

**CITY OF COLONIAL HEIGHTS, VIRGINIA
Special Meeting of City Council
Tuesday, April 21, 2020, 6:00 P.M.**

1. Call to Order

The Special Meeting of City Council was called to order by Mayor Kochuba at 6:05 P.M.

2. Roll Call

The following members of Council and Council's staff were present for roll call by the Clerk:

Present: Councilman Michael A. Cherry
Councilman Kenneth B. Frenier
Councilman W. Joe Green, Jr.
Councilman John E. Piotrowski
Vice Mayor Elizabeth G. Luck
Mayor T. Gregory Kochuba

Absent: Councilman John T. Wood (arrived at 6:27 P.M.)

Also Present: Mr. Douglas E. Smith, City Manager
Mr. Hugh P. Fisher, III, City Attorney
Mrs. Pamela B. Wallace, City Clerk

3. Declarations of Personal Interest

Declarations of Personal Interest were read by Mayor Kochuba, Mrs. Luck and Messrs. Frenier, Green, and Piotrowski then filed with the Clerk.

4. Work Session on the Following Items:

A. Review and Discussion of the proposed FY 2020-2021 Annual Operating Budget

Before turning the presentation over to Mr. Smith, Mayor Kochuba provided brief comments relative to the budget, noting that the budget was drafted with impacts from the COVID 19 pandemic. Mayor Kochuba stated that Mr. Smith and Mrs. Minor will present recommendations relating to revenue impacts from the pandemic and how such impacts will be addressed.

Mr. Smith thanked staff for their efforts in preparing the budget document. Continuing, Mr. Smith presented the following which focused on budget control measures of the current and upcoming year:

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FY20 Economic Response – Budgetary Controls

- **Hiring freeze for vacant positions**
- **Freeze on unspent capital outlay in department budgets**
- **Non-essential spending freeze**
- **Hold on pavement preservation program (\$775K)**
- **Discussion with schools on revenue projections and anticipated adjustments to monthly transfers**

FY21 Economic Response – Budgetary Controls

Personnel

- **COLA raises moved to contingency**
- **Freeze on upgraded positions**
- **Hold additional part-time funding (several departments)**

Operating

- **Additional street maintenance to contingency**
- **Freeze certain new initiatives/contributions to FY20 levels**

Capital Outlay/Equipment

- **Freeze Certain new initiatives/contributions to FY20 levels**

Other

- **Freeze on General Fund transfer to CIP**
- **Base contingency amount**

It was noted that the above listed FY21 Economic Response – Budgetary Controls totaled \$2,120,000.

Continuing with the presentation, Ms. Minor presented Proposed Budget Highlights for personnel, operating services and equipment, and capital needs, noting those items which were subject to temporary hold in response to unforeseen economic uncertainty due to COVID-19 shutdowns. Concluding the presentation, Mrs. Minor provided Council with numbers for the anticipated revenue shortfalls. These shortfalls were depicted in three FY20 Projections of moderate, difficult and severe, with a moderate revenue loss

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from the budget being approximately \$1M, and a severe revenue loss being just over \$7M.

At the conclusion of Mrs. Minor's presentation of the proposed budget, Mayor Kochuba noted the budget contained a 5% utility rate increase which would be presented at the April 28, 2020 Special Meeting. Mr. Green expressed his opposition to the proposed 5% utility rate increase noting during the present condition, referring to the COVID-19 situation, it was not a good time to impose such an increase on the citizens of Colonial Heights. Mayor Kochuba advised Mr. Green that Council would be able to provide their comments at the upcoming work session when the rate study was to be presented.

At this time, Mayor Kochuba began review of the budget document by department with Mrs. Minor or department staff addressing any specific Council questions or concerns. There were no major questions, only minor clarifications.

At the conclusion of budget review, there was discussion by Council and staff as to moving forward with the budget vote knowing the uncertainty of the upcoming revenue stream. Mayor Kochuba requested regular updates from Mr. Smith as to the financial climate of the City during the upcoming months as he and Mrs. Minor navigate through the COVID-19 crisis.

Mr. Smith advised of the upcoming special meeting at which time the budget and budget ordinances would be presented at a Public Hearing.

B. AN ORDINANCE NO 20-11

(Second Reading) Amending § 277-8 of Chapter 277, Water, of the Colonial Heights City Code by providing under certain circumstances for discontinuance of penalties and charges for unpaid utility bills, and by amending Chapter 277 by adding a § 277-18.1, authorizing the City Manager to impose a moratorium on disconnections of water service, due to non-payment of charges, during a declared disaster and for up to 60 days after the end of a City disaster declared pursuant to City Code § 27-10.

There was no discussion by Council. A motion was made by Mr. Green, seconded by Mr. Frenier, to adopt Ordinance No. 20-11.

Vote: 7-0

**Yes: Cherry
Frenier**

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	Green, Jr.
	Piotrowski
	Wood
	Luck
	Kochuba
No:	None
Abstained:	None
Absent:	None

UNANIMOUS PASS

Before adjournment, Mr. Wood, seconded by Mr. Green, renewed his motion requesting that Virginia Governor Ralph Northam, reconsider modifying his closure order due to COVID-19.

Mr. Wood stated he would renew this motion in every public meeting until June 10, 2020 or until Governor Northam modified the order.

Mayor Kochuba stated it was his opinion that the resolution not be considered by unless there was a specified date. Mr. Wood refuted Mayor Kochuba's comments and provided additional comments to support his motion.

Mr. Green suggested the language "not later than Memorial Day" in an effort to give a specific date. Additionally, Mr. Green provided information relative to reports on recovered COVID-19 patients.

Mr. Frenier stated that Governor Northam, in his most recent press conference of that afternoon, stated he would not lift Executive Order 55 until number decreased for at least 14 days.

Mr. Piotrowski reported that the most recent data shows Colonial Heights as the Commonwealth's "hot spot" according to the State Department of Health.

Mr. Cherry provided comments mirroring Mr. Green's comments specifically noting, although he did not believe Governor Northam would grant the request, localities needed to send a message.

Mayor Kochuba expressed his disapproval of the motion on the floor which did not include a specific date and asked Mr. Wood if he wished to include a date in his motion.

At this time, considering the discussion by Council relative to his motion, Mr. Wood withdrew his previous motion, and made a subsequent motion,

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seconded by Mr. Cherry, to request Governor Northam to consider lifting the ban on May 25, 2020.

Vote: 4-3

**Yes: Cherry
Green, Jr.
Piotrowski
Wood**

**Abstained: Frenier
Luck
Kochuba**

No: None

Absent: None

PASS

At the request of Mayor Kochuba, Mr. Fisher advised he would draft a resolution for vote at the April 28, 2020 Special Meeting. Additionally, Mr. Smith advised he would provide Council with updated information as to the most recent and accurate number of COVID-19 cases in Colonial Heights once he had confirmed such numbers with proper authorities.

6. Adjournment

There being no further business, a motion was made by Mayor Kochuba, seconded by Mr. Cherry, and carried unanimously on voice vote to adjourn the meeting. The meeting was adjourned at 7:59 P.M.

APPROVED:

T. Gregory Kochuba, Mayor

ATTEST:

Pamela B. Wallace, City Clerk