

The COMMON COUNCIL of the City of Tomah met in **SPECIAL SESSION** May 18, 2020 at 6:00 p.m. with Mayor Mike Murray presiding in the Municipal Building, 819 Superior Avenue, Tomah WI via Go to Meeting at 571-317-3122 – Meeting ID: 344-891-253#.

Following the Pledge of Allegiance, roll call was taken with the following members present: Mike Murray, Travis Scholze, Lamont Kiefer, Donna Evans, Shawn Zabinski, Jeff Cram, Richard Yarrington, and Adam Gigous. Absent: Dean Peterson. Quorum present. Also present: City Attorney Penny Precour and City Clerk JoAnn Cram. Gregg Hagen did not videotape the meeting due to COVID-19 restrictions.

**Discussion and Act on Policy and Procedure Regarding COVID-19 for City of Tomah.** Mayor Murray advised the total number of positive cases in 15. In the 61 days since inception of the order .0033% of the population has tested positive for the virus. The original purpose of the order was to flatten the curve of spread of the virus. Convenience stores and big box stores could be open as they were deemed essential. The virus can live on a plastic surface for up to 3 days and up to 5 days on glass and metal. The CDC has provided guidelines for reopening with the underlying theme of respect.

There are no restrictions at the current time and it was felt the market will dictate proceeding. The City needs to consider protecting our employees and try to be a model for the businesses in the City. Stay at Home doesn't mean we close all the businesses down, but we limit the number of contacts we have. Nursing Homes and Assisted Living Facilities are extremely vulnerable, and visitors need to be limited. Highly vulnerable populations should continue to remain safer at home and others should be allowed to make their own rules. Overall, Monroe County fared well. By not limiting our exposure, it will be very difficult to trace who you were in contact with. Hopefully the public will continue to follow safe practices when out in public. The Badger Bounce Back plan was developed by experts and would be a good thing to follow. What is reasonable and what is enforceable? Social distancing, hand sanitizers, the use of common sense. Big groups are a concern at this point. It was suggested that 30 days be a benchmark. The availability of public testing would also be paramount before we go wide open. Ideally, it would be good to have the numbers go down or stay the same, deaths would be important, and another metric would be to determine how many people are able to get tested. We need to measure to see if businesses are doing what they're supposed to be doing. We can limit the capacity number of various establishments. The Monroe County Health Department is not putting any restrictions on anything. The Monroe County Health Department does have authority to step in if a surge occurs and make rules if necessary. There is a Monroe County Toolbox that contains recommendations and guidelines. There is concern of doing due diligence to keep the citizens safe. Reasonableness must be tied to public health and safety. We can't limit travel, we can't close businesses and we would struggle to enforce rules put in place.

Do we want to follow the directive of Monroe County Health Dept. or do we want to create our own guidelines? Council input was requested: Don't feel we should put any more restrictions on but we should encourage the safer at home guidelines but let them choose what they want to do but strongly encourage them to practice at the WDCDC, Safer at Home guidelines, etc. As a City we can't make a ruling against the Monroe County Health Dept. and businesses should push the social distances, signage at the store re: washing hands, hand sanitizers, etc. Educate and remind businesses to follow the guidelines. A big group is of concern and perhaps wait 30 days on groups over 25 to 50. Follow guidelines that Monroe County Health Dept. has put forth and continue communication with the public going forward. In favor of opening pretty much everything – don't have a problem with large groups if attendance is somewhat traceable. Would like to see reduced capacity for dine in for bars and restaurants at perhaps 50% for the first 2 weeks. Allow businesses to open as long as they follow guidelines and practice social distancing and put limits on large groups of people. Things are open and it was felt that it is too early to allow for large groups – wait a couple more weeks to see what happens.

Motion by Scholze second by Yarrington to follow Monroe County Health Dept.'s direction not to put restrictions in place and let businesses operate as best they see fit but highly recommend that they follow the Monroe County Health Dept.'s guidelines to prevent the spread of Covid-19. (COVID-19) Tool Kit found at [healthymonroecow.org/covidtoolkit](http://healthymonroecow.org/covidtoolkit). Motion passed with one negative vote (Gigous).

