

The Jackson City Council met in regular session in the Council Chambers of City Hall and also by Teleconference and Zoom at 6:30 p.m. on Tuesday, August 18, 2020 with the meeting called to order to Mayor Pro-Tem Matt Madden. On the roll call, the following persons were present, Alderman and Mayor Pro-Tem Matt Madden, Aldermen Larry Anderson, Brandon Finck, Jeffrey Gay, Nathan Peterson and Dave Cushman. Also attending in-person were City Administrator Matt Skaret, City Attorney Brad Anderson, Street Superintendent Phil Markman, Jackson Ambulance Director Stephanie Beranek, Patty Vidana of the Ambulance Department, Community and Business Development Specialist Thomas Nelson of Community and Economic Development Associates, Shane Zahrt of the Coalition of Greater Minnesota Cities, Michael More and City Clerk/Council Secretary Dave Maschoff. Also attending via Teleconference and Zoom were Engineer Eric Hanson of HDR, Luke Ewald of Des Moines Valley Health and Human Services, Justin Lessman of the Jackson County Pilot and Dave Schmidt of KKOJ/KUXX Radio. (Mayor Wayne Walter was absent.) (A quorum of the City Council was present.)

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mayor Pro-Tem Matt Madden announced the Pledge of Allegiance would be said before the City Council meeting was called to order.

Those attending the meeting in-person and also via Zoom and Teleconference recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

CALL THE MEETING TO ORDER

Mayor Pro-Tem Matt Madden called the regular meeting of the Jackson City Council to order. He said the roll called showed all Councilmembers were present and Mayor Wayne Walter was absent.

There were no Public Hearings, Bid Lettings or Open Forum.

Unscheduled Guests

Mayor Pro-Tem Madden asked if there were any unscheduled guests in the audience. Seeing none or hearing none, Mayor Pro-Tem Madden said the Council meeting would proceed with consideration of the Consent Agenda.

CONSENT AGENDA

CUSHMAN/FINCK moved and it was unanimously carried to approve the Consent Agenda as presented.

Council Discussion Items

SHANE ZAHRT WITH COALITION OF GREATER MINNESOTA CITIES UPDATE

Shane Zahrt introduced himself to Mayor Pro-Tem Madden and the City Councilmembers. Zahrt said he's with the firm of Flaherty and Hood in St. Paul and represents the Coalition of Greater Minnesota Cities. He noted this is the second or third time that he's travelled to Jackson to give a Legislative recap and update.

Zahrt explained the Coalition of Greater Minnesota Cities has grown to 102 cities who are all located outside the Twin Cities metropolitan area. He said the cities have banded together by joining the Coalition of Greater Minnesota Cities to advocate on a number of issues at the State Capital particular to rural Minnesota. Zahrt said those issues have included LGA (Local Government Aid), property taxes, economic development, transportation funding, environmental regulatory issues, annexation and land use. Zahrt said the Coalition of Greater Minnesota Cities also provides information and advises cities pertaining to labor and employment issues.

Zahrt said there is nothing normal about this year or about the Legislative recap. He said he would cover some of the bigger issue items. Zahrt noted about the impact Covid-19 has had on the State and in Jackson as a border community.

Zahrt noted the Coalition of Greater Minnesota Cities Legislative Action Day was held on March 11th. He said it ended up being the last normal day at the Legislature as in a few days everything was shut down.

Zahrt said on the following Monday, March 16th, the State Legislature ended up shutting down with most of its in-person operations for a period of time and then resumed under modified circumstances. He said from the Coalition of Greater Minnesota Cities' perspective, Covid-19 also upended any expectations they had about the Legislative Session.

Zahrt pointed out in February, just a few weeks before shutting down, the State projected a \$1.5 billion surplus. He said a full revised estimate wasn't issued until May. Zahrt noted for the remainder of the biennium, the \$1.5 billion surplus had swung to a \$2.4 billion deficient.

