

**Special Common Council  
of the City of Onalaska**

Thursday, March 19, 2020

1

1 The Special Meeting of the Common Council was called to order at 7:05 p.m. on Thursday,  
2 March 19, 2020. It was noted that the meeting had been announced and a notice posted at City  
3 Hall.

4  
5 Roll call was taken, with the following members present: Mayor Kim Smith, Ald. Tom Smith,  
6 Ald. Jim Olson, Ald. Dan Stevens, Ald. Diane Wulf, Ald. Steven Nott

7  
8 Also Present: City Administrator Eric Rindfleisch, Human Resources Director Hope Burchell,  
9 City Engineer Jarrod Holter, Police Chief Charles Ashbeck

10

11 **Item 2 – Public Input (limited to 3 minutes/individual)**

12

13 Mayor K. Smith called three times for anyone wishing to provide public input and closed that  
14 portion of the meeting.

15

16 **Consideration and possible action on the following items:**

17

18 **Item 3 – Resolution No. 20-2020 – For the Declaration of Emergency in the City of**  
19 **Onalaska**

20

21 Mayor K. Smith read Resolution No. 20-2020 in its entirety:

22

23 *“Whereas, a novel strain of the coronavirus, named COVID-19, has spread throughout*  
24 *numerous countries including the United States; and*

25

26 *Whereas, the World Health Organization has declared a Public Health Emergency of*  
27 *International Concern; and*

28

29 *Whereas, the State of Wisconsin has declared a Public Health Emergency; and*

30

31 *Whereas, the conditions created by the proclamation of these public health emergencies pose a*  
32 *continuing and substantial threat to public order, life, health and safety of the citizens of the City*  
33 *of Onalaska; and*

34

35 *Whereas, the City of Onalaska, in cooperation with the local, state and federal governmental*  
36 *entities desires to take action to prevent exposure to and spread of the COVID-19 coronavirus;*  
37 *and*

38

39 *Whereas, pursuant to Article XI, Section 3 of the Constitution of the State of Wisconsin,*  
40 *Wisconsin Statute Section 66.0101 Wisconsin’s Home Rule Statute, Wisconsin Statutes Sections*  
41 *64.09, 64.11, 62.11(5), 66.0301, 66.0314, 323.14(2), 323.11, Chapter 323, and all other*  
42 *applicable and/or pertinent provisions of state, federal, and/or laws, and equity, granting*

Reviewed 03/23/2020 by Cari Burmaster

**Special Common Council  
of the City of Onalaska**

Thursday, March 19, 2020

2

43 *emergency powers to municipalities and that empower the Common Council, to act in response*  
44 *to such emergency conditions under certain circumstances; and*

45  
46 *Whereas, the period of the emergency shall be limited by any Common Council resolution to the*  
47 *time during which the emergency conditions exist or are likely to exist; and*

48  
49 *Whereas, the emergency power of the governing body and Chief Executive Officer conferred*  
50 *under Wisconsin Statute Sections 323.11 and 323.14(4), Chapter 323, Onalaska Code of*  
51 *Ordinances Sections 2-2-3, and all other applicable and/or pertinent provisions of state, federal,*  
52 *and/or law, includes the general authority to order, by ordinance, resolution, and/or*  
53 *proclamation whatever is necessary and expedient for the health, safety, peace, tranquility*  
54 *welfare and good order of the city, village or town in the emergency and includes without*  
55 *limitation because of the enumeration the power to bar, restrict or remove all unnecessary*  
56 *traffic, both vehicular and pedestrian, from the local highways, notwithstanding any provision of*  
57 *chs. 341 to 349 or any other provisions of law; and*

58  
59 *Now, therefore, be it resolved that the Common Council of the City of Onalaska hereby*  
60 *determines that an emergency now exists in the City of Onalaska, Wisconsin; and*

61  
62 *Be it further resolved that the Common Council hereby authorizes and directs the Mayor and*  
63 *City Administrator, working with Federal, State and other local authorities, to take all*  
64 *reasonable and necessary steps to prevent exposure to and/or spread of the COVID-19*  
65 *coronavirus within the City of Onalaska including but not limited to those duties specified within*  
66 *Chapter 9 of the City's Municipal Code and Chapter 323 of the Wisconsin Statutes.*

