Please bring:
Proposed FY 2021 Budget Document

CITY COUNCIL MEETING
MARCH 17, 2020
4:00 – 6:00 P.M.
COUNCIL CHAMBER
CITY HALL

AGENDA

1. Adopt a resolution confirming the declaration of emergency associated with Coronavirus (COVID-19).

2. Continue Review of FY 2021 Proposed Operating Budget

   a. Finish Review of General Fund (except for Schools), Review Fleet Services Fund and Airport Fund

LYNCHBURG CITY COUNCIL
Agenda Item Summary

MEETING DATE: **March 17, 2020** AGENDA ITEM #: **1**

CONSENT: REGULAR: WORK SESSION: **X** CLOSED SESSION:
ACTION: **X** INFORMATION: (Confidential)

ITEM TITLE: Adopt a Resolution Declaring a Local State of Emergency

KEY ELEMENTS:
___Economic Development ___Excellent Government ___Natural and Built Environment _**X**_Safe Community ___Vibrant Community

RECOMMENDATION: Adopt the attached resolution confirming the declaration of emergency associated with Coronavirus (COVID-19).

SUMMARY: Section 44-146.21 of the Code of Virginia authorizes the local director of emergency management to declare a local emergency subject to confirmation by the governing body at its next regularly scheduled meeting or at a special meeting within fourteen days of the declaration, whichever occurs first. The City Manager declared a local emergency Sunday, March15, 2020, and the attached resolution is offered for City Council's consideration.

PRIOR ACTION(S): Local emergency declared Sunday, March 15, 2020.

FISCAL IMPACT: To be determined

CONTACT(S): Bonnie Svrcek, 455-3990

ATTACHMENT(S):
Resolution
Declaration of Local Emergency dated March 15, 2020

REVIEWED BY: bms

#R-20-023

CONFIRMATION OF CITY MANAGER'S
DECLARATION OF EMERGENCY

WHEREAS, the City Council of the City of Lynchburg, Virginia does hereby find:

1. That the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic has the potential to seriously impact the City and its citizens by the extensive illness and even death of citizens;

2. That the President of the United States and the Governor of the Commonwealth of Virginia relating to have declared a state of emergency relating to COVID-19;

3. That pursuant to the authority of Section 44-146.21 of the Code of Virginia the City Manager declared a local emergency on March 15, 2020;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Lynchburg City Council consents to the declaration of emergency by the City Manager, does confirm all emergency actions necessary to be taken by the City Manager and City officials, employees and agents pursuant to the declaration of emergency by the City Manager.

Adopted: March 17, 2020

Certified: ______________________________
Clerk of Council

March 17, 2020

AGENDA ITEM #: 10

// An additional scheduled meeting of the Council of the City of Lynchburg was held on the 17th of March 2020, at 4:00 p.m. in the Council Chamber, City Hall, Treney Tweedy, President, presiding.

Present:	MaryJane Dolan, J. Randy Nelson, E. J. Turner Perrow, Treney Tweedy, Sterling A. Wilder, Beau Wright	6
Absent:	Jeff Helgeson	1

// In the matter of City Council, Council considered adopting a resolution confirming the declaration of emergency associated with Coronavirus (COVID-19). Ms. Bonnie Svrcek explained that she signed the declaration of emergency on Sunday, March 15, as she knew that the schools were starting to incur costs. Should there be an opportunity for us to get reimbursed the City needs to have a local declaration in place. In addition, this pandemic has the potential to seriously impact the City by the extensive illness and even death of citizens. It gives the latitude that is given to the City Manager, who also acts as the Director of Emergency Services (delegated to Melissa Foster, Director of Emergency Services). She is asking Council to confirm the declaration of emergency provided to them today.

Councilmember Wright made a motion to adopt the resolution, which was seconded by Vice Mayor Dolan. Councilmember Perrow asked what the declaration covers and in particular if it covers the Housing Authority. Ms. Svrcek would say that it does not because that is an entity of the Commonwealth. If there is something that is associated, then they will clearly collaborate and work together. Ms. Svrcek clarified for him that there are also state and national declarations of emergency. Councilmember Perrow noted that he is asking because the Housing Authority will incur some expenses related to the pandemic as well. Ms. Svrcek advised him to have the Housing Authority set up a separate code to capture those costs, which Councilmember Perrow indicated he has done.