Joe Protz, Director of Parks & Recreation Department advised that CDC has guidelines for private gatherings in various sizes. Buildings will be cleaned prior to rentals and cleaning items will be provided for renters use. It was requested that renters maintain a guest list for tracing purposes. If the renter wants to cancel, the fee is non-refundable after June 1st. Playgrounds, basketball courts, etc. – these will be open without caution tape. It's the public's responsibility to decide if they want to use. Tables in open shelters will be sanitized but it is difficult to sanitize the playground equipment. Public restrooms will be opening when properly staffed with hand sanitizer, hand soap, etc. However, if the public misuses the facilities, the public restrooms will

be closed so the public needs to assist in maintaining the facilities. Recreation programs - would like to wait 2 weeks and gather more information regarding youth baseball, adult softball, parent run organizations, etc. and see if there are more guidelines at that time. Possibly begin programs the week of June 10<sup>th</sup> through the 17<sup>th</sup> and run a shorter program. If no changes in the next few weeks, allow the user groups to start using ballfields but they would need to provide their game plan. Aquatic Center – we will continue to prep for opening, adjust the schedule to allow more different times (family swim time), close, disinfect, reopen for an open swim, close, disinfect and possibly have swim lessons in the evening. Opening would be postponed to the week of June 9<sup>th</sup> or 10<sup>th</sup> and during the week to have more park staff available during the day to check in and provide additional training for staff. Recreation Park is closed until construction is done. The first booking still active is for July 3<sup>rd</sup> and the July 4<sup>th</sup> fireworks. Discuss at the June 1<sup>st</sup> Parks and Recreation meeting.

Public Works and Utilities are going to continue social distancing when working. Garbage and recycling will remain status quo. Recycling hours have been expanded. When the lobby re-opens, the plexiglass would stay in for a while.

Chief Nicholson, Police Dept. – operationally no plans for short term decisions. Would like to keep the lobby closed and perform essential services as they have been doing.

Irma Keller, Public Library Director will be meeting with library board members to talk about functions going forward. La Crosse is planning on opening May 26<sup>th</sup> with many restrictions in place. Curbside service will continue. People will be able to use the computers by appointment. Additional discussion will be held. The curbside service is increasingly popular. It is unknown at this time when the Library will open but they are not looking at June 1<sup>st</sup>. Some computer accessibility will be provided by appointment. The Library Board will decide when to open.

Sr. Center – possibly opening the Sr. Center in the beginning part of June. They are waiting on a directive on the meal site on how that will be handled.

Director Dunford – Tomah Ambulance Service – staff will continue to wear PPE on all calls and protect themselves. No other change in business.

Ex. Dir. Muehlenkamp advised the Housing office will continue to follow the guidelines they have set up to limit the exposure. The office hours would follow whatever the city does with the main office.

Building Insp. Rolff feels it would be sufficient to allow for in-person traffic at this time and would accommodate.

Opening of city offices will occur on June 1<sup>st</sup> and we will open meetings back up to the public with social distancing guidelines encouraged. We would allow Hagen Sports Network to start televising the Committee of the Whole and Common Council meetings again. Continue down the teleconference, livestream path and incorporate where Greg would go differently and it would allow more participation and also allow people that don't want to come in person to be active utilizing the technology. Department heads should also be invited back in person to the meetings. The Police Dept. will stay on top of the testing being done and the positive tests in the weeks to come. Municipal Court has been occurring every week.

Motion by Gigous, second by Zabinski that the Council is in agreement with all city offices opening on June 1<sup>st</sup> with the exception of the Police Dept. lobby and approve the requests as presented by the various department heads. Motion passed without negative vote.

Motion by Yarrington, second by Evans to adjourn. Motion passed without negative vote.  
Meeting adjourned at 7:54 p.m.

Approved:

Michael Murray, Mayor

ATTEST:

JoAnn M. Cram, City Clerk  
Minutes to be approved on June 9, 2020