Zahrt said when the 2020 Legislative Session started, it was thought it was going to be a short Session. He said it's an election year so it was thought that Legislators would come in and maybe pass a bonding bill or maybe a supplemental budget. Zahrt said the Coalition of Greater Minnesota Cities had some priorities for the Legislative Session regarding bonding, wastewater, a number of economic development issues, a supplemental budget, small city street funding, some additional support for child care programs and those types of things. Zahrt said that all went out the window when the State's budget took about a \$4 billion swing from a surplus to a projected \$2.4 billion deficient in May for the remainder of biennium.

In the informational handouts he provided to Mayor Pro-Tem Madden and the City Councilmembers, Zahrt pointed out the history of State Local Government Aid the City of Jackson has received since 2012 and will receive in 2021. He also pointed out the CARES Act distribution for the City of Jackson.

Zahrt noted the Federal Government passed the CARES Act Bill in late March, but Minnesota's local government share of that funding to cities wasn't approved until late June and distributed during the summer.

Zahrt explained nothing in the CARES Act was certain in what cities were going to receive. He noted if cities had a population of over 500,000, the Federal Government was going to send funding to those cities directly. Zahrt said the Federal Government basically sent the CARES Act money to the State of Minnesota. He said the State was told to give some of that money to local governments. Zahrt said the State was given some general guidance on how much money to distribute and what they could do with it, but not much more information than that.

Zahrt noted the only two local governments in Minnesota that have populations of over 500,000 people are Hennepin and Ramsey Counties. He said not even the City of Minneapolis quite meets the 500,000-person threshold so they didn't get a direct distribution from the Federal CARES Act. Zahrt said Hennepin and Ramsey Counties received their Federal CARES Act funding directly from the Federal government and then everyone else had to figure out how to distribute the pool of funding.

Zahrt said there were a number of ideas that came forward on how to distribute the Federal CARES Act funding. He said there were some who wanted to allocate more or less of it at various points to local governments. Zahrt pointed out the first proposal from the Minnesota House would have distributed about \$120,000 less in CARES Act funding than the Minnesota Senate's initial proposal to the City of Jackson.

Zahrt said the Senate's plan, as it made its way through the Legislature, was referred to mostly as the "Rosen Plan" (referring to State Senator Julie Rosen). Zahrt noted the City of Jackson is in Senator's Rosen's Senate District.

Zahrt reported Senator Rosen was instrumental in saying there needed to be a larger distribution for the local government component of CARES Act funding. He said Senator Rosen pointed out the fact that Hennepin and Ramsey Counties had already received a big share of their money directly from the Federal Government and the Legislature needed to treat everyone else fairly and on a per capita basis in the rural areas too.

Zahrt pointed out the \$841 million of CARES Act funding for distribution to local governments is what the Legislature kind of agreed to during the June Special Legislative Session but they didn't end up passing it. He said Governor Walz ended up distributing the CARES Act funding but honored the agreement that the Minnesota House and Senate had reached. Zahrt said that's how local governments ended up with the final allocation and the final total amount that was sent out. (The CARES Act Distribution for the City of Jackson was \$256,684)

Zahrt said the distribution of the CARES Act funding was one of the "back and forth" issues that the Coalition of Greater Minnesota Cities ended up in the middle of this year. He noted Senator Rosen was instrumental in helping the State kind of wade through that issue.

Zahrt said the Coalition of Greater Minnesota Cities was hoping for passage of the State's bonding bill even before the Covid-19 pandemic came along. He said the Coalition had a number of priorities that were part of the bonding bill. Zahrt said those included economic development programs, public facilities authority funding for water/wastewater treatment upgrades around the State and local road and bridge programs. He said the Coalition was calling for a bonding bill of at least \$1.5 billion coming into the 2020 Legislative Session. Zahrt said that was reflective of the needs around the State. He noted the Legislature has been reluctant to have a bonding bill more than a billion dollars in the past. Zahrt said the Coalition proposed a bonding bill of \$1.5 billion and to keep things moving on some of these public infrastructure projects. He noted the State bonding bill is still in limbo a number of Special Sessions later. Zahrt said the message the Coalition has been delivering to Legislators is that the bonding bill is a jobs and stimulus program for the State. He said the Coalition's message is also that the bonding bill is just as important as it was before the pandemic came along, if not more. Zahrt noted the State can't deficiently spend like the Federal government can. He said the State has to balance their budget. It doesn't come free, but Zahrt said bonding is the one big tool the State can do to create some stimulus and put some folks to work in an immediate sense.