The motion passed by the following vote:

Ayes:	Dolan, Nelson, Perrow, Tweedy, Wilder, Wright	6
Noes:		0
Absent:	Helgeson	1

Ms. Svrcek indicated that the Emergency Policy Management Team is meeting daily and the Emergency Operations Center has been activated. The Deputy City Manager is putting together a matrix of essential functions and staffing needs for every department. Employees should be prepared to be reassigned or reallocated as needed. A policy for COVID-19 leave and work from home is close to complete. She read a letter to the editor from a local emergency room doctor, which gave several great points and recommendations on what to do and not to do with regard to COVID-19.

// In the matter of Budget, Councilmember Perrow asked if they could start with discussing modifications to projected revenues. He would think the fourth quarter for meals tax would be a 75% reduction, first quarter 50% reduction and second quarter, 25 percent reduction. Ms. Svrcek indicated she has asked staff to do their very best to look at what the rest of this fiscal year will look like and they will look at the revenues again prior to Council getting towards balancing the budget. She thinks balancing the budget will get delayed a bit as some meetings are getting delayed. They will also be coming back to them with associated expenditure reductions. Ms. Donna Witt indicated that business license tax for 2021 will most likely be impacted, as well as lodging, amusement and meals tax. Sales tax might not be impacted as much since there will be increased online sales. Councilmember Perrow would like to see all these line items put on “the list” or at least a staff adjustment. Ms. Svrcek and Ms. Witt said it is going to be done.

Councilmember Wright asked if they have contemplated pushing back any tax deadlines. Ms. Svrcek said the Commissioner of the Revenue is waiting for some advice from the State Department of Taxation.

Ms. Svrcek went over responses to questions raised last week. 1) The “wish list” that Terry Hutchens. Director of IT, mentioned has been provided in Attachment A. 2) The registrar referred to a supplement in her budget presentation regarding the need for additional Registrar staff and that has been provided in Attachment B.
3) Revenue from the Commonwealth for the registrar position in included in Attachment C. 4) The five-year history of Commonwealth Attorney caseloads has been provided in Attachment D. 5) Information has been provided regarding the General District Court Clerk’s salary supplements. 6) Questions regarding juvenile versus adult crime have been answered as well as the cost to train, outfit and equip a new officer has been provided, data regarding the use of the Grey Key system and the cost of police vehicles has been provided in Attachment E.
7) Information was provided regarding the number of properties coming into and going out of our real estate tax credit program.

// Ms. Melissa Foster gave an overview of the budget for the Emergency Services. Councilmember Wilder asked her about the staffing shortages she mentioned. Ms. Foster said they are five understaffed right now, which is about 17 percent of the workforce for the Communication Specialist. They have two in training, so that puts them at 24 percent. Ms. Foster said they struggle to recruit enough qualified applicants for those positions. Sometimes the people do not realize how much involvement there is in the job and it is not just answering the phone in an office. They are taking steps to try to reduce the turnover such as giving them more exposure to the environment before hiring a person. Their turnover rate for this past fiscal year was 25 percent.

Councilmember Perrow asked for clarification that she has plenty of FTEs and they are funded but she cannot fill them. She said that is correct. They just cannot recruit the right people. They are attending more career fairs and working with the City schools and its public safety program. She also noted that there is shift work involved and not everyone likes to do shift work with holidays and weekends involved. In response to a question from Councilmember Perrow, Ms. Foster said the educational requirement is a high school diploma or GED because they provide the necessary training. She noted that they are seeing a decrease in typing skills because people do not use a keyboard as much as they used due to texting on phones. The economy being good affects them as well because people can find other jobs that do not have the shift hours or the stress and trauma involved with being a Communication Specialist.

Councilmember Perrow asked her about Objective 5 regarding maintaining an 85% on the Local Capability Assessment for Readiness. They seem to be missing their goal. Ms. Foster explained this is in response to a survey sent out by the state. The state no longer gives the locality a score so they have had to make some adjustments and score themselves based on the questions. He would like to know what Objective 5 should tell them as policymakers. Ms. Foster said it should tell them they are doing a very good job of being better prepared for disasters. Their goal is that they always want to be making progress, so they will probably never be at 100 percent. As emergency preparedness advances, there are always new things that they want them to reach for. Another thing that brought their score down is their Hazard Mitigation Plan, which they are in the process of updating. Councilmember Perrow commented that it did not sound like Council needed to do anything and that her department had it under control. Ms. Foster said that is correct. She said the Central Virginia Planning District will be coming to them soon to update them on its progress with the Hazard Mitigation Plan.