67  
68 *Be it further resolved that this resolution authorizes that Mayor and City Administrator and their*  
69 *designees to preserve peace and order and to allow the City Administrator to act in the interest*  
70 *of the community's health, safety, peace, welfare and good order, including allowing in addition*  
71 *to the Mayor, the City Administrator or his designee to be an authorized signatory on behalf of*  
72 *the City of Onalaska during this declaration of emergency.*

73  
74 *Be it further resolved that the City Administrator or his designees in consultation with the*  
75 *Common Council President is hereby authorized to take such actions as may be necessary and*  
76 *expedient to continue regular operations of the City of Onalaska including:*

- 77  
78
  1. *Authorizing purchases and accepting bids which would otherwise require approval of*  
79 *Council, so long as such purchases or bids meet all statutory and local code*  
80 *requirements;*
  2. *Approving register of payments for invoices, payroll and other payments;*
  3. *Authorizing temporary budget adjustments and transfers.*

81  
82  
83  
84 *Any actions taken under this authorization shall be presented to Council for ratification as soon*

Reviewed 03/23/2020 by Cari Burmaster

**Special Common Council  
of the City of Onalaska**

Thursday, March 19, 2020

3

85 *as practicable.*

86

87 *Be it further resolved that the City of Onalaska is suspending all committee meetings except the*  
88 *March 24, 2020 Planning Commission and any Police and Fire Commission meetings required*  
89 *by statute until further notice, Common Council will continue to meet at its regularly scheduled*  
90 *time.*

91

92 *Be it further resolved that the City of Onalaska is waiving all payments from healthcare systems*  
93 *for City permitting that are related to the necessity of testing sites for the COVID-19 pandemic.*

94

95 *Be it further resolved that all Employee travel for City business is suspended and any travel shall*  
96 *be subject to the following:*

97

- 98 1. *A 72-hour quarantine is required (beginning today) for any employee that has traveled*  
99 *out of the State of Wisconsin in the past 5 days or is currently traveling. The City will*  
100 *compensate you for any lost work days. This will not affect your vacation. Employees*  
101 *who are able shall work from home.*
- 102 2. *We are strongly encouraging employees to cancel any travel they have planned. To*  
103 *emphasize this, a 72-hour unpaid quarantine will be required for any employee who*  
104 *decides to travel outside of the State of Wisconsin for non-essential travel. If this type of*  
105 *travel applies to you, you are required to inform your Department Head. This takes effect*  
106 *for any travel on or after March 18th, 2020. An employee may choose to utilize vacation*  
107 *or personal days in lieu of the unpaid leave.*
- 108 3. *Employees are not prohibited from traveling outside of the State of Wisconsin for*  
109 *essential travel which is defined as travel to/from their homes, medical providers, or*  
110 *childcare facilities and will not be subject to the 72-hour quarantine.”*

111

112 Motion by Ald. T. Smith, second by Ald. Nott, to approve Resolution No. 20-2020 – For the  
113 Declaration of Emergency in the City of Onalaska.

114

115 Ald. Nott referred to the section of Resolution 20-2020 that states: “*Whereas, the period of the*  
116 *emergency shall be limited by any Common Council resolution to the time during which the*  
117 *emergency conditions exist or are likely to exist,*” and he asked who determines if emergency  
118 conditions still exist or likely are to exist.

119

120 Mayor K. Smith said she believes the Common Council will make that determination and  
121 deferred to City Administrator Rindfleisch.

122

123 City Administrator Rindfleisch noted the Common Council is taking action to declare an  
124 emergency in the city and said the Council will decide when to take action to undeclare the  
125 emergency.

126

Reviewed 03/23/2020 by Cari Burmaster

**Special Common Council  
of the City of Onalaska**

Thursday, March 19, 2020

4

127 Ald. Nott asked if two or more alderpersons still may call for a Common Council meeting during  
128 the Declaration of Emergency. Ald. Nott also asked, “If so, what’s the timeline for meeting on  
129 that?”

130  
131 City Administrator Rindfleisch said, “That’s correct. The action is to suspend the committee  
132 meetings [and] not the Council meetings. There would be no restrictions on calling special  
133 meetings or the regularly scheduled meetings.”

