



## Minutes of the Goshen Common Council Regular Meeting of March 17, 2020

[7:00 p.m.]

Mayor Jeremy P. Stutsman called the meeting to order and led in the Pledge of Allegiance

Clerk called the roll:

Present: Megan Eichorn (Dist 4), Julia King (At-Large), Jim McKee (Dist 1),  
Doug Nisley (Dist 2), Gilberto Pérez, Jr. (Dist 5), Matt Schrock (Dist 3),  
Council President Brett Weddell (At-Large),  
Youth Advisor Zoe Eichorn (Non-voting)

No minutes were presented.

**King/Eichorn moved to amend the agenda to add Ordinance 5037: Expand the Permitted Uses of the Emergency Relief Fund.**

**VOICE VOTE to approve the meeting agenda as amended: PASSED 7-0**

[7:02]

Privilege of the Floor: No one spoke

### Council Committee, Liaison, Mayoral Reports

King noted that most everything was getting cancelled due to COVID-19.

Weddell reported an uneventful Redevelopment Commission meeting last week. Ice rink/pavilion was not discussed.

Schrock reported that Parks Board discussed disc golf course at Mullet Park.

McKee reported from Cemetery Board that 40-45% of cremation storage is filled and that 40% of burials last year at Violet Cemetery were for cremations.

Mayor noted that selection of Youth Advisor may be affected by COVID-19. King also noted this was discussed at Parks Board. Mayor plans to appoint a Youth Advisor to Park Board.



Perez reported meeting with Youth Advisor Eichorn, affirmed her work and leadership in spite of pandemic causing some scheduling turmoil.

Councilor Eichorn asked Youth Advisor Eichorn about candidates' desire for positions. Youth Advisor Eichorn stated that she knows of one person interested in Park Board, another in Council Youth Advisor, a couple for School Board Youth Advisor if they add that position.

Mayor reported speaking with Merritt Dilts regarding council strategic planning retreat. Mayor suggested rescheduling with date to be determined. Noted that administration is canceling all meetings not required by statute.

Weddell clarified that an email he sent to all councilors was poorly worded but was intended to suggest a group decision about cancellation and to recommend cancellation of the retreat. Eichorn, McKee, Perez expressed support for postponing.

[7:12]

Mayor distributed and read a letter regarding COVID-19 and additional funding (attached).

Weddell confirmed understanding of timing and method with Mayor.

Clerk-Treasurer Scharf explained that State Board of Accounts has advised tracking all expenses and this could be helpful.

Mayor provided additional considerations, rationale for \$500,000 amount for additional funds.

Weddell stated he was impressed with preparedness and capability of task force members. Expressed support for the \$500,000 dollar amount.

Mayor gave word that he and administration would watch money carefully. Said he would be signatory on expenditures from the line. Perez asked about relationship to Clerk-Treasurer role. Mayor addressed category transfers and budget line creation. Clerk-Treasurer explained claims approval process. Mayor said with this line one step would be added: Department Heads send claims to Mayor's executive assistant Jo Lung first.

Mayor thanked Council for support, assured that administration would do their best to keep Council informed. Perez asked about communications staff support. Mayor said that mailers and press releases will be coming soon.

Eichorn said that a list of available hotspots would be helpful. Clerk-Treasurer said that a recent email from Comcast indicated all their hotspots would be made free.

Mayor said Goshen Schools and community partners will have space in mailers.

Mayor reported COVID-19-related meetings: task force, commissioners, etc.



Jo Lung invited councilors to ask specific questions at Mayor's office.

Nisley asked about whether restaurants can serve carryout. A definitive answer was not forthcoming.

Mayor reported that Governor Holcomb issued an executive order today. Asked City Attorney Bodie Stegelmann to comment on public meetings portion. Stegelmann said there has been lots of discussion about relaxing Open Door laws. Order appears to allow councilors, vote, etc. by video so long as one councilor is present.