Mayor Tweedy asked if the Communication Specialist could be a work at home position. Ms. Foster said they typically need to be in a call center because there is a lot of teamwork involved. She said they are looking at ways they might be able to better handle the nonemergency calls. Their concern is that some citizens call the nonemergency number and it truly is an emergency. She acknowledged they are going to have to figure out some other ways to get work done if they cannot overcome the vacancy issue. She noted that the starting pay is another factor that impacts their recruitment, as well as they are competing with other agencies and the police department.

Councilmember Perrow asked if she has tried to hire retired or off-duty officers or EMS workers. She said she has had some luck with hiring retired employees at an hourly rate but her hourly rate is not enough to attract off-duty police, fire or EMS workers.

Ms. Foster commented that they have to replace the CAD system in the next three years to five years and it will cost approximately $5 million. It will take some time to figure out all the components and find vendors that can support some of the systems that are already attached to the CAD system. It does probably need to be included in the CIP so they can begin that planning process.

Fire Chief Greg Wormser gave Council an overview of the Fire Department budget. Councilmember Wright asked Chief Wormser what the turnover rate was last year. He said ten people left last year. Eight for non-fire related jobs and two for promotions in another department. With regard to two that left for promotions, Chief Wormser felt that spoke highly that they were doing the right things to grow an employee in the proper manner. They did not lose any employees to a horizontal move. Councilmember Wright asked how the compensation adjustments for the salary study and the proposed three percent wage increase will affect his team and does he anticipate it will ease any of that stress. Chief Wormser thinks it will ease the stress some but it will not be the ending point because there are more complexities than that. He does not think their pay bands are in the right place according to the Korn Ferry study. He has suggested that those pay bands need to be realigned in a different manner to incentivize people going for promotions. Councilmember Wright would like to see those suggested pay band adjustments. Ms. Svrcek said she and the Deputy City Manager would like to see them first, as they have not seen them yet.

Councilmember Perrow wanted to know how a Firefighter Recruit and a Master Firefighter could be in the same pay band. Chief Wormser said they used to be in two separate pay band but they are no longer that way since the Korn Ferry study. The earning potential is lost by that employee because they are no longer in that upper pay band.

Councilmember Wright asked Ms. Svrcek if the additional medic unit is so needed, according to Chief Wormser, why she is not recommending it for funding. Ms. Svrcek said the revenues are just not there to pay the cost, although it is one of several things she feels are worthy of funding. Councilmember Wilder would like that item added to “the list.”

Councilmember Wilder asked if there is a ratio recommended for a City their size. Ms. Svrcek said that the International City/County Management Association has benchmarks for a lot of funding based on per capita. But to look at these things just in terms of per capita when the geography and demographics of communities are very different is probably not the best way to look at things. Other things are call volumes and standard of cover. Chief Wormser said one of the main ways they look at things is from call volume and topography because it does not lend itself to ease of moving about. The reason they need to ask for nine firefighters to staff the medic unit instead of six is that they need relief facto personnel so they do not have to use mandatory overtime, which is used inordinately. Right now, if we did nothing else, we need 12 additional firefighters for the necessary relief factor.

Councilmember Wilder asked if they have positions that are not filled. Chief Wormser said they have a recruit school going on now with 11 recruits and that will fill the current vacant positions. He mentioned that they are trying to do everything they can to get the best possible candidate and employee.

Councilmember Perrow asked if a fire engine is taken out of fire service when it is sent to an EMS call. Chief Wormser said that is correct. Councilmember Perrow noted that the department beats the national average time and time again for a cardiac arrest that survives outside of the hospital and then is admitted to the hospital. The national average is 29 percent. Councilmember Perrow noted that it is coming down and asked if it is a symptom of not having enough EMS personnel. Chief Wormser said that could be part of it. They are at 38 percent currently but we are also at mid-year. Last year the average was 53 percent. Councilmember Perrow asked if the department needed anything in addition to the additional medic unit to raise the department’s performance to the level it was previously. Chief Wormser noted that with additional personnel there would be a fluidity of operations. They would be able to be more proactive instead of reactive as they are having to be now due to the shortage of personnel.

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Councilmember Perrow would like him to summarize their call volume in terms of fire calls and EMS calls for the past five years and provide that to Council so they can help understand the trend. He would like to see the trend in the average response time.