134  
135 Ald. Nott said, “I’m talking if two or more of us believe we should meet before the next 30-day  
136 cycle, do we still have that opportunity even during the declared emergency?”

137  
138 City Administrator Rindfleisch said, “Correct. You’re not restricting the Common Council’s  
139 actions at all.”

140  
141 Mayor K. Smith suggested adding a provision that states the Common Council will continue to  
142 meet at scheduled, or a special meeting may be called under the normal rules for calling a special  
143 meeting.

144  
145 Ald. Nott stated he also supports adding such a provision.

146  
147 City Administrator Rindfleisch told the Council he believes such language is superfluous.

148  
149 Ald. Nott said, “I’m trying to fight perceptions potentially out there, too. We have citizens out  
150 there who might not know everybody up on this bench well. I don’t think it’s unreasonable that  
151 some of them might have concerns. I’m just trying to come up with a declared check and  
152 balance that’s easy for anyone to see that yes, you call your councilmember and you can  
153 convince them there’s a problem and they get somebody else to do it, they’re going to call them  
154 in.”

155  
156 City Administrator Rindfleisch said, “What I would warn against is adding language that isn’t  
157 specific to what’s already in the ordinances. If the ordinances don’t specify specifically two  
158 councilmembers may call a meeting, you’re creating a new procedure versus the Council  
159 operates normally, which includes already the opportunity for councilmembers to call a  
160 meeting.”

161  
162 Mayor K. Smith suggested including the following verbiage: “*Special meetings may be called,*  
163 *as needed.*” Mayor K. Smith said, “Then we would follow the routine procedure for calling a  
164 special meeting.”

165  
166 City Administrator Rindfleisch said the word “may” is key “because otherwise we’re not  
167 creating language that doesn’t exist in the ordinance already.”

168

**Special Common Council  
of the City of Onalaska**

Thursday, March 19, 2020

5

169 Ald. Nott said, “If the normal procedure is still in play, I just want that highlighted – that’s all.”

170

171 Mayor K. Smith told the Council she had written down the following verbiage: “*Special*  
172 *Common Council meetings may be called, as needed.*” Mayor K. Smith also asked if it instead  
173 should read “special meetings” as that would provide an opportunity for any meeting to be held  
174 for a special reason.

175

176 City Administrator Rindfleisch said, “I would suggest if the meetings rise to the necessity of  
177 outside of the Common Council meeting, if the meetings rise to being required to have and we’re  
178 all willing to get together, then the need for the emergency is no longer in existence and then we  
179 should cancel the emergency. ... The whole purpose of this is so that we’re not individually  
180 deciding what’s important and what’s not important – the Council does.”

181

182 Ald. Nott said it is his understanding the Common Council still may hold special meetings under  
183 a Declaration of Emergency and stated he would like to see it written that that still applies. Ald.  
184 Nott said it would allow the Council to address any necessary issue.

185

186 Mayor K. Smith reiterated the verbiage would read as follows: “*Special Common Council*  
187 *meetings may be called, as needed.*”

188

189 Mayor K. Smith and Ald. Nott said the verbiage should read as follows: “*Special Common*  
190 *Council meetings may be called.*”

191

192 Ald. Stevens asked if the Council is first resolving the amendment.

193

194 Mayor K. Smith said her idea is to address all the amendments at once and told Ald. Stevens she  
195 is agreeable to addressing them one by one.

196

197 Ald. Stevens addressed the section of the resolution that states: “*Be it further resolved that the*  
198 *City Administrator or his designees in consultation with the Common Council President is*  
199 *hereby authorized to take such actions as may be necessary and expedient to continue regular*  
200 *operations of the City of Onalaska including authorizing purchases and accepting bids which*  
201 *would otherwise require approval of Council, so long as such purchases or bids meet all*  
202 *statutory and local code requirements.*” Ald. Stevens said that while he understands the  
203 procedure, he asked City Administrator Rindfleisch to give an example of “what may happen  
204 where this needs to be utilized, and how is it resolved. My reading of this suggests that if  
205 whether it was an emergency or otherwise something came in that required immediate attention  
206 it could be taken care of, and then the Council would ratify it at a later date.”

