

**CITY OF ALAMOGORDO, NEW MEXICO
CITY COMMISSION EMERGENCY MEETING MINUTES
3:00 P.M., COMMISSION CHAMBERS
March 23, 2020**

**RICHARD BOSS, MAYOR
SHARON McDONALD, COMMISSIONER
JOSH RARDIN, COMMISSIONER
DUSTY WRIGHT, COMMISSIONER
SUSAN PAYNE, COMMISSIONER**

**NADIA SIKES, MAYOR PRO-TEM
JASON BALDWIN, COMMISSIONER
BRIAN CESAR, CITY MANAGER
PETRIA BENGOCHEA, CITY ATTORNEY
RACHEL HUGHS, CITY CLERK**

CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL / INVOCATION / PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mayor Boss called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m. Roll Call was taken by the City Clerk. City Clerk Hughs announced there was a quorum present. Invocation was given by Commissioner Payne and the Pledge of Allegiance was led by Commissioner Wright.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Mayor Pro-Tem Sikes moved to approve the agenda.
Commissioner Payne seconded the motion. Motion carried with a vote of 7-0-0.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Consider, and act upon, Resolution 2020-23, a Resolution Declaring a State of Emergency in Alamogordo, New Mexico. (Brian Cesar, City Manager and Petria Bengoechea, City Attorney) (Roll Call Vote Required)

City Manager Cesar explained the State of Emergency opens the City up for State and FEMA funding. He said right now, with the workforce that is at home waiting to come back in, it is costing the City \$290,474 a week. He said the application will be extended if they still have issues with the virus and things are still closed. He said the initial application is going into April and that is an estimated cost to the City of a little over \$1.7 million dollars. They will be looking to FEMA and Homeland Security to recoup some of these funds, and that is what this Resolution is for.

Laurie Anderson from Otero County Economic Development said she has had 275 calls regarding what businesses are going to do, some may have to shut down for good. She said there are other people that are concerned about maintaining the qualified, certified employees that have been with these companies for years. She said things are changing every single day and unfortunately the programs are not being rolled out as quickly as they want them too. She said they have a list of different programs they have available for people that are unemployed, business owners and how they can apply for federal loans through the New Mexico Economic Development Department. She said they are trying to keep their people and the community involved and up to date as the information becomes available to them. She said whoever applies for these loans and grants, they are looking at three weeks for approval and then looking at another five days to have that check issued. She spoke with some of the bigger businesses today such as PreCheck who has invested a lot of money in equipment and now have people working at home. She was also able to talk to Mr. Cardella who has between 180 and 200 employees right now. She said the needs of his contract are bigger than before, so he has the need to hire more people. She received a call from Mr. Cardella about 30 minutes ago and he is concerned about what the status is going to be after the Governor makes her announcement, so they are looking at possibly 180 to 200 people that might not have a job tomorrow or put on hold. She said they need to figure out strategies on how to keep on working. She also spoke to a chiropractor who said he was losing 50 to 60 percent of his business and if it does not change, he is going to have to start sending people home. She said this is hitting several industries. She said they need to be concerned, and they need to figure out how they can help. She said between Otero County Economic Development, the

Chamber of Commerce and the Small Business Center they are trying to be the solution to these businesses and to provide those opportunities.

Mayor Boss asked her if the unemployment office is expediting applicants. She said that is correct. Mayor Boss said there is a very short time and a minimum of \$400 and something. Ms. Anderson answered \$461, even if your employer cuts your hours, Workforce Solutions will make up the difference. Mayor Boss said if Congress can ever get their act together, they are going to send money to the people.

G.B. Oliver with the Alamogordo Chamber of Commerce said there are businesses that have already closed. He said Albertson's and Wal-Mart is hiring right now. He said the problem is that businesses don't know what the future holds, so they don't know what their needs are and where they need to go. He said they have to stop the panic and they have to get the correct information out. He said they met with all the grocery stores and they will start providing daily information which the Chamber will start putting on their website to try and alleviate concerns. He said he has not heard anything that gives him hope for businesses. He said for a business owner, why add \$50,000 to \$100,000 of debt when they have no idea what the future is going to look like. They will be meeting with the banks to see where they will be. The banks are dependent on FDIC. They would like to know if the FDIC is going to waive some of those requirements because the first thing they look at is a person's cash flow and right now there is no cash flow. He said this community will come together and we will be stronger as a community when this is over.