Mayor Tweedy asked if recruitment is a problem. Chief Wormser said recruitment might not be as challenging for their department as possibly other departments but they get a number of applicants and that does not necessarily mean they are qualified applicants. If they were to recruit for the nine positions, they would do an experienced academy and target a particular set of individuals. She asked if they have done an experienced academy in the past and Chief Wormser indicated yes.

Councilmember Wilder asked if they are in the high schools to try and bring up recruits up the pipeline, so to speak. Chief Wormser said that is one of the services they had to cut but they are in CVCC on a regular basis. He pointed out you cannot work for the City as a driver until you are 21. Mayor Tweedy asked if the pay band structure affects them in recruiting experienced applicants and Chief Wormser said absolutely.

Councilmember Perrow asked for clarification for the need for an additional ladder truck. Chief Wormser said they have three ladder trucks but one has been out of commission for a number of weeks due its age. As the City grows and with the building of large buildings in the City, it is necessary to have three ladder trucks and one relief ladder truck. He would put the new ladder truck in the new fire station they would build in the near future. In response to a question from Councilmember Wilder, they have studied where it should go but would rather not disclose that publicly at this time.

// Ms. Gaynelle Hart gave a summary of the Public Works budget. Councilmember Perrow would like to have a longer discussion about the trash collection revenue fees and how they come in and Council policy, possibly during the balancing part. Do we charge a fee for this or not? Ms. Svrcek said there was a vote to go to a monthly fee instead of the decal but the ordinance change will be brought to them at a later date. Councilmember Perrow would like to look at the revenues generated and an offsetting decrease in the general fund. Dr. Wodicka said they can do that and for the upcoming year it is approximately $100,000. Ms. Hart indicated that on page 187 of the budget, the total City cost only goes down by $12,000 but they would expect that to increase over time. Dr. Wodicka thought they are talking about two different numbers. Dr. Wodicka is referring to the increased revenues as being the $100,000 difference. Councilmember Perrow noted this is in essence an increase of $100,000 in taxes to our citizens. He would like to have that presented more clearly to Council so they can understand it fully. Councilmember Perrow would like the additional FTE in the refuse section on “the list.”

Councilmember Perrow asked Ms. Svrcek why they are seeing increases of tens of thousands of dollars in each budget for Fleet Services. He thinks that should be relatively stable if they are doing routine replacements. Ms. Svrcek said Mr. Chuck Cramer will address that when he goes over his budget.

Councilmember Perrow asked about the Region 2000 Service Authority amount.” He is looking at the approximately $21,000 decrease in payments based on use. Ms. Svrcek indicated the excess revenue is not budgeted. Ms. Witt said it was just a line item they included because it was revenue they received. He noted that Ms. Hart runs an efficient team of dedicated employees. The employees seem to be a good group of people and that says a lot about her team leaders and management team. Her department is probably the most tangible reflection of City services and is really the face of the City in a lot of ways.

Mayor Tweedy wanted to note for the public that the proposed trash collection fees are a fee for services and not an increase in taxes. She asked Ms. Hart if there were any plans for remote control devices such as a tractor for cutting grass on hills. Ms. Hart said they have the personnel who can operate these remote control devices and they are certainly something for the future. They recently demoed a conveyor one to put the salt in the barn because the employee who used to do that has retired.

// Ms. Tamara Rosser gave a summary of Juvenile Services. She explained for Councilmember Perrow that they are seeing an increase in contractual services due to an increase in the number of childcare days (a day that a youth spends at the Juvenile Detention Center).

// Ms. Rosser gave a summary of the Social Services budget. She described three additional positions that are going to be in the third quarter adjustments. They are being funded with state dollars and a local match of 15.5 percent, which is already in the budget. Councilmember Wright asked if these positions would be funded in perpetuity or just for this budget year. Ms. Rosser said the match amount is in the budget for this upcoming fiscal year. She did not speak to whether the state would continue to fund the positions after this upcoming fiscal year.

Mayor Tweedy asked if the other state funds she has mentioned might be able to pay for the mental health position she is requesting for Juvenile Services. Ms. Rosser said they could not.

Ms. Rosser mentioned that there is a mandate to respond to a call for a child under the age of 24 months within 24 hours. They are meeting that mandate only 80% of the time and the requirement is to achieve 95%. This is not being met with staff even working overtime. The other mandate is that they have no more than 5 percent overdue cases and they are currently running 58% overdue because they simply do not have the staff. Councilmember Perrow suggested she put that mandate in her metrics from now on.