207

208 City Administrator Rindfleisch told Ald. Stevens his interpretation is correct.

209

210 Ald. Stevens asked City Administrator Rindfleisch, “Do you anticipate certain ...?”

Reviewed 03/23/2020 by Cari Burmaster

**Special Common Council  
of the City of Onalaska**

Thursday, March 19, 2020

6

211  
212 City Administrator Rindfleisch said, “Nothing is anticipated now. But depending on the course  
213 of what is occurring, that may arise. If there’s supplies or special equipment needed or anything  
214 that would normally rise to the level of bid, and we do have purchasing policy, that anything in  
215 that regard that needs Council approval that the Mayor, in conjunction with the City  
216 Administrator, would authorize those purchases and then come to Council afterwards.”

217  
218 Ald. Stevens said, “The idea is to expedite purchases and not wait on ceremony in cases of  
219 emergency.”

220  
221 City Administrator Rindfleisch told Ald. Stevens he is correct.

222  
223 Ald. Wulf said, “I’m just following up with what I thought I heard you say. You said purchases  
224 with you and the Mayor, but is that in [the resolution]?”

225  
226 City Administrator Rindfleisch said, “That was a misspeak.”

227  
228 Mayor K. Smith said, “It would be the Council President [meaning Ald. Wulf].” Mayor K.  
229 Smith also noted the section prior lists the things for which the Mayor and City Administrator  
230 Rindfleisch will be responsible, and she said, “When it comes to the purchasing and things that  
231 the Council normally does, that would fall to the City Administrator and the Council President.”

232  
233 City Administrator Rindfleisch said, “The purpose for that is if it’s not likely to, according to the  
234 opinion of the Council President, pass Council action, then we probably shouldn’t do it. That’s  
235 the reason for that portion there. I apologize for misspeaking.”

236  
237 Ald. Wulf noted she had remotely attended two different League of Municipalities meetings this  
238 week and said it had been good for her to hear the concerns of other municipalities and the  
239 challenges they’re currently facing. Ald. Wulf addressed the section that states: “*Be it further  
240 resolved that this resolution authorizes that Mayor and City Administrator and their designees to  
241 preserve peace and order and to allow the City Administrator to act in the interest of the  
242 community’s health, safety, peace, welfare and good order, including allowing in addition to the  
243 Mayor, the City Administrator or his designee to be an authorized signatory on behalf of the City  
244 of Onalaska during this declaration of emergency,*” and she asked if an establishment such as a  
245 restaurant and/or bar could be fined or closed down by the Police Department if it continued to  
246 operate even though Wisconsin Governor Tony Evers has ordered that they close and patrons are  
247 only allowed to purchase takeout orders. Ald. Wulf said she interprets the aforementioned  
248 paragraph in the resolution to mean the Police Department would have the authority to preserve  
249 order and close down an establishment.

250  
251 City Administrator Rindfleisch told Ald. Wulf she is correct and said, “The police, under all  
252 circumstances, have the right to preserve order. That’s why we have them. In specific, we’re

Reviewed 03/23/2020 by Cari Burmaster

**Special Common Council  
of the City of Onalaska**

Thursday, March 19, 2020

7

253 certainly authorizing preserving peace and order, but it's not necessarily allowing the police. It  
254 is to create policies that preserve the peace and order on behalf of the Council for future Council  
255 approval. In terms of the question regarding more than 10 people or congregants, the police  
256 would be enforcing the Governor's dictates. And there are penalties as prescribed by state  
257 statute for that, including jail time and very large penalties."  
258

259 Ald. Nott said, "My understanding of the resolution is it isn't so much of an enforcement  
260 document as it is a procedural document which is going to facilitate faster decision making,  
261 financial transactions, and things of that nature."  
262

263 City Administrator Rindfleisch said, "That's absolutely the intent of this. We'll talk about City  
264 Hall and personnel in the next agenda item, but I made a comment Wednesday that, if you look  
265 through the newsfeed a week prior to that, the big issue in the news was, should people take a  
266 cruise or not? It's amazing within seven days how quickly things had changed. ... The issues  
267 facing the city are changing rapidly – and Mayor Smith is aware of this in conversation – that it  
268 started changing daily, then hourly, and literally by the time we had the next documents prepared  
269 and out, federal regulations changed on that one as well. It's changing almost minute by minute  
270 right now, so it is absolutely that case. The intent here is not to supersede the authority of the  
271 Council, but it is to more effectively and quickly deal with policy decisions that need to be made  
272 quickly."  
273