Mayor Pro-Tem Sikes asked Mr. Oliver if anyone has applied for those loans. He nodded his head yes and said that non-profits can also go in. He said they have their organization set up at their homes, they will answer every phone call, every email and they are going to work 24 hours to do whatever they can for this business community.

Mayor Boss said grocery stores are having a bonanza, they will not shut down, and there has been no claims of any food shortage. Mr. Oliver said distribution points are 85 percent filled up. He also said until they get to the other side of this, they will give it everything they've got.

Mayor Pro-Tem Sikes moved to approve.

Commissioner McDonald seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote was taken.

Motion carried with a vote of 7-0-0.

2. Consider, and act upon, giving Mayor Richard Boss permission to sign a letter on behalf of the Commission to the New Mexico State Legislature regarding taxes. (Brian Cesar, City Manager and Stephanie Hernandez, Assistant City Manager)

City Manager Cesar said last week, all the Mayors in New Mexico were invited to participate in a conference call with Representatives from the State and the Municipal League. He said there wasn't a lot of new information coming from the State because everything has been changing almost daily but the Governor has indicated that she is going to call a Special Session of the Legislature, primarily due to the drop in oil prices. He said more than likely, we in Alamogordo will see the Capital Outlay that was approved, get clawed back, but that may not be enough to fill the holes in the State's budget. He said the Municipal League will be asking everyone to contact the legislators in their area about the internet tax sales, the delay of enacting the next 6 percent of the Hold Harmless and a few other items the Municipal League will add on. He said they do not have a letter generated at this point, but staff is asking is for the Commission to give authorization to the Mayor to sign that letter on behalf of the City and the Commission when they get that information.

Commissioner Rardin said he has no problem giving authorization but asked that a copy of the letter be sent to each of the Commissioner prior to it being sent. City Manager Cesar said yes.

Mayor Boss said gross receipts taxes (GRT) and lodger's tax has taken a big hit. City Manager Cesar said most of what City government does is based off the GRT. Mayor Boss said exactly, that is the primary source of revenue.

Mayor Pro-Tem Sikes asked if any of the two items that they have acted on today, would interfere with their budget hearings. City Manager Cesar said that is a moving target right now. This week staff will be meeting to go back over the budget and the new projections. He said they are taking the GRT projections and reducing it by 25 percent and take the projections for lodger's tax down by 50 percent. Depending on what the Governor orders today, that may change, and Finance may need to re-project those numbers. He has been hearing that there may be extensions to the State process on timelines, but they just don't have anything definite at this time, so it may impact the budget hearings. Those hearings may be pushed out a little bit, as this keeps evolving.

Mayor Boss asked about gross receipts taxes attributable to out of state sales like Amazon. City Manager Cesar said the State has made those distributions and the new way they are going to do distributions will be based on population. The Legislators could pass a bill and the Governor could sign it, where those revenues are not sent to the Counties and Municipalities but instead fill the holes in the State budget. Mayor Boss said hopefully they will recognize the holes municipalities have in their budgets. City Manager Cesar said that is the reason the Municipal League is encouraging the Counties and Municipalities to send these letters to the Legislators.

Mayor Pro-Tem Sikes moved to approve.

Commissioner Rardin asked if it would be more effective if all seven of the Commission signed it. City Attorney Bengoechea said this is giving the Mayor permission to sign on behalf of the Commission.

**Commissioner Rardin seconded the motion.
Motion carried with a vote of 7-0-0.**

Mayor Pro-Tem Sikes asked if there has ever been a State of Emergency in the City of Alamogordo. City Manager Cesar said it will be his fifth time, but it has always been for a natural disaster. He also said for something like this he believes it is the first time.

**Commissioner Rardin moved to adjourn at 3:28 p.m.
Commissioner Payne seconded the motion.
Motion carried with a vote of 7-0-0**

ADJOURNMENT



ATTEST:


City Clerk Rachel Hughes


Mayor Richard Boss

(Prepared by Eric Barraza, Deputy Clerk)
Approved at the Special Meeting held on April 23, 2020.