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TORRANCE CITY COUNCIL – APRIL 21, 2020

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At 11:35 p.m., the City Council adjourned to Tuesday, May 5, 2020 at 7:00 p.m. for regular business commencing at 7:00 p.m. via teleconference or other electronic means.

**MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING
OF THE TORRANCE CITY COUNCIL**

1. CALL TO ORDER

The Torrance City Council convened in an adjourned regular meeting on Tuesday, April 21, 2020 at 7:00 p.m. through Web Based Tele-Conference.

ROLL CALL

Present: Councilmembers Chen, Goodrich, Griffiths, Kalani, Mattucci, and Mayor Furey

Absent: None

Present: City Manager Jackson, Assistant City Manager Chaparyan, City Attorney Sullivan, City Clerk Poirier and other staff representatives

2. FLAG SALUTE/ INVOCATION

The flag salute was led by Councilmember Chen

The non-sectarian invocation was given by Councilmember Goodrich

3. REPORT OF CITY CLERK ON POSTING OF THE AGENDA/ MOTION TO WAIVE FURTHER READING

City Clerk Poirier reported that the agenda was posted on the Public Notice Board at 3031 Torrance Boulevard and on the City's website on Friday, April 17, 2020.

MOTION: Councilmember Griffiths moved that after the City Clerk has read aloud the number and title of any resolution or ordinance on the meeting agenda, the further reading thereof shall be waived, reserving and guaranteeing to each Councilmember the right to demand the reading of any such resolution or ordinance in regular order. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Chen and passed by 6-0 vote.

4. WITHDRAWN, DEFERRED OR SUPPLEMENTAL ITEMS

No items were withdrawn or deferred. Supplemental material available for items: 9B, 9C, 9D and Oral Communications.

5. COUNCIL COMMITTEE MEETINGS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mayor Furey shared the 2020 Census is still accepting submissions online, by phone, or by mail. To submit online, please visit www.2020Census.Gov

6. COMMUNITY MATTERS

6A. CITY DEPARTMENTS RESPONSE TO COVID-19.

Recommendation of the City Manager that City Council receive and file an update from City Departments on response to COVID-19.

City Manager Jackson provided the COVID-19 update; the City of Torrance is still operating under a state of emergency. The Safer at Home order has been extended to May 15, with face coverings required when out in public places. The City will continue to provide daily updates and begin to focus on recovery and reinstatement of all city services while maintaining social distancing and public health protocols as required by local, county, state and federal directives.

Fire Chief Serna provided an overview of the COVID-19 items updated since the last Council meeting.

- 1) At-home testing for high-risk community members began April 21, 2020.
- 2) Updated hospital modeling.
- 3) Developing plans to lift station isolation.
- 4) Monitor at risk care centers
- 5) Local hospitals sanitizing PPE (hospitals are able to sanitize their own PPE)

Fire Chief Serna reported the Dashboard call volume has continued to trend down. The City of Torrance has 217 reported cases and the Safer at Home order has been extended to May 15. The community is encouraged to still practice social distancing and Safer at Home precautions.

Assistant City Manager/EOC Director Chaparyan reported the COVID-19 weekly update, the incident management strategic goals are:

- 1) Life Safety
- 2) City Stabilization
- 3) Property and Quality of Life Conservation
- 4) Agility
- 5) Recovery

Assistant City Manager/EOC Director Chaparyan reminded everyone they are providing coverage seven days week and will post daily updates. The focus is on recovery strategies once the City is safe to start reopening, including safety precautions for business.

Torrance Cares to Go Grocery delivery service has been very successful within the community serving seniors and those with special needs; this service has been extended to employees. The Farmers Market has been successful in providing services while maintaining social distancing.

Torrance Cares for seniors is a new program, which provides free COVID-19 testing to seniors who live within the City of Torrance.

The City of Torrance is focusing on recovery and reinstatement of local businesses, which will occur in phases. City staff is working on a continuity of operations plan as Los Angeles County begins to lift orders and provide creative directives in reopening sectors in a safe manner. The EOC will continue to provide daily updates and work closely with local businesses in implementing safe practices and protocols to ensure the safety of the community.

