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**OMAK CITY COUNCIL  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES  
April 20, 2020**

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**CALL TO ORDER:**

Mayor Gagné called the Zoom meeting for the Omak City Council to order at 7:00 PM. Mayor Gagné said, in lieu of the flag salute, she would ask that all in attendance take a moment of silence.

**COUNCIL AND ADMINISTRATIVE PERSONNEL:**

Michael Foth	Tyler Wells, Building Official
Nattalie Cariker	Kevin Bowling, Fire Chief
Barry Freel	Jeff Koplín, Police Chief
Steve Clark	Wayne Beetchenow, Public Works Director
Walt Womack	Connie Thomas, City Clerk
Michelle Gaines	Todd McDaniel, City Administrator
Dave Womack	

**CORRESPONDENCE AND MAYOR'S REPORT:**

**Lauri Jones, Community Health Director, Okanogan County Public Health**

Mayor Gagné told Council that she invited Community Health Director Lauri Jones to update us on the COVID-19 pandemic. Mayor Gagné said that Maurice Goodall, Director of Okanogan County Emergency Management is also joining the meeting. Ms. Jones thanked Mayor Gagné for the invitation. Ms. Jones explained to Council that Okanogan County does not have testing capability and that is her biggest concern. The numbers are not reflecting what is currently happening and it may give everyone a false sense of security. She is asking that everyone comply with the Governor's order. She understands that citizens are getting anxious to get back to work. Ms. Jones also expressed her concern about the "Second Wave" therefore, the nation and the state has guidelines to open America slowly. She acknowledged that it is a bad situation for small businesses but, the healthcare system is already stretched thin and we don't want to stretch them more. She said that the Okanogan County Commissioners are advising all of us to stay home and stay healthy.

Mayor Gagné said she has been hearing a lot about the Tracing Element of COVID-19. She asked what do that would look like and if there were enough people to make that happen here in Okanogan County? Ms. Jones replied that Governor Inslee is looking at a workforce of 1,000 people that can conduct Contact Tracing. These people would identify and trace persons who may have come into contact with an infected person. For example, she explained that they have tied several cases in the Methow to one event that took place at the Twisp Community Center. This has led them to tracing people on the west side of Washington to confirm if they are positive for COVID-19. This was done using Contact Tracing.

Member Gaines asked if the ability to not get testing was statewide or just an east side issued. Ms. Jones explained that tests coming to Okanogan County were diverted to Yakima and Grant County as they exploded with cases.

Member Freel about the current turnaround time for test results. Ms. Jones said that it's now two days. He asked if there is a lineup of people waiting to be tested. Ms. Jones explained that Confluence Health and Family Health Centers have been conducting most of the testing in the County. They are only testing those who meet the criteria. She said they are seeing people testing positive with symptoms that run the gamut. People testing positive are showing signs of headaches, lethargic, sore throat it's more than a fever or cough and this makes her fearful.

Member Dave Womack who is employed at Confluence Health Centers said they have been testing six to twelve people daily. He asked Ms. Jones if she has heard about Herd Immunity. Ms. Jones said that a person could be asymptomatic (meaning immune) but, she said that we don't know enough about Herd Immunity with this virus. Initially symptoms lasted three to fourteen days and now they are seeing it last almost three weeks.

Member Foth asked if someone was offered a test and they refuse to take it, are there repercussions. Ms. Jones replied no, they are not forcing a test on anyone.

Ms. Jones said that she understands that people in town are getting antsy and tired of being in their home. She cautions them and ask that they to hold strong and not violate the Governor's order. She said that Chelan and Douglas County are allowing residential construction against the Governor's orders and that is not without consequences. We need to be looking at the bigger picture and we should rely on the science. She

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said the State of Washington had the first death in February and in less than two months over 400 have died. Again, she encouraged everyone to uphold the Governor's order.

Police Chief Koplín said he has been hearing from local businesses they intend to open on May 4<sup>th</sup> regardless. He wants to contact and educate those business owners. He does sense a change in the public perception. Mrs. Jones said there will be a slow roll out which she believes to include social distancing, disinfecting and the employers would have a big responsibility in monitoring staff if they are sick. Those at high risk will be able to telework. She hopes the businesses would be cautious about opening on May 4<sup>th</sup>.

Member Dave Womack explained that its hard for people to understand social distancing when you are not allowed to camp but you can shop at Wal-Mart. Ms. Jones said that there is nothing fair about this situation. She was made aware that over 85% of the hunting and fishing licenses are sold to people out of the area. The County Commissioners are trying to discourage tourism. They are seeing people re trying to rent VRBO's from Oroville to the Methow so they can leave the "Hot Zones". This is the reason the County Commissioners executed restrictions on short term rentals, hotels, RV Parks etc. Member Clark said that his daughter has the Peppertree and out of town doctors, nurses and contractors that are essential stay there. He appreciates the restrictions allow and exemption to those that are essential.

