

**City of West St. Paul
City Council Meeting Minutes
June 8, 2020**

1. Call to Order

Mayor Napier called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

2. Roll Call

Present: Mayor Dave Napier
Councilmembers Wendy Berry, Lisa Eng-Sarne,
Anthony Fernandez, John Justen, Bob Pace and Dick Vitelli

Absent: None

Others Present: City Manager Ryan Schroeder
City Attorney Kori Land
Police Chief Brian Sturgeon
Finance Director Char Stark
Parks & Public Works Director/City Engineer Ross Beckwith
Human Resources Director Debra Gieseke
Marketing & Communications Manager Dan Nowicki
City Clerk Shirley Buecksler

Mayor Napier stated that tonight's meeting will be conducted virtually and described the process for citizens to view the meeting and call in with questions and comments.

3. Pledge of Allegiance

4. Adopt the Agenda

Motion was made by Councilmember Vitelli and seconded by Councilmember Berry to adopt the agenda, as presented.

Vote: 6 ayes / 0 nays. Motion carried.

5. Citizen Comments

- Mary McCauley, Ward 3, called regarding:
 - Ordinance banning conversation therapy
 - Signs showing support for front line workers and Black Lives Matter have been taken or destroyed
 - Policy regarding Police use of force
- Karen Vavreck, Ward 2, called regarding
 - Policy regarding Police use of force
 - Black Lives Matter signs and any information from cameras will be turned over to Police
 - Elections and changing rules in regards to the current pandemic

- Laura Zanmiller, Ward 1, called regarding:
 - Participated in South St. Paul/West St. Paul Unity March for Black Lives and Ending Racism
- Connye LaCombe, Ward 3, called regarding:
 - Ordinance banning gay conversion therapy
 - In support of citizen review of Police policies

6. Council Comments

Councilmember Vitelli thanked the West St. Paul Police Department and, especially, Chief Sturgeon for the great work they are doing during these tough times.

Councilmember Eng-Sarne commented on how our community has risen to help their neighbors through difficult conversations, listening, food drives and demonstrations. This past Saturday, City Staff and both the Police and Fire Chiefs attended and listened, as well as Congresswoman Angie Craig. Discussions will be held on upcoming Saturdays at various parks throughout the city.

Councilmember Eng-Sarne attended the Unity March in South St. Paul and West St. Paul and said it was incredible. The South St. Paul Police insisted on providing a full lane for the peaceful demonstrators from our community and our West St. Paul Reserves were there to assist, as well, keeping us safe through traffic along the way. Thank you to ROCC (Residents of Color Collective of West St. Paul) for organizing yesterday. Councilmember Eng-Sarne asks that everyone remove all defensiveness when talking about this topic and just listen so we can get this important conversation started together.

Councilmember Justen said this is a time to sit back and listen to the community, particularly our black, indigenous and people of color community. He said he is here to listen and learn and help. Black lives matter to me. Please reach out.

Councilmember Berry said each person is in a different spot in the healing process or coping from the murder of George Floyd. Some of us are ready to listen and learn what steps we can take to avoid the same situation happening anywhere, but some still need time. When they are ready, there will still be work to do in ending systemic racism. She hopes that peaceful protests can continue to happen and that we continue as a community to take action as we are able to. She thanked everyone for respecting the curfew we had for a few nights in order to keep our residents safe.

Councilmember Berry acknowledged the citizen comments regarding conversion therapy and said this topic is on the list for discussion at the next in person OCWS. The City of West St. Paul proclaimed June as LGBTQIA Pride Month and she wished everyone a Happy Pride.

Councilmember Pace thanked the citizens who donated to the food and supply drives and the barbeque in South St. Paul, the gathering at Harmon Park, and the march that went from South St. Paul to West St. Paul. These are tough times and it's nice to see the community together voicing their opinions peacefully. My hope is that all the peaceful protests will eventually lead to change and make us all better people.

Councilmember Pace said what happened on Robert Street a week ago, and especially by my shop, was terrifying to watch. Thanks to Chief Sturgeon, our Police force and all the other Police agencies that he had come in to our city to protect the businesses and citizens of West St. Paul. They did a fantastic job. As some of the looters were busting into the doors, they jumped on them immediately and got them out of the way so it didn't escalate into anything further. I also want to give a personal thanks to the South Metro Rescue Team and the West St. Paul Police Officers who responded to my business when a rioter came to burglarize my shop and proceeded to run one of my employees over with his car as my employee tried to stop him. My employee was released from the hospital two days later and will make a full recovery.

Councilmember Fernandez echoed that these are trying times right now. Everyone is trying to figure out what they can and cannot do. There was some information passed out from the City in terms of use of force that's been posted on the City's website and social media accounts. This will be addressed more in the Public Safety Committee Meeting and also within the City Council so that we can take this and make it better. It's important for the general public to know more about this.

Councilmember Vitelli commented regarding a Facebook post about ponding at Weschske Park. Seedlings have been planted in that area, and it will look better in a year or two. It's part of the watershed area in conjunction with the construction of Wentworth Avenue.

Mayor Napier said his heart goes out to the tragedy that happened in Minneapolis. As City leaders, our responsibility is to take a look at it and take on the challenge to try and change. This Council has to take action steps, along with our Staff, to make change in our community. He appreciates the events that have taken place in the past two weeks. Although he wasn't able to attend, he has enjoyed the passion he's seen throughout the community to make change. Mayor Napier said he has received a ton of emails and has responded to every one of them just with the simple response as thank you. Thank you for reaching out to us as City leaders.

Mayor Napier thanked Chief Sturgeon and his team for their professionalism and bringing in support from around our community. He has received feedback from other states who have asked how we came out of this. He believes our proactive professional approach really paid off. Thank you to our team for being proactive and making sure that peaceful protesting can happen in our community without worrying and fearing that our residents would be unsafe. Residents reached out to him stating that they felt unsafe. but he reassured them that we are doing everything in our power to keep them safe throughout this. The horror we watched in Minneapolis was almost unbelievable, unrealistic, never this close to us, and it happened. He said he appreciates everyone and the way they handled it. Now is the time to make a change and we need to do it as City leaders.

7. Consent Agenda

Motion was made by Councilmember Pace and seconded by Councilmember Fernandez to approve the following items on the Consent Agenda, as presented:

- A. Minutes of March 23, 2020 Regular Council Meeting**
- B. Minutes of May 11, 2020 Regular Council Meeting**
- C. Minutes of May 30, 2020 Emergency Council Meeting**
- D. List of Claims in the Amount of \$849,743.90**

- E. Rental License for 151 Haskell Street East (New-Single Family)
- F. Temporary Easement for Construction Staging Purposes for 1539 Robert Street South
- G. Resolution No. 20-057 Accepting the Thompson Oakdale Feasibility Study
- H. 52nd Annual West St. Paul Fastpitch Softball Tournament
- I. Direct the Public Safety Committee to Review the Use of Force Policy

Vote: 6 ayes / 0 nays. Motion carried.

8. New Business

There were no new business to discuss.

9. Old Business

There was no old business to discuss.

10. Adjourn

Motion was made by Councilmember Berry and seconded by Councilmember Justen to adjourn the meeting at 7:05 p.m.

Vote: 6 ayes / 0 nays. Meeting adjourned.



David J. Napier
Mayor
City of West St. Paul