Zahrt noted there's been the regular Legislative Session and three Special Sessions and still no bonding bill. He went on to outline some of the negotiating that has been going on among State Legislators and the Governor regarding the bonding bill. Zahrt said no agreements have been reached at this point.

Zahrt said the Governor's use of his Emergency Powers has remained a significant issue in the negotiations regarding passage of a bonding bill. He noted the Legislature has been meeting in Special Session due to the State Law that says the Governor can have emergency powers for only 30 days and each time he wants to renew them he has to give the Legislature the opportunity to revoke them. Zahrt said each Special Legislative Session has brought new surprises and dynamics, but none of them have brought forth a bonding bill so far.

In a typical year, Zahrt said he would be talking about a number of subject areas and outlining what was proposed and what happened. However, he said the pandemic and the shut downs related to it, really narrowed the focus at the Legislature this year pretty significantly.

Zahrt invited the City Council to read the information he provided to them and noted upcoming Coalition of Greater Minnesota Cities meetings and conferences.

Skaret noted the Coalition of Greater Minnesota Cities has been an ardent supporter of Local Government Aid and was instrumental in getting the LGA funding back to 2002 levels. Skaret thanked the Coalition's efforts in restoring the LGA funding levels. He noted the LGA funding is about 40 percent of the City of Jackson's General Fund budget. Skaret said it's a great unknown right now regarding LGA with the State facing a \$2.7 billion deficient coming into the next fiscal year.

Zahrt said according to the Minnesota Management and Budget Agency's planning forecast released on July 31st, the State's budget deficient was forecast to be \$4.7 billion for the 2022-2023 biennium.

Zahrt said LGA has long been the Coalition of Greater Minnesota Cities top priority and the long fight to protect LGA in the bad times and to build it back up during the relatively good times budget wise. He said the Coalition will continue to fight to maintain and increase Local Government Aid. Zahrt said the Coalition knows the impact LGA has on cities.

Zahrt thanked the City Council.

Mayor Pro-Tem Madden, City Councilmembers and Skaret thanked Zahrt for his update.

AIRPORT HANGAR AREA PAVING BIDS

Skaret noted Engineer Eric Hanson of HDR was joining the meeting via telephone.

Skaret explained the City received one bid for the airport hangar area paving project on Thursday, August 13th. He said unfortunately the bid was high at over \$576,000. Skaret said the engineer's estimate for the project was right around \$442,000.

Skaret pointed out this is a special year with the FAA funding a greater portion of the project than they would in a normal year. He explained normally the City's share of the funding for the project would be about 15 percent. Skaret said this year the City's share is calculated to be about 8.8 percent.

Based on the bid, Skaret said the City's share is about \$50,000. He explained always the risk of rebidding a project is that the City might not get any bids or the bids could come in higher or in this case, the City might not be able to make the cut-off on this fiscal year for the State and FAA and have to do the project under normal funding allocations.

Skaret said even if the City did rebid the project and received a bid that was the engineer's estimate or even lower, the City could still end up paying more of a local share than if the City would just accept the high bid and move forward.

Skaret explained Hanson has talked with the State and the FAA. He said both the State and FAA are still on board with moving forward. Skaret asked Hanson if that was correct.

Hanson said that was correct. He said the State and FAA are both OK with the project and ready to fund their portion of it.

