

**MINUTES**  
**Town of Crested Butte**  
**Special Town Council Meeting**  
**Monday, April 27, 2020**

Mayor Schmidt called the meeting to order at 6:39PM.

Council Members Present: Will Dujardin, Candice Bradley, Chris Haver, Mallika Magner, Laura Mitchell, and Mona Merrill

Stanford took a roll call of Council members at the beginning of the meeting. All of the Council members connected and participated in the meeting via Zoom.

Staff Present: Town Attorneys Barbara Green and John Sullivan, Town Manager Dara MacDonald, Parks and Recreation Director Janna Hansen, Public Works Director Shea Earley, Chief Marshal Mike Reily, and Town Clerk Lynelle Stanford

Finance Director Rob Zillioux (for part of the meeting)

Everyone connected and participated in the meeting via Zoom, and MacDonald, Stanford, and Zillioux were present in Council Chambers.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Schmidt added a discussion on the update of the County's orders and a report from Haver regarding the Recovery Subcommittee to the agenda.

Dujardin moved and Haver seconded a motion to approve the agenda with the addition of two items. A roll call vote was taken with all voting, "Yes." **Motion passed unanimously.**

**OLD BUSINESS**

**1) Updated Financial Forecast and Discussion.**

Zillioux stated March sales tax collections were 50% below last year. Year to date, Town was 25% below 2019. RETT through March had been strong, but nothing had been sold in the near term. Zillioux pointed out the short-term rental tax collections were down. Everything was down, except for utilities. It was imperative to shop locally.

Zillioux reminded the Council that non-essential expenses were delayed. Town purchases and services, not yet contracted, should be sourced locally when possible. Town would not begin any new affordable housing or CAP projects until local economics stabilized.

**NEW BUSINESS**

## **1) Review of the Eighth Public Health Order.**

MacDonald reported that the health order allowed groups to get bigger. Restaurants would maintain status quo. Restrictions would be loosened on retail and personal services. There would still be no tourism. The order focused on loosening up a little bit to understand how the virus would spread under relaxed conditions. Next, MacDonald spoke regarding Phase 2, estimated for July and August. Phase 3 was still undetermined in the guidelines. She described the situation as quite fluid.

## **2) Recovery Team Update from Chris Haver.**

Haver informed the Council that the Recovery Team was reporting to the OVLC. Cathie Pagano had taken over in the past few weeks. They were broken down into three areas: business, health and human services, and civic and institutions. He described it as a continuous process. Dujardin added the OVLC would meet weekly on Thursdays. Haver implored the community to follow the health guidelines. Actions could be impactful on the future of Town this summer. Dujardin recognized the best minds in the local community were on it. He reminded the Council they were trying to build capacity to deal with future outbreaks.

Magner questioned whether Town could be on the side of aggressively opening, rather than squarely in the middle. Merrill did not think people would come here, even if fully open. Haver identified the goal was opening in a way that would give people confidence in Crested Butte. Dujardin did not think Town needed to be more or less aggressive than what Joni Reynolds directed. Schmidt identified the concern of things getting busier in neighboring counties, related to being able to transfer patients from the hospital in Gunnison. MacDonald clarified Town could not be more permissive than the County or the State, but Town could be more restrictive.

Schmidt stated Town was in the same boat as the businesses, pertaining to a question on Town refunding short-term rental fees. Priscila Palhava expounded on her question. She would appreciate help with supplies to help in safely opening. Magner pointed out Council needed to be careful with reserves. Sasa Watt disagreed that people would not be coming to Town, if possible, in June. Haver hoped Crested Butte could be a perfect solution for people.

Schmidt acknowledged people and businesses that were providing assistance and food. He thanked everyone that had been helping. There was a question on the campground closures. Schmidt affirmed the Forest Service had been a part of the EOC meetings. The discussion became focused on the wearing of masks. Reily stated the most important aspect was education. He thought peer pressure was a great motivator. Reily said business owners could make their own rules for their businesses. Dujardin read comments from the chat from Kent Cowherd and Palhava. Hansen reported on what she expected concerning the parks. Statistics on the effectiveness of masks were cited. The Council would discuss requiring and making masks mandatory at their next meeting.

### **3) Discussion on a Temporary Modification to the Purchasing Policy.**

Schmidt reviewed the current purchasing policy. Zillioux reported that Staff recommended four modifications listed in the staff report, to the purchasing policy in an effort to best distribute business in the community. The policy did not mean Town would spend beyond the budget. Zillioux asked for Council's support to bring forward a modification to the purchasing policy in a resolution. The Council did not voice any objections, and Staff would draft a resolution for the meeting next Monday.

### **4) Discussion on a Grant and/or Loan Program for Local Financial Relief.**

Haver recused himself as a small business owner that could qualify. Bradley recused herself, too. Haver and Bradley turned their video cameras off and muted themselves.

Zillioux explained the intention was to pull \$100,000 from the General Fund reserves for a grant program for small businesses. \$2,500 would be the maximum reward. Businesses would need to demonstrate plans to open, in concert with Gunnison County's reopening plan. Grants would be made on a first come, first serve basis. The goal was to provide immediate support to businesses. Zillioux outlined criteria for eligibility. Evidence of sustainability would be required. Also, businesses would need to provide a letter from the landlord or mortgage holder. The application deadline would be May 8<sup>th</sup>.