City Attorney Sullivan stated his office is focusing on providing departments with legal advice in support of their responses to the COVID-19 orders.

Economic Development Manager Fulton reported her office is managing incoming phone calls from businesses inquiring on essential versus non-essential requirements, eviction moratorium policy, health and safety protocols, and funding sources available to them. The Economic Development department has partnered with the South Bay Investment Board and Chamber of Commerce in effort to assist those who have been laid off or furloughed from work. Information will continue to be updated on the website as it becomes available.

Management Associate Wand shared employee safety and wellness is a top priority, protective equipment and cleaning supplies are available to all employees, staggered schedules are being considered and employees are instructed to sanitize workstations and common areas at 10:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. daily.

Assistant to the City Manager Hoang stated the key priority is to provide support to employees and city departments. Torrance appreciation program was launched which provides support to employees through web-based interface. They will continue to provide support through email, phone and in person when necessary. The Civil Service Division will provide a social media post to express appreciation community volunteers.

Cable and Community Relations Manager Smith reported his department shared vital information and external communications. They will continue to keep staff and the community informed with daily updates.

Communications Manager Gallo reported his department focused on restoring, deploying and repurposing technologies to assist with the city's new operating policies.

Community Development Director Santana reported the Planning and Intel Department Operation Center have compiled all pertinent information in a daily report. Virtual building inspection has begun in order to keep projects on track and the department will continue to expand additional virtual services as needed. Visual flyers have been created to aid and facilitate education for Code Enforcement, Fire Prevention Specialist, and the Police Department field interactions.

Community Service Director Jones reported his department's new operating procedures and policies in order to comply with the COVID-19 safety requirements.

Finance Director Tsao reported his department is tracking all additional costs associated with COVID-19. Finance Department has expedited procurement of personal protective equipment for employees and the community. A budget presentation will be provided as Finance returns to full operations.

Fire Chief Serna reported the department's priority continues to be the community's safety while following COVID-19 policy and procedures.

General Services Director Megerdichian reported his department has continued to provide necessary services while practicing COVID-19 safety protocols.

Police Chief Berg reported the police department has continued to serve and protect the community while adhering to the COVID-19 rules of order.

Public Works Director Bilezerian reported his department continues to provide essential services, including construction of all infrastructure projects, safe drinking water, and collecting trash, green waste and recycling.

Transit Director Turner reported several safety concerns have been addressed by modifying schedules and providing safety equipment to employees. Sanitation procedures on buses is being done regularly, a safety area has been identified around the driver's seat and a rear door entry policy has been implemented. The Transit Department will continue to prioritize the safety of its drivers and passengers.

Councilmember Mattucci questioned reopening of public facilities such as parks and beaches. He stated local small business are questioning why they are still unable to open but larger companies such as Amazon are able to operate and ship any product they desire.

City Manager Jackson replied the city is under the orders of the County of Los Angeles; these issues will have to be addressed with the county before any action can be taken.

Councilmember Griffiths agreed with Councilmember Mattucci, a plan to reopen local businesses and facilities needs to be discussed before the economy is damaged beyond repair.

MOTION: Councilmember Mattucci moved to receive and file the COVID-19 update. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Chen and passed by 6-0 vote.

8. **CONSENT CALENDAR** – None scheduled

9. **ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS**

9A. **APPROVE BUDGET PLAN THROUGH JUNE 30, 2020 AND FISCAL YEAR 2020-2021 BUDGET PHASES FOR RE-BALANCING**

Recommendation of the Finance Director that City Council approve:

- 1) Budget plan through June 30, 2020; and
- 2) Fiscal Year 2020-2021 Budget Phases for re-balancing.

City Manager Jackson introduced item 9A.

Finance Director Tsao reported major revenue impacts to the City that include the Cyber incident, which occurred on March 1, 2020, and COVID-19 Public Health Emergency, the city has been forced to operate under limited funding. The insurance coverage should cover the Cyber incident expenses. The revenue impact of COVID-19 is estimated to be a twenty million dollar short fall; these expenses have been forecasted up to September 2020, budget reductions are being implemented to reduce upcoming expenses. The Finance Department recommends City Council to approve the budget plan through June 30, 2020 and fiscal year 2020-2021 budget phases for re-balancing.