Skaret reported the Airport Commission met on Monday night, August 17th and their recommendation to the Council was to approve the bid from Svoboda Excavating. He said the project would be done in 2021.

Hanson said the project is scheduled for construction in the spring of 2021.

Skaret explained the City wanted to get the bid approved and the project secured so the City could keep the extra funding from the State and FAA.

Skaret asked if there were any questions for Hanson or himself.

Alderman Anderson asked Hanson why there was a difference of \$130,000 between the bid and the engineer's estimate.

Hanson explained when the project was put together for next year, the thought was that there would be more people bidding. He said the top five prime contractors took the bid information including two paving companies. Hanson said Paul Fishel from Svoboda Excavating had a difficult time from either of the paving companies to give him a quote. He said the project specified 2000 tons of asphalt so it's not a real large project. Hanson noted there's no asphalt paving contractors in the area anymore so a contractor has to bring in a mobile hot mix plant for the project.

Hanson said the cost per ton of asphalt was slightly higher than the engineer's estimate. He said after talking with Paul Fishel from Svoboda Excavating, the mobilization number was really the cost number that was quite high because they have to move a hot mix plant in. Hanson also said maybe MnDOT doesn't have a asphalt paving project nearby next summer. He said he wasn't exactly sure why the paving contractors weren't that interested in providing a quote for asphalt. Hanson said usually that's not that much of a problem. He said fortunately M.R. Paving from New Ulm provided a quote so we do have a qualified contractor to do the paving portion and of course Svoboda Excavating doing all the other work.

FINCK/ANDERSON moved and it was unanimously carried to approve the Airport Hangar Area Paving Bid from Svoboda Excavating of Jackson, Minnesota.

Mayor Pro-Tem Madden thanked Hanson for joining the Council meeting via conference call.

Hanson thanked Mayor Pro-Tem Madden and the Councilmembers.

CONSTRUCTION ADMINISTRATION SERVICES AGREEMENT FOR 2021 AIRPORT HANGAR REHABILITATION PROJECT

Skaret explained the Construction Administration Services Agreement is to have HDR do the on-site supervision and the construction administration such as preparing the pay applications and any change orders and so forth. He said it's pretty standard with any construction project.

Cushman asked if the costs related to the construction administration services agreement were all rolled into the initial project.

Skaret said those costs are also grant eligible.

ANDERSON/GAY moved and it was unanimously carried to approve the Construction Administration Services Agreement with HDR Engineering for the 2021 Airport Hangar Rehabilitation Project.

EDA RECOMMENDATION: RENEW CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT STOREFRONT FACADE IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM FUNDING FOR 2021 OF \$25,000

Community and Business Development Specialist Tom Nelson said the EDA's recommendation pertains to the Central Business District Storefront Facade Improvement Program. He said the program has been in place in 2019 and 2020 and has been operated through the Jackson Business Development Committee (JBDC) in conjunction with the EDA. Nelson said applications for the Facade Program then receive final approval from the City Council.

Nelson said the JBDC has requested to continue the Facade Program for 2021 as recommended by the EDA.

Looking at the numbers, Nelson pointed out in 2019, the City Council approved seven different projects. Of those, he said about \$17,200 has been distributed with one project cutting down in size by about \$2,000 with another project awaiting completion.

Nelson said \$25,000 was committed for the Façade Program in 2019. He said there was also a private commitment of about \$37,000 with the initial bids. Nelson pointed out the amount of private commitment has actually gone above that. He noted a lot of those projects are going above and beyond the 50/50 match that's required in the program.

Nelson said for 2020, there's been only one application so far which has been approved. He said of the full \$5,000 match from the program, that project is going to result in roughly \$19,000 of private investment. Nelson said there are some really great examples of projects due to the program that's focused on the central business district of downtown Jackson.

Nelson said a couple more applications are expected to be submitted at the end of this year. He said they are not looking to have any project deadlines for the upcoming year. Nelson said the biggest challenge is getting the contractors to work on the projects.