Eichorn asked what residents can do if they see unnecessary large gatherings of people. Mayor said we are trying to get an understanding of what local authority is. Said we don't want to get involved in ruling everyone's lives. Noted that many businesses are instituting measures voluntarily. Mayor encouraged residents to continue to do business locally and not go exclusively online. Shared anecdote about The O sharing food with employees before closing.

[7:41]

Resolution 2020-08: Interlocal Agreement for Stormwater Education Programs

**Weddell/King moved for passage.**

Director of Public Works Dustin Sailor indicated that this is \$7500 for a year and relates to City of Elkhart Aquatic Biologist. Mayor relayed some activities that will support, including fish shocking/tracking, education and demonstrations, etc.

**VOICE VOTE to approve Resolution 2020-08: PASSED 7-0**

[7:43]

Ordinance 5036: Amend Ordinance 4897, Goshen Common Council Rules of Order

**Weddell/Perez moved for passage on first reading.**

Mayor explained that this is an ordinance that packages together all changes made at last meeting. Mayor requested a change to allow Presiding Officer to cancel meeting for any emergency. After discussion and clarification,



**Eichorn/Weddell moved to amend Ordinance 5036, Section 12 (B) to: “The meeting can be canceled by Presiding Officer if there is a declaration of emergency by the Federal Government State of Indiana, Elkhart County, or City of Goshen that affects our area.”**

**VOICE VOTE to amend Ordinance 5036 accordingly: PASSED 7-0**

King expressed displeasure that this ordinance came without notice. She hopes that retreat can be used to help council can work as a group, not advance changes out of anger, etc.

**VOICE VOTE to pass Ordinance 5036 on first reading: PASSED 7-0**

**Unanimous consent was granted to hear Ordinance 5036 on second reading.**

**Weddell/Nisley moved to pass Ordinance 5036 on second and final reading.**

**VOICE VOTE to pass Ordinance 5036 on second and final reading: PASSED 7-0**

[7:49]

Ordinance 5037: Expand the Permitted Uses of the Emergency Relief Fund

**Weddell/Perez moved for passage on first reading.**

Mayor explained that the essence of the change is to expand permitted uses to any emergency. He noted that the city’s promised match of up to \$100,000 was never made, so an additional appropriation would be coming to make good on that commitment. Mayor further noted that in conversations with other communities, some are trying to raise emergency funds to help homeowners, businesses. Utilities in Goshen may be an issue later on. Currently Goshen Utilities and NIPSCO have waived shutoff fees and will be offering generous payment plans.

**VOICE VOTE to pass Ordinance 5037 on first reading: PASSED 7-0**

**Unanimous consent was granted to hear Ordinance 5037 on second reading.**

**Weddell/Perez moved to pass Ordinance 5037 on second and final reading.**

**VOICE VOTE to pass Ordinance 5037 on second and final reading: PASSED 7-0**




King/Eichorn moved to adjourn.


VOICE VOTE to adjourn: PASSED 7-0

[7:53 p.m.] *Meeting Adjourned*

APPROVED:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Jeremy P. Stutsman, Mayor of Goshen

ATTEST:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Adam C. Scharf, Goshen City Clerk-Treasurer



**Jeremy P. Stutsman, Mayor**  
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March 17, 2020

Council President Weddell and Council Members,

COVID-19 is a global pandemic with local impact.

As leaders of Goshen, we need to work together to assure that this virus infects as few people as possible. We need to put our community and its needs first. My Covid-19 Task Force along with other City staff and community partners are preparing for what the community may need when the virus is confirmed to be in our county.

We want people to stay calm and keep their distance from each other physically but at the same time come together as a community.

The virus has already impacted us with a range of cancelled events and people starting to work from home rather than gathering at their usual workplaces. We will need to think differently about how we live our lives. We will need to give up some of our routines to navigate this. As our places of work and schools are changing how they operate, we need to remain flexible and ask that people be understanding and flexible to accommodate people caring for their families.

