

CITY OF RUTLAND, VERMONT
Board of Aldermen Minutes
Monday, April 6, 2020

7:00 PM BOARD OF ALDERMEN MEETING

President Whitcomb called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM

President Whitcomb noted because of the teleconference, that Clerk Heck would call an attendance roll.

Clerk Heck called the roll. Members present included, President Whitcomb, Aldermen Gorruso, Humphrey, Ryan, Ettori, Talbott, Mattis, Gillam, Clifford, DePoy and Davis. All Aldermen were present. Also present, Mayor Allaire, Attorney Bloomer and City Clerk Heck. President Whitcomb noted some rules about muting microphones to keep the background noise to a minimum.

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS (March 16 & 26, 2020)

A motion was made and seconded (Mattis, Davis) approving the minutes of the previous meeting. Alderwoman Mattis stated that Jennie Gartner was present and spoke outside the rail. Clerk Heck had listed her as a different person. **Motion passed.**

OUTSIDE THE RAIL

Jeff Wennberg asked to speak outside the rail. Commissioner Wennberg wanted to give the Board a quick update on the meter project. For approximately forty five (45) minutes Commissioner Wennberg spoke on the change out of the utility billing meter upgrade and the associated issues related to the meters, billing utilities, COVID-19 and the exceptional transition of the vast amount of issues associated with the FATHOM related change to date. His report was for information only.

Jason McCullough of the Mountain Times wanted to speak with the Board, requesting funds to help advertise COVID-19 related information, a resource guide, so the public could be more informed. Mayor Allaire then spoke and supported this request. Mayor Allaire stated that he was going to contribute \$1,000 to support the resource guide. There was debate from the Board.

COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE MAYOR

Mayor Allaire spoke on the COVID-19 situation and updated the Board on the Dailey EOC meetings and how the City was moving forward on addressing public concerns and questions. Mayor Allaire noted arrangements at Spartan Arena and the Courcelle Building, as both are being prepared for potential COVID-19 overflow or City employee quarantine issues. Mayor Allaire noted City Hall was closed to the public and the recent lawn sign campaign on getting COVID-19 messages out to the public. Alderman Davis spoke briefly on how City Treasurer Markowski was going to handle the upcoming property tax bills and how people could pay them.

ADDITIONS AND DELETIONS TO THE AGENDA

Alderwoman Ryan; Community & Economic Development Committee request.

President Whitcomb noted the request and sought to add it to Standing Committees. The Request was so moved and seconded (Mattis, Ryan) Motion **passed.**

REPORTS AND LETTERS FROM DEPARTMENT HEADS AND OFFICIALS

Treasurer Markowski; FY2019 Audit Report

Treasurer Markowski was on the phone to update the Board on the completed FY 19 Audit and asked for a referral to the Finance Committee. A motion was made and seconded (Ettori, Davis) to refer the FY19 Audit to the Finance Committee. **Motion passed.**

REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES

Alderwoman Ryan; Community & Economic Development

Alderwoman Ryan noted her committee met virtually on March 31, 2020 to discuss the Business Incentive Assistance Program (BIAP) for Emergency Loan Provisions. The committee discussed criteria to establish emergency loans up to \$100,000 for local businesses affected by COVID-19.

The drafted policy for the Emergency Loan Fund, included six sections; Statement of Purpose, Eligibility, Opportunities and Terms, Criteria, Non-compliance/Termination, and Application Process. The committee discussed each of the sections and noted some concerns.

There was general discussion regarding the eligibility for existing city businesses who currently employ "at least two (2) full-time employees, but no more than fifty (50) full-time employees." Aldermen Ettori and Mattis advocated for changing the term "full-time employee" to full-time equivalent, in order to include owner run and sole proprietor businesses. Board members wanted to limit the top end of eligibility— fifty (50) was too high, and recommended that the RRA find a lower number and to come back to the board with it.

A motion was made by Alderman Etori to accept the Emergency BIAP Loan Provision Policy as presented with the changes of removing and changing the language around the number of full-time employees. The motion was seconded by Alderman Davis. The motion passed 5-0 and Alderwoman Ryan so moved to the full Board. Alderman Davis seconded. Debate.

Alderwoman Mattis spoke about full-time equivalent and her desire to add that language. RRA Director Brennan Duffy spoke on the issue, noting the micro business definition from the Small Business Administration may be the best fit for the number of employees (1-10). There was debate about this new definition. It was noted by Mr. Duffy that this was the first round and changes are possible as the process moves on.