Mayor Tweedy asked if the trauma in families is going up, which is causing their numbers to go up. Ms. Rosser commented that child protective services is now going to be called home based services. They recognize that if they do not get in there and do good ongoing home care services, then what they are doing is really only putting a band aid on the problem.

Ms. Rosser noted that since these are federal mandates that there may come a time when they are faced with monetary penalties for not meeting some of these standards. Councilmember Nelson asked if these are penalties imposed on the City or on the parents of the children who are suffering the trauma. Ms. Rosser noted that they are penalties on the City. He asked if there is anything being done or that can be done to transfer some of the penalties to the parents. She said that is a good question and the conversation needs to be had with everyone that touches ones of these cases—the lawyers, the guardians ad litem, etc., but right now the locality would incur the penalty. It all comes back to timeliness. Councilmember Nelson said he is well aware of all the parties involved in these cases. In his 43 years of experience, he saw the missing piece being the incentive for the parents to step up and do the right things. Ms. Rosser said she agrees and he said he appreciates her comments.

In response to a question from Mayor Tweedy as to how she would categorize the issues facing families, Ms. Rosser said the three main reasons a child comes into the foster care system are substance abuse, mental health issues and domestic violence. The window to reunite a child with the parents is very short and is mandated. It could take six months for a person with substance abuse issues to admit they have a problem. The state is putting some emphasis on kinship care and they work hard to identify other family members that might be able to care for the children.

// Ms. Rosser stated there are no proposed increases to the Public Assistance budget and no changes to the Public Assistance grants.

// Ms. Rosser gave a summary of the Detention Center budget.

Mayor Tweedy asked how much her department and Schools are seeing they are incurring costs with the same families. Ms. Rosser said she does not have any hard numbers but she would guess that they are serving the same families. She thinks there are opportunities to work collaboratively with schools as the school task force efforts and recommendations continue. She said that they are seeing younger and younger children with mental illnesses and if we do not get a handle on it, everyone is going to pay a higher cost. Councilmember Nelson noted that he had said that over the years in his time dealing with Juvenile Court cases. He would say to the judge that a seven or eight year old had mental issues but the judge would say "That is not possible." Now it is clear that it is possible and they require very expensive, intensive and professional interventions. He also agreed that there will likely be some recommendations coming from the school task force to address these problems. He would agree that it will take a collaborative effort and it does seem that there are families that have multiple children coming through the schools through the years with similar problems caused by issues within the family.

Mayor Tweedy noted there is a per pupil cost for a child in the public school system. She asked Ms. Rosser if she knew a per child cost for a child in foster care. Ms. Rosser said she has all that information and can provide it to them.

// Ms. Marilyn Martin summarized the Library budget. Ms. Svrcek commented that this will be her last presentation, as she has announced her retirement. Councilmember Perrow noted that she has made the library a very welcoming place and she thanked her for her service. Mayor Tweedy asked how she might see the library experience expanding, as the City grows, without necessarily having a new building. Ms. Martin said there is a plan to renovate the main library in the CIP. It will need your support with the CIP and with fundraising. They could not keep that building open without Public Works employees holding it together. It could be a very beautiful and modern building but it needs a lot of support. Ms. Svrcek noted there is a regional agreement with the City and Bedford and Campbell counties so people can check books out from those libraries. Mayor Tweedy mentioned that she has seen a library experience in a mall in other localities. Ms. Martin said that would be difficult with her current staff. Councilmember Wright would agree that it is a priority to renovate the library and he congratulated her on her tenure.

Ms. Svrcek noted that Schools is delayed until April. Mayor Tweedy noted that they really need to look to the future and grapple with big issues like the delivery of services and quality of services as the City continues to grow. We really need to look at how we integrate facilities and services.

// In the matter of Roll Call, Councilmember Wilder thanked the school staff and volunteers for the wonderful lunches they are providing to the children. Mayor Tweedy reminded everyone of the Census coming up and how very important it is for everyone to participate. Ms. Svrcek said they are interested to hear how the census will pivot to handle communities that will not have their student count there on April 1. Councilmember Wright thanked staff for keeping them safe and noted the passing of someone who was important to the City and the EC Glass community. Mr. J. P. Vaughn. We will miss him.

// The meeting was adjourned at 6:12 p.m.

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Clerk of Council