274 Ald. Wulf referred to the paragraph that reads: *Be it further resolved that the City Administrator*  
275 *or his designees in consultation with the Common Council President is hereby authorized to take*  
276 *such actions as may be necessary and expedient to continue regular operations of the City of*  
277 *Onalaska,*" and she asked if this would be a joint effort between City Administrator Rindfleisch  
278 and the Council President.  
279

280 Mayor K. Smith said, "Or [City Administrator Rindfleisch's] designee. As we were trying to  
281 prepare for this meeting, we had to keep rewriting the resolution because everything kept  
282 changing. In this document that we ended up with, we tried to broaden the wording so that if the  
283 City Administrator ... [We asked], what if the City Administrator is incapacitated? We tried to  
284 broaden the wording so that we could outline for our future selves what to do if the situation  
285 continues to deteriorate. That is hopefully what we did. I'm sure there is room for  
286 improvement."  
287

288 Ald. Wulf addressed the paragraph pertaining to employee travel and asked if there are any  
289 issues related to union contracts with what is being proposed.  
290

291 City Administrator Rindfleisch said, "Keep in mind the quarantines for the most part, unless it's  
292 personal reasons we're establishing a date and people still decide to take vacations that way are  
293 paid quarantines, and there would be no issues on the union side regarding that. Effectively,  
294 anyone still planning on taking a vacation could be denied at this point in time prior to. But I

Reviewed 03/23/2020 by Cari Burmaster

**Special Common Council  
of the City of Onalaska**

Thursday, March 19, 2020

8

295 would not indicate that there is any conflict under these heightened emergency circumstances.”

296

297 Ald. Nott asked if he needs to make a motion for the amendment and the Council then votes on it  
298 prior to voting for the resolution.

299

300 Motion by Ald. Nott, second by Ald. T. Smith, to amend the previous motion and state the  
301 following in Resolution No. 20-2020: *“Be it further resolved that the City of Onalaska is*  
302 *suspending all committee meetings except the March 24, 2020 Planning Commission and any*  
303 *Police and Fire Commission meetings required by statute until further notice, Common Council*  
304 *will continue to meet at its regularly scheduled time. Special Common Council meetings may be*  
305 *called.”*

306

307 Vote on the amendment:

308

309 On voice vote, motion carried.

310

311 Ald. Stevens addressed the paragraph pertaining to a 72-hour quarantine for any employee that  
312 has traveled out of the State of Wisconsin in the past five days or is currently traveling, asking if  
313 an employee who travels to the City of La Crescent, Minnesota would be expected to adhere to  
314 the 72-hour quarantine.

315

316 Mayor K. Smith said, “The resolution, as it is currently written, they could go there for essential  
317 travel, which would be to go to and from their home, medical provider, childcare facility. The  
318 way it is written right now, they could not go over there to go to Kwik Trip.”

319

320 Ald. Stevens stated he only wanted to clarify that as some individuals think of La Crescent,  
321 which is located a few minutes away from Onalaska, as part of this region.

322

323 Mayor K. Smith noted there are many variables and said it is difficult to anticipate all of them.

324

325 Original motion restated:

326

327 To approve Resolution No. 20-2020 – For the Declaration of Emergency in the City of Onalaska,  
328 as amended.

329

330 On roll call vote: Ald. Steven Nott – aye, Ald. Tom Smith – aye, Ald. Jim Olson – aye, Ald. Dan  
331 Stevens – aye, Ald. Diane Wulf – aye. Motion carried, 5-0.

