**JOPLIN CITY COUNCIL**
**SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES**
**JUNE 24, 2020**

## CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Stanley the special meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Invocation was read by City Clerk Barbara Gollhofer

The Pledge of Allegiance to the United States of America was led by Ms. Williams.

City Clerk Barbara Gollhofer read the Special Call:

Notice is hereby given that the City Council of the City of Joplin, Missouri, will conduct a Special Meeting at 6:00 p.m. on Wednesday, June 24, 2020, at Joplin City Hall, 5th Floor Council Chambers, 602 S. Main Street for the purpose of discussing an ordinance to require persons to wear facemasks to help restrict the spread of COVID-19.

The public was informed the meeting could be viewed live on KGCS-TV channel 21 and regional cable television systems including Sparklight in Joplin; or livestream at http://www.joplinmo.org/182/Video-Multimedia. In compliance with the social distancing requirement of six feet, the number of guests in the Council Chambers is limited to 43.

Answering Roll Call were Council Members: Charles Copple, Keenan Cortez, Doug Lawson (via phone), Anthony Monteleone, Diane Reid Adams, Gary Shaw, Mayor Ryan Stanley, Phil Stinnett and Christina Williams. Also, in attendance were City Manager Nick Edwards and City Attorney Peter Edwards.

Mayor's introduction of the ordinance

Mayor Stanley opened the discussion of the proposed ordinance by explaining what led to this meeting. The increased cases of COVID-19 between June 1 and June 24 concerned some council members and after communication with all the council members, it was decided to call a special meeting to consider the ordinance.

Mayor Stanley asked City Manager Nick Edwards to read the key provisions of the proposed ordinance. Mr. Edwards read Sections 1-9.

**Requests to Address Council**:

Mayor Stanley opened the meeting to hear requests to address Council and public comments.

Dixie Hogan, 4604 W. 27th Place, stated she is against a mask order.
Allen Shirley, 3520 S. Alabama, stated he is against a mask ordinance.
Barbara Owsley, 3455 S. Harrison, stated she is against a mask ordinance.
Johanthan Hopper, Nixa MO, stated he is in favor of a mask ordinance.
John Knudsen, 4807 S. Byers, stated he is against the mask ordinance.
Patrick Otero, 315 S. Connor, stated he is against the mask ordinance.
Charles, McGrew, 2912 S. Minnesota, stated he is against mandatory masks.
Anthony Wilson, Joplin, stated he is in opposition of the bill in regard to the constitution.

Justin Hamlin, M.D., Carl Junction, stated he is against a mask ordinance.
Mike Melin, 1240 S. John Duffy Drive, stated he is against a face mask ordinance.
Steve Allgood, Webb City, stated he is against the requirement of use of masks.
Kevin Van Story, Diamond, stated he is against the mask ordinance.
Jerry Dallies, 1832 S. Sergeant, stated he is against mask wearing being enforced.
Deborah Ferguson, 4480 Bradley Dr. stated she is against the mask ordinance.
Erik Martin, M.D., 4705 S. Jackson, stated he is favor of the mask ordinance.

Comments from the Public:
City Clerk Barbara Gollhofer read citizen comments submitted by email:
Kathy Huffaker, Joplin, feels it's not the correct decision for mandatory wearing of masks.
Connie Bellamy: for health reasons she cannot breathe well in a mask.
Mark Barger: Make masks mandatory; masks are the only proven way to bring the virus to a halt.
Gary Huffaker: Allow each individual to decide for themselves if they want to wear a mask.
Carol Barger: Make masks mandatory in the community.
Ruth Sawkins: is against a mask mandate for Joplin
Lauren White: is against a mandated mask ordinance in Joplin.
Richard Roark: wants a mask ordinance; take a step back on the open process.
Alyce Turner: supports the proposed indoor mask requirement.
Greg Jackson: against the mask ordinance
Jenny Anger: does not want to wear a mask in public; needs to be a personal choice.
Neil Huffaker: opposed to a policy that would require individuals to wear a mask.
Steve and Meegan Brown, 3106 S. Grand: against the mandatory mask rules

**Discussion of impact to the business community/learning institutions**:
Toby Teeter, Chamber of Commerce President, reported on a survey that was sent to the Chambers 2,225 members that asked if masks should be mandatory. A link to the proposed ordinance was attached in the survey. There were 594 responses.
No - 343 (57.7%) Yes – 251 (42.2%)

Mr. Teeter discussed the need to figure something out to stop the spread of the virus before school starts in the fall. As a community, we need to do better. He stated there could be an economic impact, accreditation issues and consequences if students cannot return to the universities and college in the fall.

Dr. Melinda Moss, Joplin Schools Superintendent, asked the council to consider the practicality of six-seven-and eight-year-olds wearing a face mask all day in a classroom. Could there be some other considerations if there is going to be a blanket mandate?

