Analyst Martinez Gavina took roll call vote:

- Regan Gonzalez: AYE
- Supple: AYE
- Trautmann: AYE
- Whalen: AYE

Council Member Garcia was having technical issues and was unable to provide a vote.

Motion carried 4-0

<b>Item #2</b>	<b>ADOPTION OF A PARAMETERS RESOLUTION WITH REGARD TO THE ISSUANCE OF THE \$5,375,000 G.O. BONDS SERIES 2020A ESTABLISHING A PRICING COMMITTEE (STAFF REPORT NO. 50)</b>
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Council Member Whalen presented staff report 50.

Director Regis spoke of how this sale will provide the City some flexibility and comparable sales in the surrounding area.

Rebecca Kurtz explained how all the details are provided in the staff report and will be available if anyone has questions.

M/Whalen, S/Supple to approve a Resolution Authorizing the Sale of General Obligation Bonds Series 2020A, in the Maximum Principal Amount of \$5,375,000; Fixing Their Form and Specifications; Directing Their Execution and Delivery; Providing for the Payment; and Establishing a Pricing Committee.

Council Member Trautmann expressed his appreciation for the plan and the flexibility it will allow the City. He requested a status update of where the debt of the City currently sits and how the debt could affect possible future economic uncertainty.

Director Regis explained most of the G.O. debt is supported by tax levy's so as long as the City is able to alter those levies, the City should have no problem paying that debt. The revenue bonds that come from water and utility are paid by the revenue from those areas so as long as the City is still billing and residents are paying those bills, that debt should be serviced. There are some cash reserves available if absolutely necessary.

Council Member Trautmann asked for some outlook on what the City could be facing if the economic downturn were similar to the issues that arose ten years ago.

Director Regis spoke of how the current situation is very different from the challenges faced ten years ago. No offices needed to close and lack of government aid. The City has since made changes so as to not have to rely on government aid so heavily. The big difference is the need to cancel all recreation programs, deputy registrar, and some licensing services. Director Regis then spoke of the City reserves and is able to levy taxes so the debt is able to be paid.

Council Member Trautmann thanked Director Regis for taking the steps to put the City in a place where it is not leaning on the government for aid.

Director Regis explained how there are some things that need to be paid for and fixed right now. The water main is one thing that needs to be addressed.

Council Member Supple thinks it is good to be keeping water main infrastructure in good shape so as to not have issues down the road. She also thanked Council Member Trautmann for his thoughtful questions.

City Manager Rodriguez explained how the City saved money by addressing the water main now because it is being combined with another project.

Mayor Regan Gonzalez thanked Council Member Trautmann for his questions and the overview Director Regis was able to provide. She spoke of how important it is to maintain the water main infrastructure. She thought it was great to hear that another city was able to get a great return on their bond sale and is hopeful we will do the same.

Executive Analyst Martinez Gavina took roll call vote:

- Regan Gonzalez: AYE
- Supple: AYE
- Trautmann: AYE
- Garcia: AYE
- Whalen: AYE

Motion carried 5-0

<b>Item #3</b>	<b>SUMMARY REVIEW OF THE CITY MANAGER’S ANNUAL PERFORMANCE EVALUATION FOR 2019, HELD ON MARCH 10, 2020, AS REQUIRED BY MINN. STATUTES 13D.05 SUBD. 3(A) (STAFF REPORT NO. 51)</b>
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Mayor Regan Gonzalez read staff report 51. She then expressed extreme gratitude for City Manager Rodriguez to be serving the City of Richfield. She commented on the extra ordinary circumstances City Manager Rodriguez has had to confront and how she has done during these challenging times. She is grateful for the leadership and integrity City Manager Rodriguez has taken amidst all of the change that has occurred. Mayor Regan Gonzalez stated how clear it is to both staff and City Council that City Manager Rodriguez truly is invested in what is best for the City. She is looking forward to the future.