Nelson said there was definitely a lot of a good feedback from businesses about the Facade Program.

Finck asked if the funds for the Facade Program come from the EDA.

Nelson said the funding comes from the EDA's 616 Projects Fund. He said the remaining balance in the Projects Fund is roughly \$250,000.

PETERSON/FINCK moved and it was unanimously carried to renew the Central Business District Storefront Facade Improvement Program funding for 2021 of \$25,000.

EDA RECOMMENDATION: RENEW JACKSON BUSINESS CHALLENGE FUNDING OF \$10,000 FOR 2021

Community and Business Development Specialist Tom Nelson explained the Jackson Business Challenge is a program the JBDC (Jackson Business Development Committee) created in 2019 in an effort to try and promote downtown Jackson and really get some energy going. He said the JBDC organization doesn't have any funding at all.

Nelson said in 2019, the JBDC had a winner selected for the Jackson Business Challenge that ended up not opening so there was no announcement.

Nelson pointed out in 2020, *The Rest Stop* is scheduled to open on September 1st and is still on pace to do so.

Nelson explained the Jackson Business Challenge is a three-phased program. He said applicants need to have a business concept, a business plan and then give a presentation in order for the JBDC to select a winner.

Nelson said roughly \$20,000 worth of pledges have been made for the Jackson Business Challenge Program over the last two years. He said the pledges have included \$10,000 from a project fund of the EDA, the JEDC pledged \$5,000 and the remainder of the funding has come from the Livewire, KKOJ/KUXX radio, the Costello, Carlson, Butzon and Schmit Law Firm, Reed and Brinkman and the Chamber of Commerce. He noted the JEDC has renewed their pledge of \$5,000 for this year.

Nelson said it's a good program and they are hoping to do the Business Challenge again and keep that energy going.

Finck said kudos to the JBDC in resurrecting and creating the Business Challenge Program. He said it's been really nice to see the energy the Program has created on Main Street and getting the businesses involved. Finck said this has been a really well-run and well-put-together program. He said "hats off" to the JBDC.

FINCK/ANDERSON moved and it was unanimously carried to renew the Jackson Business Challenge funding of \$10,000 for 2021.

Nelson thanked the City Council.

HIRING OF TWO PART-TIME EMT'S FOR THE REMAINDER OF THIS YEAR FOR THE AMBULANCE DEPARTMENT

Jackson Ambulance Director Stephanie Beranek said she was appearing before the City Council regarding the hiring of two part-time EMT's for the remainder of this year.

Beranek explained the Ambulance Department has had two EMT's recently resign. She said the two people who resigned were two people who filled many of the Ambulance Department's weekend shifts.

Due to the resignations, Beranek said the Ambulance Department is struggling with filling shifts and providing coverage. She said they are looking at hiring two part-time people so they can create a schedule and make sure all the shifts are covered. Beranek said the Ambulance Department is also proposing to increase the hourly wage of the part-time person they currently have hired from \$16 to \$20 an hour starting for the next pay period.

Beranek asked if the Council had any questions.

Peterson asked if the two proposed part-time hires would be in addition to the part-time person already on staff.

Beranek said that was correct. She said the Ambulance Department is looking for two additional part-time people for 24 hours a week and they would each be paid at \$20 per hour.

Skaret explained he and Alderman Dave Cushman had the privilege of attending a three-and-a-half-hour session facilitated by Silver Fox Safety on Wednesday evening, August 12th. He said there was a really good discussion about the Ambulance Service, staffing and scheduling.

Skaret said certainly one of the challenges the Ambulance Department is facing is staffing. He said staffing numbers are down and the Department has lost crew members primarily due to life changes such as people moving and obtaining new jobs and so forth. Skaret noted the last two crew members who left were moving out of Jackson and even out of Minnesota. He said the Ambulance Department isn't replenishing the crew as fast as staff members are leaving for a variety of reasons. Skaret pointed out that's pretty common throughout rural EMS. He said it's difficult when the Ambulance Department loses crew members, especially those that covered a lot of shifts.