332

333 **Item 4 – Closure of Building and Staffing**

334

335 City Administrator Rindfleisch read into the record a letter dated March 19, 2020: *“Dear Mayor*  
336 *Smith and Common Council members: To reduce the risk of community spread of COVID-19,*

Reviewed 03/23/2020 by Cari Burmaster

**Special Common Council  
of the City of Onalaska**

Thursday, March 19, 2020

9

337 *I'm asking under City Ordinance 5-5-5 for a Mayoral Proclamation with Council ratification to*  
338 *approve the following procedures related to City services, visitor access, and paid leave as set*  
339 *forth in the Mayoral Proclamation attached hereto:*

340

341 *[In] summary, most City services related to public visitors closed effective Wednesday, March*  
342 *18, 2020. Internal city operations and field operations will continue. Teleworking will be*  
343 *required to the extent possible for employees who can telework. Employees who cannot telework*  
344 *and whose job is focused on public visitors may be reassigned to other duties or, as a last resort,*  
345 *paid administrative leave for time they are unable to work. All employees will continue to*  
346 *accrue sick leave, and during 2020 will be allowed to have negative balances up to the amount*  
347 *the employee would earn in 2020 until such time as the leave has been earned. In addition, all*  
348 *employees will receive the equivalent of two weeks of emergency leave. Onalaska will overcome*  
349 *this by working cooperatively and supporting each other. If you have any questions or concerns,*  
350 *City Administration is always available to answer any questions you may have. Sincerely. Eric*  
351 *Rindfleisch, Onalaska City Administrator."*

352

353 Mayor K. Smith read into the record the Mayoral Proclamation for Emergency Order No. 1:

354

355 *"Whereas, the United States of America and the State of Wisconsin have affected the worldwide*  
356 *pandemic of the novel coronavirus disease COVID-19, which is a dangerous respiratory illness*  
357 *that can spread from person to person; and*

358

359 *Whereas, COVID-19 pandemic and its prevalence in the southwestern Wisconsin region and*  
360 *throughout the United States continues a Public Health Emergency; and*

361

362 *Whereas, pursuant to City of Onalaska Ordinance 5-5-5, the Mayor may proclaim, promulgate,*  
363 *and enforce orders, rules, and regulations.*

364

365 *Now, therefore, as the Mayor of the City of Onalaska, I do hereby proclaim as follows:*

366

367 *City services and public visitors who were not already in effect effective at 12:01 a.m. Friday,*  
368 *March 20, 2020:*

369 *1. Public-facing services at City facilities such as walkup counters and other public spaces*  
370 *will close public visitor access until further notice. Public visitors will be allowed in the*  
371 *Clerk's Office for absentee voting purposes.*

372 *2. City offices are still open to internal staff for internal business operations.*

373 *3. Field operations will remain in place.*

374 *4. Teleworking will be required to the extent possible for those who have the ability to*  
375 *telework in consultation with and as approved by their supervisor.*

376 *5. Managers and supervisors should pursue and accommodate workspace and meeting*  
377 *space changes that allow social distance between the employees who continue to work in*  
378 *the office.*

Reviewed 03/23/2020 by Cari Burmaster

**Special Common Council  
of the City of Onalaska**

Thursday, March 19, 2020

10

379 6. *Employees who work with the public and whose job duties are substantially reduced or*  
380 *eliminated by closing public visitor access and who cannot telework may be reassigned*  
381 *to help fulfill other essential services. Such employees who are not reassigned and*  
382 *cannot telework as determined by their Department Head and the City Administrator will*  
383 *be paid administrative leave for their time out of work. Employees on administrative*  
384 *leave must remain on call and return to service at any time during their normal work*  
385 *hours.*

386

387 *Paid leave for illness or quarantine: Our employees are our most important asset. To ensure*  
388 *they have adequate leave balances in the case of illness, quarantine, or respite:*

389 1. *Emergency Leave. All City employees, including hourly employees, will receive the*  
390 *equivalent of two weeks (80 hours) for most full-time employees of emergency leave to*  
391 *use during the duration of the Declaration of Emergency. Emergency leave balances will*  
392 *appear on their April 10, 2020 paychecks, but will be available for use during the current*  
393 *pay period. All employees should use this emergency leave only for illness, illness of a*  
394 *family member, quarantine, caregiver or respite needs in relation to the COVID-19.*  
395 *Please recognize that our community may be at risk for COVID-19 for much or all of*  
396 *2020, and this leave time may be needed to cover time of sickness or quarantine in the*  
397 *near term or the longer term in 2020.*

