

**CHISHOLM CITY COUNCIL
SPECIAL JOINT MEETING WITH
EMERGENCY PERSONNEL
APRIL 15, 2020**

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor John Champa called the special joint meeting to order at 5:00 p.m. The meeting was held via Zoom video teleconference instead of in person due to the COVID-19 coronavirus pandemic and Minnesota Governor Walz's Executive Order to "Stay at Home".

ROLL CALL

Present: Council Members Lantz, Fountain, Vake, Varda and Mayor Champa
Absent: Council Member Campbell

Emergency Personnel Present: City Clerk-Treasurer/Administrator Bill Manney, Emergency Management Director/Fire Chief Bob Brown, Police Chief Vern Manner, Public Works Director Larry Folstad; Roland Shoen, Operation Manager of Chisholm Ambulance Service & Joe Sertich, the President & CEO of Chisholm (Longyear) Ambulance Service

Others Present: Deputy Clerk Eileen Zah, Building Official Mandy Galli, Consultant Engineer Jim Johnson, Library Supervisor Katie Christenson, Recreation Director Tammy Nevalainen, Administrative Assistant Margaret Gornick & Marie Tolonen with the Chisholm Tribune Press

ADOPT THE AGENDA

Moved by Councilor Fountain and supported by Councilor Lantz to adopt the Agenda as presented.

Voting Aye: All

Motion Carried

**GENERAL DISCUSSION & EMERGENCY PLANNING
FOR THE COVID-19 CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC**

Mayor Champa opened the meeting by mentioning what is going on with the COVID-19 coronavirus pandemic in other cities & states such as New York, California, Seattle, New Orleans and the Twin Cities area in Minnesota. He feels that what we are doing locally and in Minnesota is helping a little bit when you compare the statistics that Minnesota currently has to the statistics of other states. He also said if things ramp up and the numbers start rising with more cases of coronavirus, the Chisholm City Council members, the City staff, Fire & Police Department members will be here to partner with and help the ambulance crew in any way that they can. Administrator Manney is available at any time for assistance. The main reason the Mayor called this meeting was to have an open discussion to see what the City Council members, the Emergency Response Team & City staff can do as a community.

Joe Sertich, President & CEO of the Chisholm Ambulance Service, explained that one of the first things that he, Roland Shoen & Administrator Bill Manney did was to apply for a COVID-19 Emergency Fund grant from the Minnesota Department of Health. They were awarded \$26,111.00, the full amount of the grant. The grant funds can be used for things such as additional pagers, cost of personal protective equipment, additional cost for training and extra personnel time related to COVID-19. The ambulance crew is preparing for the worst-case scenario, which would be an outbreak of COVID-19. When responding to a call, the ambulance crew treats each call as if it were a potential COVID-19 case. He explained that one emergency responder is equipped with a respirator and N95 mask & wears protective gear when entering a residence. This responder conducts a screening for potential symptoms of the virus. The other ambulance personnel will wait outside of the residence while the screening is being conducted. Three things the ambulance service has been focusing on is:

1) Protocols

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| A. Distancing (home with pagers) | B. Zoom meetings (recorded) |
| C. EMS Manager (communication) | D. Scout on each call (minimize risk to staff) |

2) Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

A. Conservation (masks are stored in a clean environment) B. Reuse (only reusing N95 respirators) C. Inventories (they have 150 isolation gowns & 150 on order; over 450 N95 masks and 1,000 pairs of gloves in each size). The Chisholm Ambulance continues to report its inventory of N95 masks, gloves, shields and gowns to the Minnesota Department of Health.

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3) Staffing/Vehicles

A. Current Staff (monitors symptoms/underlying conditions) B. Auxiliary Staff (they need 10 people to assist in the event of a breakout). C. Pagers (need extra for auxiliary staff) D. Need two additional vehicles E. Communication from ambulance hall.

Joe stated the Declaration of Peacetime Emergency by Governor Tim Walz allows the Chisholm Ambulance Service to use its own judgement and is not bound to the rules it normally operates under. Triage and other resources that are not normally used are now allowed, due to the peacetime declaration. Each member of the thirteen (13) member ambulance crew has been issued a personal respirator with N95 masks. The ambulance crew has held virtual meetings via Zoom for the past five weeks in which their medical advisor Dr. William Drurie has participated. Joe is available 24/7/ 365 days a year and his phone number is (218) 969-5239 if anyone has any comments or questions.