Alderman Etori moved to amend the motion, but was unsure, then noted Mr. Duffy added language on terms/conditions and he definitely wanted to refer the issue back to C.E. & D. Alderwoman Ryan seconded. President Whitcomb noted there was a motion on the floor and asked if there was any debate. There was a question from someone if they knew what was being voted on.

Attorney Bloomer spoke on that question, noting updated information sent out by Alderwoman Ryan after their committee meeting, as well as Director Duffy responding to the request by the committee on setting criteria (people employed) numbers. There seemed to be some confusion. Aldermen Davis tried to clarify, by approving the original motion as amended by Alderman Etori and then to refer the issue back to C.E & D. for more discussion and Alderman Davis so moved. Alderman Etori seconded. Mr. Duffy tried to explain his update on the interest rates. Alderman Davis then apologized for misunderstanding and moved to approve the Emergency BIAP as presented. Alderman Etori seconded. Debate. Alderman Depoy questioned the 3% vs the .25. Mr. Duffy answered his question.

At this point Clerk Heck spoke with President Whitcomb to the order of the motions and amendments of which there was four (4). Clerk Heck then reviewed the history of motions then amendment, then motion. There was a withdrawal. Alderwoman Ryan reread her committee motion. Debate. Attorney Bloomer chimed in on his take on how to proceed. Debate. Discussion was on withdrawal of a motion. Debate. President Whitcomb asked Alderman Davis to re-read her amendment. Alderman Davis did so and suggested Alderwoman Ryan withdraw her motion. Alderman Davis then presented a motion to approve the BIAP Policy Micro-Business Emergency Loan Provision as presented. Alderman Etori seconded. Debate. **Motion passed.**

President Whitcomb noted that the original motion (BIAP Loan Provision) as amended was up. There was no debate. **Motion passed.**

A motion was made and seconded (Etori, Mattis) to refer the BIAP Emergency Loan Provisions to the Community & Economic Development Committee and to have the committee meeting and reported out before the May 18th BOA meeting. **Motion passed.**

RRA Director Duffy then stated that the previous "original motion as amended" that passed did not mention the funding mechanism identified or amount (100,000).

Attorney Bloomer spoke to the issue of a funding source with several suggestions. Alderwoman Mattis so moved the Language. Alderman Davis seconded. President Whitcomb then noted a motion to specify the funding source for the BIAP Emergency Loan. **Motion passed.**

REPORTS OF SELECT COMMITTEES

There were no select committee reports.

REPORTS OF REPRESENTATIVES

There were no representative reports.

RRA Director Duffy, noted he still had requests for the Board and needed guidance on the Loan Agreement, specifically collateral or a personal guarantee for the applicant. Mr. Duffy stated that the RRA Board did not want to request a guarantee. There was debate. The BOA agreed that collateral or a guarantee was not necessary. No action was taken. President Whitcomb continued with the agenda.

REPORTS OF SELECT COMMITTEES

There were no select committee reports.

REPORTS OF REPRESENTATIVES

There were no representative reports.

PETITIONS, LETTERS, MISCELLANEOUS COMMUNICATION

There were no petitions, letters or miscellaneous communications.

BOARD OF CONTROL COMMISSIONERS

There were no items to come before the Board of Control Commissioners.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Alderman Etori asked to refer the issue of the Master Plan to the General Committee. Alderman Davis seconded for debate. Alderman Etori noted that the Master Plan was an extensive document that needed more than the 15 minutes set for the public hearing. There was debate about postponing the hearings. RRA Director Duffy spoke on the issue and thanked Alderman Etori for the referral to committee, but noted that the timelines were in play and wished to continue with the proposed outline. There was further discussion. **Motion passed.**

MISCELLANEOUS MOTIONS, RESOLUTIONS, NEW BUSINESS

Alderman Davis noted that with all the COVID-19 issues there would be no Public Safety Committee meetings unless there was an emergency.

Alderman Gillam noted that the Loyalty Day Parade had been canceled and Solid Waste was not accepting hazardous waste until further notice.

At 8:50 PM a motion was made and seconded (Gorruso, Mattis) to adjourn. **Motion passed.**

Respectfully submitted,

Henry A Heck