M/Regan Gonzalez, S/Supple to approve the motion approving the Resolution amending the City’s Manager’s employment agreement with the City reflecting a salary adjustment.

Council Member Garcia stated how City Manager Rodriguez learned very quickly how to adjust to the needs of the community and has risen to the occasion during a very challenging time. She hopes that the City can continue to count on City Manager Rodriguez and is looking forward to her future with Richfield.

Council Member Whalen expressed thanks to City Manager Rodriguez in being the leader the City of Richfield needs. He spoke of her not being afraid to tackle tough subjects and conversations and is looking forward to working with her in the future.

Council Member Supple spoke of how City Manager Rodriguez has very much risen to the occasion and is extremely appreciative of her hard work.

City Manager Rodriguez conveyed gratitude to the Council, community and staff. She stated how this has been a journey and appreciates everyone.

Executive Analyst Martinez Gavina took roll call vote:

- Regan Gonzalez: AYE
- Supple: AYE
- Trautmann: AYE
- Garcia: AYE
- Whalen: AYE

Motion carried 5-0

<b>Item #4</b>	<b>CITY MANAGER’S REPORT</b>
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City Manager Rodriguez provided an update regarding the COVID-19 pandemic:

Mitigations and Community Response:

- All buildings remain closed to the public until further notice. We are again processing motor vehicle services via a drop-box, and dealership work. No passport services at this time.
- Construction is an essential service under the Governor’s order and building permits, inspections are still happening at a rapid clip, difficult to project with confidence but so far it seems folks are going ahead with planned projects.
- Staff is bringing a proposal for a local COVID-19 Small Business Grant/Loan program to the Richfield EDA at their April 20 meeting.
- Staff will also recommend that both additional CDBG and existing local funds be directed to VEAP for emergency food and rental assistance at the April 20 HRA meeting.
- We plan to send a mailing to all residents in a couple weeks that provides info on resources and are providing a survey asking residents about how the pandemic has impacted them this week.
- Rec staff recently made wellness calls to all of their vulnerable customers.
- Rolling out our park ambassador program tomorrow since the weather had been crazy cold.
- PD reports that people are adhering pretty well to social distancing requirements.
- We will make decisions about summer programming and the pool at the end of the month.
- Our liquor store sales are not as robust as March but still strong.
- We have not been overwhelmed by 911 calls with flu-like symptoms, it has been steady since mid-March.

Financial Impact:

- We continue to monitor the impact on revenues and so far we are still estimating about a \$1M loss to the General Fund this year. That’s about 5% of the budget. We are also expecting a loss of about \$800k in the Ice Arena fund but that should be somewhat offset by less part-time and seasonal staff and we had already planned for less revenues due to the refrigeration project.
- Hennepin County is considering waiving property tax late fees and penalties for residents and delaying the first payment of property taxes to cities. Waiving fees is a more manageable impact than delaying the payment. We have asked Commissioner Goettel for an estimate of how many residents pay their taxes via escrow since those payments would not be delayed.

Staff:

- We have not had to issue any lay-offs or furloughs since much of our staff are essential, can work from home or have been reassigned. Some part-time staff are working less hours. Of

course our goal is not to furlough but we don't know the extent of the pandemic. If we don't have summer programming or open the pool that is about 115 part-time jobs that won't be created. Public Works are still likely to hire some seasonal workers to maintain the parks and other right-of-ways.

She stated how morale seems pretty good given all that we are asking of staff during the pandemic. She continues to be impressed by their hard work and resiliency in continuing to find ways to provide services. Even though some of the innovations will continue, there have been some silver linings.

Council Member Trautmann was curious of Council work sessions to address policies regarding social distancing and other items concerning the pandemic. He asked City Manager Rodriguez what she saw as the Council's role in the coming months.

City Manager Rodriguez reiterated to have a special session to address those questions and goal setting. She also recommended pushing strategic planning to early next year.

Council Member Whalen wanted to make sure the upcoming election is still on the forefront of residents' minds. He was curious as to any plans regarding voting without people risking their health.