**Comments from Freeman and Mercy representatives**:
Dr. Rob McNab, Director of Covid Services for Freeman Health System, stated his observation is that we need to find some agreement on how to reduce the spread of the virus. Locking down society and having no regulations at all is not the right answer. We need to have some guidance and some regulations in place that helps keep society – or at least keep the syndrome – under control. At least make it manageable so that we don't overwhelm the capacity of the hospitals. He understands both sides of the mask issue, but we need to find a way to live our lives safely.

Mercy President Jeremy Drinkwitz was unable to attend the meeting, but Mayor Stanley stated Mr. Drinkwitz asked Mayor Stanley to pass along his comments that Mercy currently has six COVID -19 patients and there is room to expand. Mercy is in favor of a mask ordinance.

Mayor Stanley recessed the meeting at 8:10 p.m. It was reconvened at 8:20 p.m.

**Discussion of enforcement of the ordinance**

Police Chief Sloan Rowland discussed the enforcement section of the ordinance. Enforcement would be complaint driven. If the police department is called, the initial response will be to educate the offender and give them an opportunity for compliance. If necessary, a warning will be issued, and if there is non-compliance, a citation would be issued. He stated responses to calls would be on a priority basis.

**Discussion of health case data and current conditions**

Health Director Dan Pekarek presented a power point COVID-19 and discussed the case data and current conditions. After his presentation, he stated he is supportive of wearing masks, whether it be by ordinance or voluntarily. The CDC guidelines recommends using face masks and he supports following those guidelines.

Mr. Copple stated that whether the ordinance passes or not, he would like the City to make masks available to the citizens. Mayor Stanley stated this would be discussed later on the agenda.

**Ordinances – Emergency**

After discussion, the following amendments to Council Bill No. 2020-003 were introduced. Voting in favor were Council Members: Copple, Cortez, Lawson, Monteleone, Reid Adams, Stanley, and Williams, 7. Nays: Shaw, Stinnett, 2.

Section 1. That all persons six (6) years old or older who are present in the City of Joplin shall have possession of a face covering that covers their mouth and nostrils ~~when they leave their home or place of residence~~ and shall wear the face covering whenever they are within six feet of another person who is not a member of their family or household.

Section 2. Exceptions for face coverings will be made under the following circumstances:

- For restaurant *and bar* patrons while they are dining

- For individuals exercising ~~outdoors~~ or while walking or exercising with other people from the same household, if social distancing from others who are not your family or household members can be maintained; or

Section 6. Under the Joplin City Council's authority for enforcement of a violation of face coverings, the City Council specifically orders that a violation of this ordinance under Joplin's City Code, Section 1-5, is punishable by a fine of $0 to ~~$250~~ $50dollars, at the court's discretion.

**Amended Council Bill No. 2020-003**

Dr. Reid Adams introduced Amended Council Bill No. 2020-003 - an ordinance to require persons to wear facemasks that cover the nostrils and mouth to help restrict the spread of the COVID-19 virus, to establish reasonable exemptions, to set practical enforcement conditions; and containing an emergency clause. Motion by Dr. Reid Adams, second by Mr. Monteleone that Amended Council Bill No. 2020-003 be approved on an emergency basis. Voting in favor were Council Members: Cortez, Monteleone, Reid Adams, and Williams, 4. Nays: Copple, Lawson, Shaw, Stanley and Stinnett, 5. Amended Council Bill No. 2020-003 failed.

**Any other business**

Mr. Monteleone made a motion to direct the city manager to move forward with a budget amendment for the July 6, 2020 city council meeting, and if approved, to procure face masks for public distribution. Mr. Copple seconded the motion. Voting in favor were Council Members: Copple, Cortez, Lawson, Monteleone, Reid Adams, Shaw, Stanley, Stinnett and Williams, 9. Nays: 0.

Mayor Stanley stated he has noticed that due to reduced business hours, stores are experiencing bottlenecking and asked if there is anything City Staff can do to encourage retail businesses to expand business hours.

Mr. Stinnett asked Mayor Stanley to work with the city manager to collaborate with the Chamber (Toby Teeter), the public schools (Dr. Moss), MSSU, and others in the business community to come up with opportunities to help create mandates within their own businesses. Steps need to be taken to help solve some potential problems where people work side by side and close together. Mayor Stanley replied he would discuss the issue with the city manager next week.

City Manager Nick Edwards informed the city council that the Joplin Health Department added a Joplin COVID-19 Dashboard with data that is updated by noon Monday through Friday with the previous day's case totals. The dashboard is on the same page that contains the COVID-19 various resources and information links (joplinmo.org – click on the COVID-19 banner on the homepage).

Nick Edwards stated the City successfully made a partnership with a local agency to help with contact tracing. We're also exploring options to hire temporary employees to help with this task.

**Adjournment**

With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 10:03 p.m.

Respectfully,

Barbara J. Gollhofer, City Clerk