In response to Councilmember Chen, Finance Director Tsao confirmed the September 2020 forecast is an estimated cost and a prediction but may change based on the Los Angeles County Safer and Home requirements.

In response to Councilmember Mattucci, Finance Director Tsao replied the 120 positions would have to be evaluated case-by-case to determine how long they can stay vacant and what the overall impact will be. The June 30, 2020 date was selected because it is the end of the fiscal year budget.

Assistant City Manager/EOC Director Chaparyan stated retirement projections would also be evaluated to determine long-term reduction options.

In response to Councilmember Griffiths, Finance Director Tsao confirmed the budget includes the projected cost of COVID-19.

Councilmember Goodrich asked if there are instances where overtime can be more cost effective to the City. He further asked the status of the vacant Assistant Emergency Operator Management position and if volunteers can be utilized to support staff and reduce costs.

Finance Director Tsao confirmed there are rare instances in which overtime is cheaper, but on average it costs the City more. The City closely analyzes the necessity of overtime before it is approved.

Assistant City Manager Chaparyan replied to Councilmember Goodrich confirming the Assistant Operator Management position was part of the current year's budget balancing and has been placed on a two-year hold. Coverage for this position has divided amongst staff and an intern.

City Manager Jackson replied to Councilmember Goodrich's question stating due to this unusual disaster, utilizing volunteers to assist staff would not be an option due to social distancing requirements.

A member of the public spoke.

MOTION: Councilmember Chen moved to approve budget plan through June 30, 2020 and budget phases for re-balancing. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Mattucci and passed by 6-0 vote.

The Council recessed from 9:10 p.m. to 9:18 p.m.

9B. APPOINT MEMBER AND ALTERNATE MEMBER TO SOUTH BAY CITIES COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

Recommendation of the Mayor that City Council:

- 1) Concur with the appointments made by the Mayor to the South Bay Cities Council of Governments (SBCCOF); and
- 2) Direct the City Clerk to update and post Form 806 on the City's website.

MOTION: Councilmember Goodrich moved to concur with appointments to South Bay City Council Governments. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Griffiths and passed by 6-0 vote.

9C. ESTABLISH BUSINESS ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Recommendation of the City Manager that City Council establish a Business Assistance Program to offer the following:

- 1) Micro grants
- 2) Loan preparation assistance
- 3) Waive certain business license fees
- 4) Waive fire permits/inspections
- 5) Waive other permit related fees
- 6) Allow for marketing and public relations support through Cable and Community Relations
- 7) Defer payments for Transit Occupancy Tax
- 8) Defer water and trash fees for 3 payments with repayment over 12 months
- 9) No fees for reopening and inspections

Economic Development Manager Fulton stated there is \$1,029,000 in the Economic Reserve Account, which come from a year-end carry over from the General Fund. The funds will be utilized to develop a business assistance program focusing on the reopening process once the Safer at Home orders are lifted.

Councilmember Mattucci stated his concern for the limited amount of funds, and how much of the funds will be spent on staff conducting the application process. He questioned the requirements for the application; and suggested the funds might be better spent on one project versus trying to disperse several businesses or putting the funds back into the General Fund to help balance the difference.

Councilmember Chen agreed with Councilmember Mattucci and suggested staff explore further options to ensure the funding goes to businesses that are in urgent need.

Councilmember Griffiths stated he is in favor of allowing deferred payments for selected businesses. His concern is the limited amount of funds and how to equally distribute funding amongst businesses.

In response to Councilmember Kalani, Economic Development Director Fulton stated if the City partners with the Small Business Development Center they will help with administrative services and absorb those expenses. An application selection process would have to be determined by Council and staff, further evaluation would need to be conducted before funding is disbursed. A benefit to using the Office of Economic Development is they will develop a check list/loan application process to evaluate the different elements of the program.

City Manager Jackson stated the deferred payments would be an option. The waiving of certain fees can be implemented now to provide relief to businesses, as well as contacting the County in order to establish a plan to reopen businesses.

