MINUTES of a Special Meeting of the City Commission of the City of Brownsville, Texas, held on Wednesday, April 1, 2020, at 5:30 P.M., with the following members present via Zoom Teleconference Meeting by logging on at: https://zoom.us/j/621840529
Meeting Number: 621 840 529

TREY MENDEZ
JOHN F. COWEN, JR.
ROSE GOWEN
NURITH GALONSKY PIZANA
JESSICA TETREAU
JOEL MUNGUIA
BEN NEECE

NOEL BERNAL
HELEN RAMIREZ
BRYANT WALKER
RENE DE COSS
GRISELDA ROSAS
ABSENT

Mayor
COMMISSIONERS
At Large “A”
At-Large “B”
District 1
District 2
District 3
District 4

CITY MANAGER
DEPUTY CITY MANAGER
ASSISTANT CITY MANAGER
CITY ATTORNEY
INTERIM CITY SECRETARY
ELIZABETH WALKER – Assistant City Manager

CALL TO ORDER
a) Roll Call

A quorum being present, Ms. Griselda Rosas, Interim City Secretary, read the call to order to consider the matters as posted and filed for the record in The Office of the City Secretary on March 27, 2020.

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

Mr. Jesus Salinas registered for Public Comment, whom chose not to address the Commission, but did request that his opinion be registered for the record.

1. Discussion regarding the City of Brownsville response to the urgent public necessity concerning COVID-19, otherwise known as Coronavirus, including but not limited to:

a. Continuity Plan Update: City staffing, facilities and services, including actions and continuity of such operations;
At this time, Department Directors provided a brief explanation and updated the Commission of their perspective continuity plans, which had taken in effect on March 17, 2020, when Mayor Trey Mendez declared the Local Disaster for Public Health Emergency, as follow:

Mr. Bryant Walker, Assistant City Manager/Aviation Administrator, briefly informed the Commissioner that as part of the department’s continuity plan, the airport determined which employees were eligible to telework. He further noted that the airport access was limited to the terminals, an increase in custodial sanitation throughout the airport was in place, and passengers were being screened when arriving at the airport.

Mr. Rene De Coss, City Attorney, briefly informed the Commission that the purpose of the continuity plan was to allow the office to continue its operations and legal services to the City of Brownsville through catastrophic events. He further noted that the office had established a succession order and a redundancy in the manner it provides its legal services to ensure that the next person up can always operate and continue with the duties and responsibilities of the office.

Ms. Griselda Rosas, Interim City Secretary, briefly informed the Commission that the department was open to the public with the assistance from other City department staff to.

Mr. Felipe Romero, Director of Communications and Marketing, briefly informed the Commission that his staff was currently teleworking and alternating on call duty weekdays and weekends. He further noted that the department was providing immediate support on distributing urgent and lifesaving communications related to COVID-19.

Mr. Armando Gutierrez, Engineering & Public Works Director, briefly informed the Commission that all services were still in effect, however changes had been made where public contact was involved and the light traffic had been facilitated the street work such as paving, patching, and stripping. He further noted that at the Landfill, citizens were encouraged to remain in their vehicles and transactions were being conducted through the drive thru window.

Mr. Lupe Granado, Finance Director, briefly informed the Commission that the in-office and remote processes had been implemented to achieve the continuation of services. Mr. Granado further noted the following:

- Research and recommendations would be made in light of the macro level functions and impacts of the current event to sales tax, building permits, bridge revenue, property tax, etc.
- Procurement Services has been providing direct assistance to COVID-19 related activities.
- Accounts payables was currently working on a system to approve vendor payments electronically within their ER system assuring timely payments to vendors are being processed
- Working with revenue from other departments and allocating resources from them in order to minimize impact on the city budget.
Ms. Gail Bruciak, Enterprise Applications Director, briefly informed the Commission, it was essential to provide uninterruptable services to the public and continue to maintain the same level of internal and external customer service during the unprecedented pandemic, by providing continual information technology support services and maintaining an infrastructure network and application availability of 99.99% and implementing a telework plan across the departments.