398 2. *Sick Leave. All employees may access their unearned 2020 projected sick leave balances*  
399 *immediately.*

400 3. *Administrative Leave. As mentioned in Item 6 above, employees who cannot perform*  
401 *their job duties, cannot telework, and have not been reassigned to other services as*  
402 *determined by their Department Head and City Administrator, will be paid*  
403 *administrative leave for their time out of work.”*  
404

405 Mayor K. Smith noted the Proclamation is dated March 19, 2020.

406

407 Motion by Ald. Stevens, second by Ald. Nott, to approve the Mayoral Proclamation for  
408 Emergency Order No. 1.

409

410 Ald. Nott told Mayor K. Smith it was his understanding the Common Council had given her the  
411 authority to do what is addressed in the Mayoral Proclamation upon the passage of Ordinance  
412 No. 20-2020.

413

414 Mayor K. Smith said, “Even when these actions take place, we still want to have the Council’s  
415 ratification as soon as possible.”

416

417 City Administrator Rindfleisch said, “You are correct for two reasons. First is a show of unity  
418 for the public to know that we’re taking this seriously, and for the employees to know that you  
419 have their back and you’re there to support them as well – not just the Mayor, but also the  
420 Council. Two, while the items are not unbudgeted, per se, since we are already budgeting to pay

Reviewed 03/23/2020 by Cari Burmaster

**Special Common Council  
of the City of Onalaska**

Thursday, March 19, 2020

11

421 staff full-time for the whole year, potentially there could become unbudgeted items which, while  
422 the resolution passed will allow to do and let us come back to Council later on, we want to make  
423 sure the Council is on board with this up front. There may be costs involved for staff, but right  
424 now I think we're good."

425

426 Ald. T. Smith asked Hope if she believes will be able to quickly address everything that is  
427 necessary.

428

429 Hope said, "Ultimately we want to do something that protects the employees. They are our  
430 biggest asset. Right now we are actually in the middle of payroll, so this is something that while  
431 it may impact this payroll, we're probably not going to have a lot implemented this payroll.  
432 We'll still handle it. We'll still get them paid. We'll get the codes set up shortly after this  
433 payroll. ... Again, it's protecting the employees and making sure they understand that we're  
434 looking out for their best interests. That's all of our Department Heads and Eric and [City  
435 Attorney] Amanda [Jackson] and all of you helping us out by doing that. There's a lot of work  
436 that Eric and Amanda have put together. ... We do appreciate it. I know this is a special meeting  
437 and things are being put on you at the last minute. We'll handle it. We have a good team, and  
438 we have people who are willing to help out. I appreciate it."

439

440 Mayor K. Smith said the challenging circumstances have brought out the best in City staff as  
441 well as the community. Mayor K. Smith also said, "I think this proclamation and giving forward  
442 the extra 80 hours ... The number one thing we're battling right now isn't illness at this moment  
443 – it's fear. And I think this goes a long way to help allay that. I appreciate your support in  
444 moving forward."

445

446 Ald. Olson asked Hope to check in with federal representatives regarding any potential future  
447 disaster-related assistance from the government.

448

449 Hope told Ald. Olson she and City Administrator Rindfleisch had received information earlier  
450 Thursday, but not had sufficient time to examine it. Hope said part of the codes she will be  
451 putting together will involve tracking, and that the Department Heads have been told to track  
452 expenses so that the city may potentially recoup some of those funds via federal aid. Hope said  
453 it is essential to set up the codes correctly so that the city possibly could recoup some of the  
454 funding.

455

456 Mayor K. Smith said, "This will cause a financial impact on the city. We've closed the Omni  
457 Center. We're supposed to be opening for registration for spring programming. We're losing all  
458 the revenue that we normally have, so there are going to be longstanding financial implications  
459 from this. Right now we're just trying to take care of our people. We're trying to make sure we  
460 can provide police services [and] fire services, and that people can vote. [We're trying to make  
461 sure] they still can have water, sewer – all the things that our community relies on us for. We're  
462 trying to make sure those services are in place and protect our people [and] their health – both

Reviewed 03/23/2020 by Cari Burmaster

**Special Common Council  
of the City of Onalaska**

Thursday, March 19, 2020

12

463 mentally and physically.”