Skaret said for the remaining crew members, the number of shifts and hours that they are "on-call" is staggering. He said it amounts to hundreds of hours and that's in addition to the Ambulance Department's paid staff. Skaret noted the paid staff are also taking on hundreds of extra hours beyond what they are getting paid for.

Skaret said to relieve some of the stress of the Ambulance Department crew, one of the recommendations that came out of the August 12th meeting was to hire a couple of extra additional part-time paid staff so there would be less stress on finding "on-call" people.

Cushman said the Jackson Ambulance Department has a great facility, great people and great equipment but the clock hasn't changed. He said there's still 24 hours in a day and we can't cover all that and that's where the real problem is. Cushman said we just don't have people to do it. With hiring two additional part-time staff, Cushman said it's hoped to get more people actively involved and alleviate the problem.

Finck asked what happens in the long term if the Ambulance Department is not able to solve the staffing issue. He asked will the Ambulance Service be short of coverage and how will it be covered.

Cushman said that's the great question. He said it's hopeful that by being able to find more people to staff the ambulance, some shifts may be split up by having two on board verses three. Cushman said there are some things that are being explored.

Finck said he's guessing this is going to be an ongoing challenge.

Beranek said that was correct. She said the Ambulance Department is starting with hiring two additional part-time people to get the Department through the end of the year. Looking at next year, Beranek said the Ambulance Department is looking at changing their configuration from running with three to running with two on an ambulance call. She said they believe the requirement is to run with two to try and spread the Ambulance Department's staff to help cover shifts better without stretching everybody as thin. Beranek said the Ambulance Department is going to have to look at other options also if they continue. She said the Department is hoping to get more hires. Beranek said the Ambulance Department will have to look at a lot of different options.

Cushman said he doesn't think Jackson is the only community struggling with staffing their ambulance service.

Beranek said other communities such as Windom, Worthington and everywhere are also dealing with the same situation. She said the Jackson Ambulance Department is getting calls for transfers that other community's ambulance services can't take.

Finck asked what are the strategies in other communities as staffing is becoming a bigger problem. He asked Beranek if she has reached out to other communities to find out how they're handling ambulance department staffing shortages or does she know how they're handling it.

Beranek explained that's why the Jackson Ambulance Department has reached out to a consultant for help. She said there's a lot of different ways that communities are handling staffing situations for their ambulance departments. Beranek said it depends on the community and the pool of people to pull from and everything like that. She said there's a lot of options to look at.

Gay asked if the Ambulance Department already has identified two people for the part-time positions.

Beranek said the Department has two people in mind but they are going to seek other applicants as well. She said hopefully there will be others that will be interested. Beranek said if they could attract additional qualified people to apply, that would be even better.

Gay asked if the people in mind to be hired are already qualified to work with the Ambulance Department or would they have to also be trained.

Beranek said the two people in mind are already qualified.

Alderman Anderson noted Jackson has three ambulances, Lakefield has two and Heron Lake has one. He said if Jackson has a transfer to Sioux Falls and then has a call locally, that leaves one ambulance left sitting due to a staffing shortage. He said it's sad when you have to give away business, so to speak, and call Lakefield, Worthington, Fairmont or somebody for mutual aid because the Jackson Ambulance Department doesn't have the staff to fill all three ambulances and handle three calls at once and that's an awful tough thing to do.

Gay also noted the time issue for an ambulance from another community getting to Jackson.

Beranek commented about using the ambulances from other communities. She noted the Lakefield Ambulance is already short staffed and what happens when Jackson uses them for a call and then Lakefield is left with one ambulance and what happens if they have a call in their community. She said those are all things that need to be thought about also.

Finck said he hopes Beranek will be able to find staff and continue to grow that staff verses shrinking. He said in these rural communities, we're all taxed harder on our time on what people are doing.