Fire Chief Jarrett Sheldon briefly informed the Commission that the Continuity Plan had been implemented in phases since the beginning of March 19, 2020, when delegation of authority was designated at all divisions. Chief Sheldon further noted that the department was currently implementing plans to eliminate exposure to employees and the community.

Ms. Roxanna Moreno, Internal Services briefly informed the Commission that the call center was operating in a normal capacity. She further noted that the Continuity Plan to telework was in its final stages to become effective April 6, 2020, and Fleet and building maintenance were still conducting normal operations following proper protocol.

Mr. Jerry Hedgecock, Library Director briefly informed the Commission that as part of the Continuity Plan the following had been implemented following projects and strategies:

- Book collection inventory
- Virtual Library Project
- Created a new way for patrons to apply and receive a virtual library card
- Developing a program strategy for children and adults which will be provided via video streaming
- Cross department support – assisting other departments with critical needs

Mr. Mike Sanchez, Municipal Court briefly informed the Commission that the department and drive thru was open to the public and measures were being taken to ensure the safety of the employees.

Ms Perla Ceipada, Organizational Development & Human Resources Director, briefly informed the Commission that the department had implemented the strategies that are in line with the Continuity Plan.

Damaris McGlone, Parks & Recreation Director briefly informed the Commission that she had accounted for the ten (10) divisions that she oversees and was able to meet the goals in the plan for its essential functions, while most of the in-person services to the public were halted such as events, gyms, parks and playgrounds, leagues, camps and afterschool activities.

Police Chief Felix Saucedo briefly informed the Commission that services will not be suspended but changes have been implemented to protect employees and citizens. The department has been heavily leaning on technology by launching their app.
Rick Vasquez, Planning & Redevelopment Director briefly informed the Commission that the department had personnel in-office working and teleworking with normal business hours.

Dr. Arturo Rodriguez, Public Health briefly informed the Commission that the department had transitioned from normal operations to working within the incident command system. Dr. Rodriguez further noted the following:

- majority of staff were in level one critical mission
- working closely with legal and police departments
- department added a drive thru window at city plaza and inspectors are now able to respond after hours

Mr. Noel Bernal, City Manager briefly informed the Commission that in response to the global COVID-19 pandemic, the City Manager’s Office ensured it’s most important and time critical operations are performed efficiently and with minimal disruption, and explored additional steps to adjust its continuity of operations over the long-term.

b. Financial Update: Emergency Procurement; and

Mr. Lupe Granado, Finance Director briefly updated the Commission of the following:

- total expenditure was $552,563 with $414,442 eligible for FEMA reimbursement
- the majority was being spent on personnel overtime from Police and Fire
- other areas of expenses were on supplies, lease costs, contract costs, and use of equipment The emergency procurement expense is at $78,230 with the majority spent on masks
- the city was currently paying the uninsured tests kits at a cost of $110 per citizen

Mr. Shawn Schroeder, Assistant Airport Director briefly updated the Commission with the following:

- emphasized only ticketed passengers were allowed in the terminal
- increase of security, custodial and disinfecting has been taken in effect at the airport
- rental car companies have limited counter hours and the restaurant closed on April 6, 2020

Ms Norma Zamora, Multimodal Transportation Director briefly updated the Commission of the following:

- there has been a decrease in passengers compare to last year, majority of trips are mostly medical or work related
- City of Brownsville/B-Metro had been eligible for the Federal Emergency Relief Legislation funding of $25 billion in funds, which had been made available to transit 5307 recipients and other COVID-19 related issues
c. Drive-thru collections/testing site update

Dr. Arturo Rodriguez, Public Health Director and Ms. Odie Leal, Emergency Management Administrator briefly updated the Commission of the testing site as follow:

- currently 338 patients had been tested with 191 insured and 147 uninsured
- three people had tested positive and 335 negative
- the site was open Monday through Friday and had the capacity of occupying large number of vehicles

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Commission, upon duly made motion the meeting adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

Approved this ___4th___ day of ___August___, 2020.

Trey Mendez
Mayor

Attest:

Griselda Rosas
Interim City Secretary

Respectfully submitted by:
José A. González, Reference Librarian
Office of the City Secretary