Zillioux was hesitant to add more money to the pool. He was concerned about the future. Dujardin suggested the cap of \$2,500 was really low. He asked for clarification on who was eligible. Zillioux wanted to see what would happen with the amount of \$100,000, capped at \$2,500 for each business. Magner wanted to give Zillioux flexibility in administering the rules. Schmidt asked about money to help to back up mortgage payments on deed-restricted housing. His thought was it cost less to cover mortgage payments compared to getting deed restrictions. Zillioux said business owners were hurting more than individuals in many cases. Magner and Bradley would talk about grant ideas to help individuals. Dujardin and MacDonald acknowledged comments from people in the chat. Schmidt explained why the Town could not waive water and sewer fees.

Magner moved and Dujardin seconded a motion to approve the expenditure of \$100,000 for the grant program outlined by Rob Zillioux. A roll call vote was taken with all voting, "Yes," except for Haver and Bradley, who had recused themselves and did not vote. **Motion passed unanimously.**

### **5) Discussion on a Potential Summer Closure of Elk Avenue to Vehicle Traffic to Encourage Social Distancing and Commerce.**

Schmidt referred to a survey put out by The Chamber. MacDonald made it clear they were not asking for a decision tonight. It was the beginning of an ongoing conversation if the Council wanted to pursue. She recommended the Council not delve into the details. MacDonald identified the intention was whether and how Town could use public

property to assist businesses in opening up by providing sufficient distance between customers. Staff recommended a travel lane on Elk Avenue, approximately 16 feet wide, down the center. MacDonald outlined details and considerations that would need to be decided upon. MacDonald emphasized the intent was not to create a festival atmosphere; it was to create more space between people. Inevitably there would be parking impacts on neighborhoods.

Schmidt asked about blocking off the sides of 3<sup>rd</sup> Street. Magner stated the summer of 2020 would be unlike any other summer. They were looking at creative steps to help the business community. She wanted to look at it as a discrete, specific short-term solution to help businesses through the current crises. Schmidt said The Chamber survey was half and half, and some people did not think it would help the businesses this summer. Dujardin thought it was putting a wrench in people's recovery plans. A parking plan needed to be in place before going down this route. He was concerned they were not taking the long-view approach and were reacting to COVID-19. Haver saw comments in the survey as stumbling blocks for him. He shared roadblocks that were identified. Mitchell recognized that businesses had spent money on parking they could not use. The idea needed to be better vetted. Bradley identified the idea came from the restaurant subgroup, and they talked about it again in the retail group. She thought she was doing her homework because it was well accepted in both of the groups. She was still in favor of investigating.

Ashley UpChurch reported on survey results. Schmidt read comments from Shaun Horne, Carrie Jo Chernoff, Kent Cowherd, Jason White, Kim Raines, Mike Knoll, and Priscila Palhava, from chat.

Darcy Perkins

- She shared information she had. People wanted to be safe wherever they went. People would change behaviors. The safest place to be was outdoors. This would give people a change to feel safe and enjoy shopping and dining in a different way. It was a different customer now.

UpChurch would continue the survey and could add to the live document until the meeting next Monday.

Priscila Palhava

- Town had been too hard on businesses regarding the sidewalks.
- The plan seemed really ambitious.
- She wanted workers to be taken care of. They were driving to work.
- Losing the parking was really bad for businesses.
- Outdoor space was needed on Elk Avenue.

Shaun Horne

- Certain retail merchandise did not spill out on the street easily.
- Do not throw the whole town under the bus for restaurants in a tough position.

Aaron Tomcak - Mountain Spirits Liquors

- Every time the block is closed, his sales go down.
- He cited concerns with liquor in the streets.
- He asked about people strolling down Elk Avenue with alcoholic beverages.

Carrie Jo Chernoff - Business located at 123 Elk

- They were really impacted with parking even when the rest of Elk Avenue was free.
- She saw it (closure of a main street) happen in another town, and it became a ghost town.

Erica Woodward

- She would have no idea how a retail store would deal with the elements.

Magner reminded that using the expanded area would be voluntary. Dujardin was not comfortable with it now. He would need to see a hybrid solution. Haver wanted more feedback from the restaurants, retail, and service subgroups. Chernoff wondered if it was what the Town should spend resources on during this time. Mitchell agreed with Chernoff.

Schmidt stated that the topic would be added to the agenda for discussion at the next meeting. MacDonald asked what the purpose was of the agenda item for next Monday. Magner said they were hoping for more people in Town. Haver agreed. Merrill thought it would be good to hear more from restaurants and retail and see where the restrictions would be in a week. MacDonald cited limitations that would take lead-time, such as ordering and installing signage. She asked the Council to keep in mind Phase 2.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

Mayor Schmidt adjourned the meeting at 9:28PM.

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James A. Schmidt, Mayor

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Lynelle Stanford, Town Clerk (SEAL)