Mayor Gagné thanked Mrs. Jones for attending.

### **CONSENT AGENDA:**

Member Gaines moved, seconded by Member Cariker, to approve the consent agenda consisting of minutes from the April 6, 2020 council meeting; 2020 claims checks numbered 102547-102603; voided checks 102543-102546 & 102592-102595, in the amount of \$317,461.22. As there was no discussion and no comments from the audience, Council voted and unanimously approved the motion.

### **OTHER BUSINESS:**

#### **Committee/Staff Reports:**

Member Cariker told Council that the Public Safety Committee met on Friday and asked Administrator McDaniel to expand on the meeting. Administrator McDaniel said that nothing significant happened this past week. He did explain that a proclamation for utility ratepayers was signed by Governor Inslee. It prohibits disconnection of any residential customers and the charge of late fees through May 4, 2020

Building Official Wells told Council that he has been utilizing video inspections the last week or so. He has been receiving pictures and Facetiming with contractors. He has been receiving a lot of calls from homeowners about improvement projects. Last week he administratively approved a short plat for 116 W Grape. Wednesday, April 22<sup>nd</sup> is the last day for comment and if none are received, he will finalize the short plat by the end of the week. Member Dave Womack asked about dirt that is being moved just above Apple Springs. Building Official Wells said there is a potential construction project but, he has yet to receive plans.

Fire Chief Bowling told Council that his crew is healthy and, this will be the sixth week with no training but, his crew is still responding to calls. He is working to obtain three quotes for the City Hall fire alarm system he is waiting for the last one. He has continued to issue burn permits but asking citizens not to burn. China Express is back up after a kitchen fire they had a few weeks ago.

Police Chief Koplín said things are really going well in Omak. The call load is lower than normal. He has noticed an uptake on the domestic violence and assaults calls. This is due to people being stuck at home. He explained to council that they can't book anyone into jail which makes things tough. He said the officers are doing a great job of finding other ways to take care of the situation. Again, he said that after May 4<sup>th</sup>, businesses may defy the Governor's order. He will continue to work through the situations as they arise. Background investigations are being done on the potential new hires. The Academy is closed through July or August but when they open, he will be working on securing a spot.

Assistant Public Works Director Beetchenow said the crew is busy and he has been working on quotes to replace the playground equipment at Julia Maley Park on Fourth Avenue.

Mayor Gagné asked City Clerk Thomas to report on the Spring Clean Up. Clerk Thomas explained to Council that the original cleanup event was canceled due to COVID-19. Administrator McDaniel reached out to Dion Gotti with Sunrise and they will do a curbside pick-up. The Spring Clean-Up for both Omak and Okanogan will be on Saturday, May 2<sup>nd</sup>. It will be for natural vegetation only and the bags should be out Friday evening.

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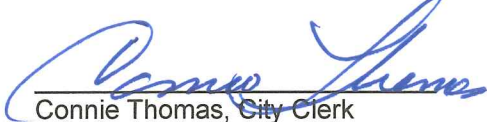
She said the Department of Ecology is doing a big media push using Facebook, Twitter, North Cascades Broadcasting and the Omak Chronicle.

Administrator McDaniel told Council that he had the opportunity to work the night shift last week which gave him time to work on the annual report. He advised Council that \$20,000 grant through the Cares Act is available for the Omak Airport. He said this grant has very few requirements attached to it. He would like to meet with the Personnel/Finance Committee the end of next week to discuss the grant.

Member Foth asked Fire Chief Bowling about burning in the County. Chief Bowling said that both the County and Department of Ecology are asking people not to burn but there is not a burn ban. There are no enforcement and people continue to burn. Member Cariker asked if burn restriction are in place. Chief Bowling reiterated that agencies are just asking people not to burn and there is not enforcement if they are burning.

Member Dave Womack raised the question about city sales tax and hotel motel revenue. He asked if projects can be postponed for a year. He believes the business closures will take a toll on those revenue streams. Administrator McDaniel said that he has reviewed the first quarter revenue and the city is up three to four percent. We have not seen an impact yet. He will be projecting revenues and would like to discuss those potential impacts with the Personnel/Finance Committee during the meeting next week.

As there was no further business before Council, Mayor Gagné adjourned the meeting at 7:45 PM.

  
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Connie Thomas, City Clerk

  
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Cindy Gagné, Mayor