

# CITY OF LEWISTON

CITY COUNCIL

NOVEMBER 10, 2020

## SPECIAL MEETING HELD REMOTELY VIA ZOOM

THE HONORABLE MARK A. CAYER, MAYOR, PRESIDING.

PRESENT: Mayor Cayer, Councilors Khalid, Pettengill, Rea, Lajoie, Jensen, Clement and Gelinias, City Administrator Denis D'Auteuil and City Clerk Kathleen Montejo.

The City Council workshop ended at 8:55pm and the special meeting begin immediately following the conclusion of the workshop.

### **AUTHORIZING THE CITY ADMINISTRATOR TO EXECUTE THE MAINE HOUSING COMMITTEE CERTIFICATION OF APPROVAL TO USE MAINE HOUSING EMERGENCY SOLUTIONS GRANT FUNDING TO AUTHORIZE COMMUNITY CONCEPTS TO OPERATE A TEMPORARY HOMELESS SHELTER IN THE CITY OF LEWISTON**

Mayor Cayer allowed questions and comments from the public:

Joshua Nagine – Noted this is a temporary shelter and the expenses are not from the local taxpayer, noting this is a morale issue and not a political one, there is no solution in place currently to assist homeless residents, encouraged use of CDBG funds to set up public restrooms in parks, noted there are homeless people in his neighborhood and he considers them his neighbors.

Chris Bicknell, Executive Director of New Beginnings – Noted he has been working on the issue of homelessness since 2004, CCI ran a very impressive operation with the summer shelter, it was better run than most in the state and they only established it within 13 days, wellness shelters in hotels have better outcomes for homeless residents statewide, a state-level response is needed since this impacts service areas, there is a high cost to the community of unsheltered people – local expense for EMS responding to parking garages, camp sites, etc., cost of police and EMS, jail time or emergency room visit, there are mental illness issues and substance abuse disorder issues costing thousands of dollars, hosting a shelter for unhoused residents is compassionate

David Singer, WGME TV reporter – inquired about the amount to be received from Maine Housing and the name of the hotel

Jon Connor – Neither for nor against the shelter, more concerned with lack of transparency of the location, what are the contractual obligations if the hotel suffers business from other customers, experiences a backlash from the community or neighborhood, lack of regular hotel guests, negative publicity

Councilor Clement – Constituents in his ward do not want this to be established, recognize need yet see problems.

Councilor Rea – Opportunity for partnership with city yet no funding from city, if this is voted

down, the issue of homeless residents does not go away, apply lessons learned from the summer shelter

Councilor Jensen – This represents issues the state is not addressing or taking care of, not fair for state to relinquish responsibility to towns, homelessness is a state issue, the summer shelter was a success, there is uncertainty with this one due to more time being spent at the shelter instead of outdoors like summer, concerned with impact on taxpayers – more police visits to shelter means time away from other citizen calls

Councilor Gelinis – Finds the lack of transparency regarding publically naming the hotel to be troublesome

Mayor Cayer announced the hotel is The Ramada on Pleasant Street and the project is a contract between Maine Housing, CCI and the hotel, and not with the city.

Councilor Pettengill – Does not want to see people outside in winter, not sure if this is the right approach, this is a temporary shelter, need to look at whole picture, not do a band-aid approach, need to take care of people who call Lewiston home

Councilor Lajoie – CCI learned lessons while running the summer shelter, have faith in individuals putting this process together

**VOTE (1)**

Motion by Councilor Rea, seconded by Councilor Khalid:

To authorize the City Administrator to execute the Maine Housing Certification of Approval to Emergency Solutions Grant Funding to operate a Temporary Homeless Shelter in the City of Lewiston. Passed - Vote 6-1 (Councilor Clement opposed)

**RESOLVE, EXTENDING THE WAIVING OF CERTAIN FEES AND POLICIES INVOLVED WITH PUBLIC RIGHT OF WAY AND MUNICIPAL OWNED PROPERTY AND CONTINUE THE ESTABLISHED PROCEDURES TO ALLOW FOR THE USE OF PRIVATE PARKING AREAS FOR THE PURPOSE OF ASSISTING LEWISTON ORGANIZATIONS IN IMPLEMENTING SOCIAL DISTANCING**

**VOTE (2)**

Motion by Councilor Gelinis, seconded by Councilor Jensen:

To approve the Resolve, Extending the Waiving of Certain Fees and Policies Involving the Public Right of Way and Municipally Owned Property and Continue the Established Procedures to Allow for the Use of Private Parking Areas for the Purpose of Assisting Lewiston Organizations in Implementing Social Distancing:

Whereas, on May 19, 2020 the City Council adopted a resolve authorizing city staff to work with businesses seeking permission to expand their operations onto municipal right of way and public or private open spaces and parking areas; and

Whereas, the May 19, 2020 resolve expired on November 1, 2020 and social distance restrictions remain in place; and

Whereas, the State of Emergency declared by the Governor has been extended; and

Whereas, while emergency operating restrictions continue, the City desires to support local businesses and other community organizations by working with them where possible to allow for the use of publicly owned or controlled areas; and

Now, therefore, be it resolved by the City Council of the City of Lewiston that while organizations will continue to be required to obtain a permit from the city for the use of city sidewalks, streets, parking spaces, and public open spaces for the purposes directly related to that organizations normal operations, and to abide by the restrictions and requirements of such permits, fees for the use and occupancy of such spaces are waived, such waiver to remain in effect until the expiration of the state of emergency declared by the Governor. In addition, organizations wishing to use municipal sidewalks or rights of way, including parking spaces, located near but not directly adjacent to their property, may be allowed to do so subject to a showing that permission has been granted by the owner or lessee of the property abutting the municipal space the organization wishes to occupy. Such organizations may also be permitted to occupy nearby municipal open spaces.

Be it Further Resolved, that a staff committee composed of the City Administrator, Public Works Director, and Director of Planning and Code Enforcement or their designees is hereby authorized to review and approve or deny permits for the use of such municipal space or receive permits for these purpose. In addition, this Committee is hereby authorized to approve:

- The closure of certain streets or sidewalks to allow for those streets or sidewalks to be occupied and used for the purposes outlined above.
- The use of on-site open space or parking spaces normally used to meet Zoning and Land Use parking requirements to serve patrons, subject to presentation of a plan showing how this can be done safely.

Permissions granted by this committee may be revoked at any time should the operation violate any permit or use restrictions or operate in such a manner as to negatively impact the public or other adjacent property owners or create a hazard to public safety. The decisions of this Committee may be appealed to the City Clerk.

Passed - Vote 7-0

**VOTE (3)**

Motion by Councilor Jensen, seconded by Councilor Rea:

To adjourn at 9:37 P.M. Passed - Vote 7-0

A true record, Attest:

Kathleen M. Montejo, MMC  
City Clerk  
Lewiston, Maine