

MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING

MALTA CITY COUNCIL MALTA CITY HALL

May 26, 2020

Officials present:

Mayor John Demarais

Councilpersons Ward I: David Rummel

William Hicks

Councilpersons Ward II: Bonnie Wiederrick

James Sintler

Clerk/Treasurer: Lorie Bond

Public Works Director: James Truelove

Others attended: Janet Berg, Park & Recreation Director Sally Wright, Assistant Park & Recreation Director Jessica Zeiger, Charles Messerly, Crystal Lett, Wendy Simanton, Debra Pankratz, Gail Cummings, Raelynn Robinson and Kate Cleveland.

Mayor Demarais opened the meeting at 5:00pm.

COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE MAYOR

1. None

Councilperson Wiederrick moved to approve the minutes, 2nd by Councilperson Sintler. Motion carried unanimously.

Councilperson Hicks moved to approve the agenda, 2nd by Councilperson Rummel. Motion carried unanimously.

Councilpersons Rummel and Hicks presented claim warrants.

Councilperson Wiederrick moved to approve claim checks 26190 to 26240, 2nd by Councilperson Hicks. Motion carried unanimously.

DEPARTMENT REPORTS, COMMITTEES & MEETINGS ATTENDED

1. PWD Truelove reported that he had visited with the County Health Nurse and it was okay to open the bathrooms at Trafton Park and turn the water on to the hose bibs.
2. PWD Truelove reported that the remaining park bathrooms would be opened next week.
3. PWD Truelove reported that the city crew had been trimming trees in Trafton and cutting weeds on the dike.
4. PWD Truelove reported that he hoped to have the blade and sweeper out next week and he would like to have an alley cleanup week. Mayor Demarais thought it would be a great idea.
5. Clerk Bond presented Council with the current check register, the current shut off list and the revenue and expenditure actual vs budget reports.
6. Clerk Bond reported that the audit was done and on its second review and there were no findings.
7. Clerk Bond presented Council a copy of the exemption of late fees and disconnect of water/sewer services form that was sent out with the water shut off letters per Governor Bullock's directive. Clerk Bond explained that a person would have to meet all of the requirements to be exempt.
8. P&R Director Wright reported that they had received approval from the County Health Nurse to start activities. P&R Director Wright listed all of the upcoming activities.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None

NEW BUSINESS

1. Mayor Demarais asked Council to approve the appointment of Great West Engineering as the City's on call engineering firm. Councilperson Rummel moved to retain Great West Engineering as the on call firm, 2nd by Council person Sintler. Mayor Demarais called for a roll call vote. Councilperson Rummel Aye, Sintler Aye, Hicks Aye, Wiederrick Aye. Motion Carried.
2. Mayor Demarais presented Council with the Transit Addition Plat. Councilperson Hicks moved to approve the Transit Addition Plat, 2nd by Councilperson Sintler. Mayor Demarais called for a roll call vote. Councilperson Hicks Aye, Sintler Aye, Wiederrick Aye, Rummel Aye. Motion Carried.
3. Mayor Demarais informed Council that tonight they would get to decide if they wanted to change the ordinance to allow people to raise chickens in the City of Malta. Mayor Demarais stated that updating the ordinance would take at least ninety or more days. Mayor Demarais opened the floor for comments from the public. Wendy Simanton read four letters from community members in favor of chickens in city limits and Crystal Lett read her letter out loud to Council. To summarize Ms. Lett's letter, she stated that the city should allow citizens the ability to raise eggs and should not stand in the way of a citizen's ability to raise food for their family. Poultry entries had dwindled at the fair and may increase due to the city allowing chickens. Next, Ms. Simanton listed all of the Cities and towns throughout Montana that allowed chickens. Ms. Simanton stated that people raising chickens in city limits would benefit businesses because people would buy their chicken supplies locally. Also, chickens would eat bugs and food waste. Audience member Debra Pankratz stated that she did not want chickens but couldn't see why they couldn't have them. People need to feed themselves. Mayor Demarais informed everyone that he had received multiple calls from people who did not want chickens in city limits. He had a call from a lady that had allergies who was concerned. Someone suggested that people could ask their neighbors if they were okay with them to raise chickens, then someone asked if the city made dog and cat owners ask their neighbors permission to have pets. Mayor Demarais informed everyone that there had been cases of salmonella contracted from chickens. Ms. Simanton asked about the health risk of dogs pooping on people's lawns and cats pooping in peoples flower beds. Mayor Demarais gave a quick summary of other city's/town's ordinances. Audience member Charles Messerly suggested starting with fifteen chicken permits and go from there. He did not think there would be a big rush for permits and once people realize the work and cost of raising chickens the demand would decrease. This was followed with much discussion about the pros and cons of chickens with in city limits. Finally, Councilperson Rummel moved to change to ordinance to allow chickens, 2nd by Councilperson Hicks. Mayor Demarais called for a roll call vote. Councilperson Rummel Aye, Hicks Aye, Sintler Nay, Wiederrick Aye. Motion Carried.
4. Mayor Demarais called on audience member Raelynn Robinson to give her presentation on the trap, spay, neuter, release program. Ms. Robinson presented Council with handouts about trap, spay, neuter, release programs. Mayor Demarais informed Council that he had contacted the Animal Control Officer from Havre and they have a good program. They trap, spay, neuter, vaccinate, mark the ear and either release or put the cats up for adoption. Ms. Robinson stated that the program would make the feral cat population healthier and they wouldn't be multiplying. This was followed by much discussion of the merits of the program. Mayor Demarais thanked Ms. Robinson for her presentation. Ms. Lett asked if the City was actively trapping cats at this time. Mayor Demarais stated no, the City only traps when complains are

received. Mayor Demarais informed Council that this was only an informational session.

5. Mayor Demarais informed Council that he had received multiple complaints about junk vehicles/messy yards and ask Council what their thought were for tackling the issue. Should we have PWD Truelove ticket the offenders? Councilperson Rummel suggested starting with the worst yards and going from there. Mayor stated that we need to start enforcing ordinances. Council agreed that PWD Truelove should start issuing tickets to the individuals with the messiest yards and continue from there.
6. P&R Director Wright reported that per the directive of Governor Bullock the City Hall Gym could be opened on June 1, 2020 at 75% capacity. Councilperson Wiederrick moved to open the City Hall Gym on June 1st, 2nd by Councilperson Sintler. Mayor Demarais called for a roll call vote. Councilpersons Wiederrick Aye, Sintler Aye, Hicks Aye, Rummel Aye. Motion Carried.
7. Mayor Demarais informed Council that he would like to see a new city logo and he was thinking of having a logo contest for city employees. Audience member Crystal Lett asked why he wouldn't want to open it up to the public because there are so many talented people in Malta. After some discussion, Mayor Demarais informed Council that he would have to rethink his idea.

OTHER COMMENTS

1. Councilperson Wiederrick stated that the Bishop cleanup area was looking good.
2. Councilperson Wiederrick reported that there were people living in camp trailers around the City which is not allowed by City Ordinance. Mayor Demarais agreed that he needed to start enforcing the ordinance.
3. Audience member Crystal Lett asked if she could ask a question about an earlier new business item. Ms. Lett asked Mayor Demarais how he arrive at the decision to hire the one firm as the City's on call engineering firm. Mayor Demarais stated that due to COVID-19 he had reviewed the proposals and presented Council with his choice.

With no other business, Councilperson Wiederrick moved to adjourn, 2nd by Councilperson Sintler. Motion carried unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 6:42pm.

Mayor

ATTEST:

Clerk/Treasurer