- Roland Shoen, Operation Manager of the Chisholm Ambulance Service reported they are currently operating under normal conditions while practicing distancing. The scout goes in and puts a mask on the patient, takes their temperature to check for a fever and symptoms of COVID-19. They have a screening form that they complete. If a person shows signs of COVID-19, they will transfer them with only one person in the back of the rig. The rig is specially equipped. They notify the staff at the UCMC hospital of the situation. As of today, the hospital in Hibbing said they do not have any record of anyone testing positive for COVID-19. He is the EMS manager and he can send messages to the entire ambulance crew. He communicates regularly with Joe & Tony Sertich. Their goal is to reduce the anxiety of their staff. Roland said he is not concerned with the amount of PPE that they currently have. They are recruiting auxiliary staff to assist the ambulance crew. They have trained seven people so far on the ambulance equipment and the ambulance rigs. He will get information out at a later date on how to apply for an auxiliary position. The auxiliary staff is under the same regulations as the regular EMT's and must monitor their temperature daily. He said they will follow normal protocols until they can't follow them anymore. The ambulance service is working with the City to explore the possibility of using alternative vehicles that could be used to transport patients if necessary. Measures would be taken to provide a barrier between the passenger portion of such vehicles from the driver and the driver would be required to wear an N95 mask to prevent transmission of the coronavirus. Any vehicle used to transport patients with COVID-19 would need to be sanitized afterwards.
- Emergency Management Director/ Fire Chief Bob Brown presented slides to the group in attendance at the virtual video conference. The slides explained the top three things that the Emergency Manager focuses on: 1) Past Events 2) Hazard Mitigation and 3) Current Events. The slides also explained their Mission: 1) Prevent Harm 2) Survive and 3) Be Nice. As the Emergency Management Director, Bob has been involved in past events such as a flooding issue in the mid 1990's where the water level in Chisholm exceeded the level of Longyear Lake and it flooded many homes. They walked through ankle deep water in the Fire Hall during the 100-year flood due to rainfall. The next year they experienced a 200-year flood due to rain fall. During this time they experienced up to 20 calls per hour and would prioritize these calls. The 2nd Street storm sewer project helped alleviate future flooding issues. Snow storms are other emergencies that people go through. He was also involved when there were missing persons in the area. Another major issue they have are wild land fires, they work with the DNR & Forest Service on these. They have back-up generators to be used for some of the City buildings during emergencies and they have the notification system to alert residents. They have joint trainings with other departments to prepare for emergencies and National Incident Management System (NIMS) training. They have conference calls each week with other agencies and receive emails from Dewey Johnson with St. Louis County. He is working with Roland on recruiting and training auxiliary drivers for the ambulance crew. State teams are in place that could assist them but may not be able to at this time due to COVID-19 and Governor Walz Executive Orders to "Stay at Home". He will check with the DNR on burn permits for people to apply for if they would like to burn brush. These fires can become an issue if the fires get away from them. He will keep Deputy Clerk Eileen Zah informed if there is a need to apply for funds from FEMA. The Fire Department is doing things differently now, they have no more than 4 people

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in the Fire Hall at one time due to COVID-19. They are trying to eliminate any contact with the public. They are communicating with their mutual aid partners and are staying put as much as possible unless they are really needed. The Fire Department hosted their first Zoom meeting last week. They have received some free training webinars from Central Lakes College. They have protocol in place for responding to calls and are keeping up with their personal protective equipment. Fire Chaplain Steve Breitbarth personally called each individual from the Ambulance Service and Fire Department to see how they are doing. They are practicing physical distancing instead of social distancing. The Fire Department gets called to many chaotic events. This is when their Mission is most important and that is to: 1) Prevent Harm 2) Survive and 3) Be Nice.

- Mayor Champa said he feels really good after having this meeting and feels we have a very qualified staff that is preparing and is using forward thinking as to what could happen. He asked about mutual aid among the communities. Joe responded that mutual aid is currently in place and the ambulance service is working closely with Jim in Buhl and with Hibbing. Roland said he read that Minnesota has one of the lowest transmission rates of COVID-19 in the United States.
- Council Member April Fountain asked what they would do in Chisholm if the Memorial Building in Hibbing filled up with patients and our citizens needed a place to go. Joe responded that he does not anticipate this happening and would be more concerned that they would not have the staff to handle this type of situation if it were to happen. He said that he would be in contact with the Chisholm Inn & Suites to ask if they could use some rooms in this facility if they needed to isolate any of their staff.
- Public Works Supervisor Larry Folstad received a phone call today from a vendor that said they have 2000 masks available for \$1.00 each. They are not the N95 masks but are more of a work mask. Roland replied that they are probably not the quality of masks for the first responder crews and he did not feel there was a need to order these at this time. Bill Manney said that they are the ELM100 masks and Roland said they may work for the City crew members to wear in public.
- Council Member Jim Varda asked if the Chisholm arena staff was prepared to make ice if they needed to. Larry said he was in the arena today and it was very cold in the arena. He felt they would be prepared to make ice if needed.
- Mayor John Champa thanked Roland, Bob & Joe for the information that they provided at the meeting and expressed his appreciation for everything that they are doing.

ADJOURN

Moved by Councilor Vake and supported by Councilor Varda to adjourn the joint meeting at 6:32 p.m.

Voting Aye: All

Motion Carried

/s/ John A. Champa
Mayor

Attest:

/s/ William Manney
City Clerk-Treasurer/Administrator