Economic Development Manager Fulton replied to Council Griffiths stating Business-licensing fees bring in \$10,000 annually.

Councilmember Kalani suggested conducting further research to verify which businesses have not received Federal assistance and have already received assistance.

Mayor Furey suggested tabling this item for further research.

MOTION: Councilmember Mattucci motion to bring back a more formal plan May 12 and contact and work with the County to reopen businesses sooner. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Griffiths and passed by 6-0 vote.

9D. ADOPT ORDINANCE ALLOWING FOR MAILED BALLOT ELECTIONS

Recommendation of the City Attorney that City Council adopt an Ordinance to add a new Article 8 of Chapter 2 of Division 1 to allow for mailed ballot elections.

City Attorney Sullivan introduced the item as a response to the vacancy due to Councilmember Chen being elected for District 2. The action tonight will allow an ordinance to conduct an all-mail ballot election. An authorization needs to be established prior to the election.

In response to Councilmember Mattucci, City Attorney Sullivan replied Council can set guidelines to have it only apply to special elections.

Mayor Furey questioned if Torrance being a Charter City was tied to the Presidential Primary Election and may not be able to run a separate all-mail ballot election.

City Attorney Sullivan replied to Councilmember Chen stating first the charter amendment needs to be voted on, then Government Code can only change once the voters ratify it and the Secretary of State accepts and files it. In response to Mayor Furey's question City Attorney Sullivan explained Torrance's elections are tied to the statewide primary direct election, this would be considered a special election. There are certain dates elections can be held; the date would have to fall within a specific date range.

Councilmember Kalani questioned if Council cannot appoint a new member within 30 days, if the Council has the option to conduct an all-mail ballot election and what the time frame would be.

City Clerk Poirier replied to Councilmember Kalani stating an all-mail ballot election would take 3 to 6 months.

MOTION: Councilmember Griffiths moved to concur with City Attorney and Adopt Ordinance No. 3868 and approve ordinance summary for publication: The motion was seconded by Councilmember Goodrich and the motion failed 3-3 vote with Councilmembers Chen, Kalani, and Mattucci voting no.

10. **HEARINGS** – None scheduled

11. **AGENCY AGENDAS** – None scheduled

12. **SECOND READING ORDINANCES** – None scheduled

13. **ORAL COMMUNICATIONS #2**

Members of the public spoke.

Councilmembers Griffiths, Kalani, and Mayor Furey spoke.

14. **CLOSED SESSION**

The City Council recessed to closed session to confer with the City Manager and the City Attorney on agenda matters listed under 14A) Conference with Legal Counsel – Anticipated Litigation (Initiation of Litigation Pursuant to California Government Code § 54956.9(d)(4)); and 14B) Conference with Labor Negotiator (California Government Code § 54957.6) 14C) Real Property – Conference with Real Property Negotiator – (California Government Code §54956.8):

Items 14B and 14C were continued to May 5, 2020. The City Council reconvened in public session at 11:32 p.m. No formal action was taken on any item considered in closed session.

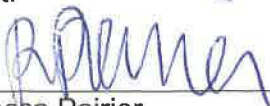
15. **ADJOURNMENT**

At 11:35 p.m., the City Council adjourned to Tuesday, May 5, 2020, for the regular meeting commencing at 7:00 p.m. In compliance with Governor Newsom's Executive Order N-29-20, which suspended portions of the Brown Act, members of the Torrance City Council and staff will participate in this meeting via teleconference and other electronic means in our continuing effort to practice social distancing to reduce the spread of COVID-19. Members of the public are encouraged to watch the meeting via CitiCABLE Channel 3 (Spectrum) and Channel 31 (Frontier),

over-the-air on 25.2, streaming on TorranceCA.Gov, Facebook @ City of Torrance CA Government, and YouTube Channel TorranceCitiCABLE. Tuesday, April 28, 2020 is a Council dark night.

MOTION: Councilmember Chen moved to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Griffiths and passed by 6-0 vote.

Attest:



Rebecca Poirier
City Clerk of the City of Torrance



Mayor of the City of Torrance

Approved on June 16, 2020