Alderman Anderson made a dramatic motion to approve the hiring of two part-time EMT's for the remainder of the year for the Jackson Ambulance Department and to also approve increasing the hourly wage from \$16.00 per hour to \$20.00 per hour for Assistant Ambulance Director Carey Simmons. The motion was seconded by Alderman Gay and was unanimously carried.

Skaret commended Beranek and the younger members on the Ambulance Board for really stepping forward.

Beranek also introduced Ambulance Department member Patty Vidana who was in attendance at the Council meeting.

Going forward, Cushman said he and City Administrator Skaret will continue to meet with the Ambulance Staff when they have their monthly meetings.

Beranek said the Ambulance Department would absolutely love that.

Councilmembers thanked Beranek and Vidana.

Beranek thanked Mayor Pro-Tem Madden and the City Councilmembers.

RESOLUTION NO. 30-0820 APPROVING DESIGNATION OF OFFICIAL DEPOSITORIES

Skaret said Resolution No. 30-0820 is a very simple resolution. He explained with Security State Bank opening up a business in Jackson, the City has to add Security State Bank as an official depository for the City. Skaret said the City does most of their banking with Bank Midwest, but the City also has CD's (Certificates of Deposits) and investments in other banks. He said Security State Bank needs to be added to the City's list of official depositories. Skaret noted United Prairie Bank has been taken off the list. (United Prairie Bank moved their banking operations out of Jackson on August 7, 2020)

CUSHMAN/PETERSON moved and it was carried to approve Resolution No. 30-0820 approving the designation of Security State Bank in Jackson as an official City depository.

Aldermen voting in favor of Resolution No. 30-0820 included Aldermen Larry Anderson, Dave Cushman, Jeffrey Gay and Nathan Peterson.

Alderman Brandon Finck abstained.

UTLITY BILL DELINQUENT LATE FEES AND SHUT OFFS

Skaret said the City Council needed to decide whether to continue the City's program of waiving the late fees for another month and also the shut-offs as well. He said the City has been waiving the late fees and shut offs on a month by month basis.

Skaret reported in August, the City had 156 delinquencies which is right in line with past months. He said the number of delinquencies has been in the 140 to 155 range every month and right in line with the same time last year. Skaret said there's always new people on the delinquency list every month but, by in large, it's pretty consistent of who's on the list.

Skaret said the City staff is looking for some direction on whether to continue the program. He said there are getting to be more and more cities that are ending similar programs and getting back to their regular practices. Skaret said it's up to the Councilmembers if the City of Jackson wants to continue the program for another month.

Peterson asked what month the Minnesota Cold-Weather Rule begins. Skaret said that will start in November.

Finck said community-wise, in his opinion, nothing has really changed yet. He said there are still businesses that are struggling and you don't hear about the being back at work kind of thing. Finck said he's still a proponent of continuing month-by-month with the City's program that's set-up.

Finck said hats-off to the City's citizens on how diligent they've been about paying utility bills on time. He noted there's really been no change in the number of delinquencies, but he still likes the flexibility that it creates if the City needs to work with a citizen on their utility bill. Finck said as a City that's a good thing.

Cushman said he would agree with Finck. He said the City hasn't seen an abuse of the program. Cushman noted the City had 140 to 150 delinquencies pre-Covid and 140 to 150 during the Covid pandemic. He said people haven't abused the program. Cushman said it's been a useful tool so he would certainly be in favor of the City continuing the program for another month. He noted the City has had the program since mid-March and has been continuing it month by month so this would be just another month.

FINCK/GAY moved and it was unanimously carried to continue the City's policy regarding utility late fees and shut offs for another 30 days.

REVOLVING LOAN PAYMENT DEFERMENTS

Skaret said the Revolving Loan payment deferments are along the same line as the utility bill late fees and shut off policy. He said the City has been deferring monthly payments from businesses who have requested deferments who have loans from the Revolving Loan Fund. Skaret said he was looking to see if the City Council wanted to defer those loan payments another month.