The impact on our daily lives is already here and the economic impact is beginning. As that happens, we will stay in contact with each other and our community and continue doing all we can to help our community stay strong.

In that vein, we are changing how our local government operates so our employees who serve the public can stay healthy. That is the most important thing - we all work to be healthy and help our friends our neighbors and our community as much as we can.

Goshen Utilities have waived late fees and canceled shut-offs through the end of April.

I issued Executive Order 2020-01 which offers 80 additional hours of sick time to employees who need to self-quarantine. Today I am issuing Executive Order 2020-02 which will allow our employees more protections through the ability to limit in-person access to the public.

I am asking for changes tonight to Ordinance 5037 which will open up the uses of our Emergency Relief Fund and to Ordinance 4897, our council rules. Both of these planned for natural disaster and weather emergencies but never planned for a pandemic.



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In addition, I have asked Clerk Treasurer Scharf to create a new line in the Board of Works Budget. This line is placed in the category of Other Services/Charges. The line will be named, Emergency Supplies and Services.

I am proposing that we budget this line each year but it will only be accessible to the Mayor if the State of Indiana, County of Elkhart or City of Goshen Declares an Emergency that includes Goshen.

Coming back to Covid-19, I will be using this budget line for the known and unknown expenses coming down the road.

Examples:

1. The City will be contracting with some private communications firm/s. We have an extreme amount of information that needs to be going out to the public. This includes updates and new information that continues to come to us. This will give our Communication Coordinator additional support in creating content, managing the multitude of avenues we use to get information out, translations and other needed tasks. This will also create a redundancy in case we need back-up personnel to manage our communications.
2. PPE's (personal protection equipment) and cleaning supplies. These are in high demand at this time and prices on some items are increasing on others we are seeing extreme increases. We will also need more than a normal year. This line would soften the blow we will see to our department budgets.
3. Unknown Expenses – Obviously I cannot list these for you. These types of unexpected disasters can create increased costs, everything from equipment needs to overtime expenses. Back in 2016, Goshen had its first double homicide. This was one of the first things I had to deal with as Mayor. This was a time of increased communication with our community. Our Police Department worked hard and quickly, in 5 days they were able to find the suspects and arrest them putting the affected families and our community at ease. This overtime cost the City nearly \$60,000. I tell you this to show how quickly cost can be incurred.

This line will only be used for internal City of Goshen (government) expenses and will not go to outside agencies or people like our Emergency Management Fund.

Goshen City Council has been discussing a \$500,000 transfer to the Rainy Day Fund to happen sometime this year.



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I would like to offer an idea for funding this new line:

1. If City Council agrees that a \$500,000 additional appropriation to the new line puts us in a good spot to respond over the next month, 3 months or however long this pandemic lasts.
2. Clerk Treasurer Scharf and I would transfer \$500,000 from our BOW line which pays for our trash pick-up. This line has \$1.5 million budgeted.
3. Later in the year when things calm down, I would bring back a request for a \$500,000 additional appropriation to replenish the trash pick-up line.
4. It is my hope and belief that the City will not need the full \$500,000 to respond to this pandemic. However, placing this amount of money allows for quick reaction to needs and will be a great resource to our response. The amount that is not spent at the end of the year we will transfer directly into our rainy day fund. At this time we can look at our city finances and decide if we will transfer the unused amount or add more to it to bring the intended \$500,000 to the Rainy Day Fund.
5. It will be my intent each year from here on to budget money in the new line. If it isn't needed it will revert back to the General Fund.

I apologize if this letter became two convoluted or if I left anything out. I only had 30 minutes to put this together before our meeting tonight. Please also keep in mind this is a first draft and there was no time to check for grammar mistakes. Please ask any questions or for clarification of any point or item.

With Great Respect,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "JP Stutsman", written over a horizontal line.

Mayor Jeremy Stutsman