City Manager Rodriguez was aware of a legislative committee that met recently. They may be providing mail-in voting along with other options. City Clerk VanHoose will be in contact on the subject as new information becomes available.

Mayor Regan Gonzalez spoke how this pandemic is making the community face the deficiencies. It is allowing for site of gaps in processes and the ability to fix these issues. She stated how this will be great for strategic planning in locating those strengths and weaknesses. She then asked if there is a picture of losses as a City and what support we can see from the government level.

City Manager Rodriguez stated the City did recently receive about \$70,000. She believes a lot of that sum will be directed to Bloomington Public Health and staff is working on getting a number on exactly how much. No additional funds will come from the CARE Act since that is for cities with populations over 500,000. Details on other amounts will be shared by staff as they become available.

<b>Item #5</b>	<b>CLAIMS AND PAYROLL</b>
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M/Garcia, S/Whalen that the following claims and payrolls be approved:

<b>U.S. Bank</b>	<b>04/14/2020</b>
A/P Checks 286086 - 286675	\$ 2,006,491.62
Payroll: 153467 - 153746	<u>639,472.97</u>
TOTAL	\$ 2,645,964.59

Executive Analyst Martinez Gavina took roll call vote:

- Regan Gonzalez: AYE
- Supple: AYE
- Trautmann: AYE
- Whalen: AYE
- Garcia: AYE

Motion carried 5-0

<b>Item #6</b>	<b>HATS OFF TO HOMETOWN HITS</b>
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Council Member Supple gave praise to a Richfield graduate, Lisseth DeGracia, volunteering aid in New York during the pandemic. She also spoke of the conversations she is having with her students and the strength it takes to ask for help. She encourages residents to reach out and ask for help when needed and applauded all of those providing help.

Council Member Whalen lifted up the staff for the great things they are doing and building up the community during the pandemic. He then spoke of all the good work VEAP is doing regarding their food and emergency rental assistance. They have been very nimble and been able to offer more aid. He then thanked all residents who have already completed their Census forms. The City is reporting 57% completed so he encouraged everyone to be counted.

Council Member Garcia expressed her feelings of being on the sidelines with her medical conditions but a good friend of hers has been able to provide her with a wonderful mask. She then spoke of how proud she has been with the City from top to bottom in everything they are doing. She also spoke of what a nightmare this time has been but is a nightmare we will overcome. She encouraged residents to keep faith and continue to support each other.

Council Member Trautmann spoke of how grateful he is for the staff and the City. He thanked people taking the steps to cover up when out and about. He called out Richfield resident, Stephanie, and how she been sewing masks nonstop. He then talked about the Friends of Wood Lake (FOWL) Fundraiser Dinner. It is a great way to support the City and Wood Lake Nature Center. There will be a live virtual auction as well as presentations. Meals are being provided by Local Roots and available for pick up the day of event. He encouraged residents to attend, eat and be a part of the event.

Mayor Regan Gonzalez spoke of how the staff has continued to do amazing things during this stressful time. She also expressed gratitude for the residents donating coffee, food and snacks to the Fire and Police Departments. This has been a great example of people going above and beyond. She then gave praise to Omar McMillan, Richfield teacher and basketball coach. Richfield is so fortunate to have him in the community and inspiring the youth. He has been labeled one of the top ten coaches in Minnesota and it speaks volumes to the leadership in the Richfield community. Mayor Regan Gonzalez then extended a warm welcome to Krista Guzman who started as the new Human Resources Manager. She then spoke of the law passed regarding the emergency insulin program. The act will ensure that community members will be able to access a 30-day supply of insulin when they are unable to afford it. She thanked all who made it happen.

<b>Item #7</b>	<b>ADJOURNMENT</b>
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The meeting was adjourned by unanimous consent at 7:59 p.m.

Date Approved: April 28, 2020

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Maria Regan Gonzalez  
Mayor

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Kelly Wynn  
Senior Office Assistant

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Katie Rodriguez  
City Manager