Finck said the loan payment deferments are even more important considering where businesses are at based on the situation due to the pandemic.

Community and Business Development Specialist Tom Nelson noted some businesses have voluntarily opted to restart making their monthly loan payments. He noted there are a number of businesses who have not asked to start making payments again. Nelson said there are some very key businesses where the Revolving Loan payment deferments have had a big impact for them.

Finck said until the City's restaurant industry can take back off, the Revolving Loan payment deferments is really a good program to keep everybody afloat the best we can as a City. He said it's nice to hear some businesses are getting back to normal and are able to restart their payments. Finck said that's kind of the first step to recovery.

PETERSON/FINCK moved and it was unanimously carried to continue the Revolving Loan Fund Payment Deferments for another month.

RESCHEDULE NOVEMBER 3RD CITY COUNCIL MEETING DUE TO GENERAL ELECTION

City Councilmembers discussed possible dates to reschedule the regular November 3rd City Council meeting due to the General Election occurring that day.

Following discussion on possible meeting dates, Alderman Anderson said he would amend a previous motion he made to move the meeting to Thursday, November 5th to include that the Council meeting will begin at 5 p.m. that day.

ANDERSON/CUSHMAN moved and it was unanimously carried to reschedule the November 3rd, 2020 City Council meeting to Thursday, November 5th, 2020 at 5 p.m.

Cushman noted the City Council may have to hold a special meeting the following week to canvass the votes from the General Election.

Other:

North Highway project starting date

Finck asked if there had been any more progress on determining a date for starting the North Highway reconstruction project.

Skaret reported a preconstruction meeting will be held on Wednesday, August 19th at 1:30 p.m. with the contractor and other interested parties such as utility companies and so forth.

Skaret said according to the last information he heard from Engineer Greg Mitchell of Bolton and Menk is that the contractor was looking to start the North Highway Project on the week of August 24th or the following week of August 31st.

Painting of Crosswalks

Finck noted schools will be starting soon. He asked Street Superintendent Phil Markman if the crosswalks around the schools are scheduled to be repainted.

Markman said the Street Department is scheduled to clean the streets this week and hopefully painting next week.

Finck thanked Markman for the update.

Notifying residents about North Highway Project starting

Cushman said after Wednesday's preconstruction meeting, it will be important to notify residents through social media, the newspaper and radio that the North Highway reconstruction will be getting underway.

Markman noted there have been three utility locates submitted to relocate mailboxes in the construction area along North Highway. He said the contractor, Duininck's, has been in contact with the Post Office regarding the relocation of mailboxes.

Update on the Splashpad Project

Alderman Anderson asked about the status of the Splashpad Project.

Skaret said there's been a lack of communication from the contractor on the Splashpad Project which aligns with the lack of activity on the project. He said the work on the Splashpad has been sporadic. Skaret pointed out most of the activity at the Splashpad site lately has been from the City's staff.

Skaret said the Street Department did a great job installing the pipe for the rainwater diverter. He said the Street Department dug the pipe in themselves. Skaret said the pipe will divert the rainwater to the storm sewer instead of the sanitary sewer. He said installing the rainwater diverter pipe was outside of the scope of the contract for the Splashpad Project.

Skaret noted he received an email from the project manager for the Splashpad late in the afternoon on August 18th indicating he was going to be in Jackson on Friday morning, August 21st at 8 a.m. to inspect and see where things are at with the project. Skaret said he thinks there's more to do at the Splashpad than what the project manager realizes.

Skaret said he will be meeting on site with the project manager for the Splashpad Project on August 21st and has also invited Street Superintendent Phil Markman and Water/Wastewater Superintendent Tony Oxborough to attend.

Skaret said any of the City Councilmembers are also certainly welcome to join them for Friday's meeting as well.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business, FINCK/PETERSON moved and it was unanimously carried to adjourn the Jackson City Council meeting at 7:26 p.m.

David A. Maschoff, Council Secretary

Matt Madden, Mayor Pro-Tem