464

465 City Administrator Rindfleisch noted there were four cases of COVID-19 a little more than one  
466 week ago in Wisconsin, and he said there are now 155 cases. City Administrator Rindfleisch  
467 referred to a news conference held by La Crosse County officials regarding a household affected  
468 by COVID-19, and he said, “The count only has one confirmed case, but the assumption is the  
469 entire household has it. Keep in mind that when we look at 155 [cases], that does not count any  
470 members that are presumed infected as well. It’s here, and it’s among us. I don’t say that to  
471 create any new fear, but I do want to bring that up because you have a remarkable team. Every  
472 employee within this organization that I’ve interacted with truly cares about providing service to  
473 this community. They love this city, and they love the organization they work for. It’s been a  
474 pleasure to work with everybody through these very trying times, but it has been trying. Make  
475 no mistake the employees are on edge. There’s concern not just for their jobs, but their own  
476 mortgage payments and their family members – both older and younger – and their mortgage and  
477 rent payments as well. In spite of all that, they’re still doing remarkable work on your behalf.  
478 Thank you all for your support. You should take pride in the job that you do as elected officials  
479 here representing truly a great organization from top down.”

480

481 Ald. Wulf referred to an email the alderpersons had received regarding the world municipalities  
482 that purchase additional supplies and make other unanticipated expenditures in 2020 associated  
483 with responding to COVID-19. Ald. Wulf asked if it will jeopardize the city’s eligibility to  
484 receive expenditure restraint program payments in 2021.

485

486 City Administrator Rindfleisch told Ald. Wulf that expenditure restraint calculations are budget  
487 year to budget year, and he said the calculations do not require going back to correct that. City  
488 Administrator Rindfleisch said, “Every year we redo the budget to make sure we, as required by  
489 the Constitution, have a balanced budget. But for that calculation that we’re looking at for future  
490 years, no, that will not be impacted by over expenses.” City Administrator Rindfleisch  
491 complemented Financial Services Director Fred Buehler, a City of Onalaska employee since  
492 1981, and this Common Council and past Common Councils for the fact the city has a healthy  
493 reserve. City Administrator Rindfleisch said the city probably can utilize that reserve for the  
494 unbudgeted expenses related to responding to COVID-19 without impacting the city’s bond  
495 rating. City Administrator Rindfleisch added, “That’s the importance of having that reserve.  
496 We’re not really putting ourselves at risk right now.”

497

498 Motion restated:

499

500 To approve the Mayoral Proclamation for Emergency Order No. 1.

501

502 On voice vote, motion carried.

503

504

Reviewed 03/23/2020 by Cari Burmaster

**Special Common Council  
of the City of Onalaska**

Thursday, March 19, 2020

13

505 **Item 5 – Closed Session**

506

507 To consider a motion to convene in Closed Session under Section 19.85(1)(e) of the Wisconsin  
508 Statutes for the purpose of deliberating or negotiating the purchasing of public properties, the  
509 investing of public funds or conducting other specified public business, whenever competitive or  
510 bargaining reasons required a closed session:

511

- 512 • Discussion and negotiation regarding the proposed Sanitary Sewer Agreement with the  
513 City of La Crosse

514

515 If any action is required in Open Session, as the result of the Closed Session, the Council will  
516 reconvene in Open Session to take the necessary action and/or continue on with the printed  
517 agenda.

518

519 Motion by Ald. Stevens, second by Ald. Olson, to convene in Closed Session.

520

521 On roll call vote: Ald. Dan Stevens – aye, Ald. Diane Wulf – aye, Ald. Steven Nott – aye, Ald.  
522 Tom Smith – aye, Ald. Jim Olson – aye. In Closed Session at 7:45 p.m.

523

524 Motion by Alderperson Diane Wulf, second by Alderperson Steven Nott to adjourn from closed  
525 session at 8:24 pm.

526

527 On roll call vote: Ald. Wulf – aye, Ald. Olson – aye, Ald. Smith – aye, Ald. Nott – aye, and Ald.  
528 Stevens – aye. Motion carried 5-0.

529

530

531 Recorded by:

532

533 Kirk Bey