

COLDWATER CITY COUNCIL
SPECIAL MEETING

Monday, May 18, 2020 at 6:00 p.m.

The governing body of the City of Coldwater met in special session for the purpose of discussing the ballfields, opening of the lake and the pool during the COVID-19 Pandemic, with the following present: Mayor Penny Bruckner, Council members Renee Blasi, Mike Bushnell, Robert Cardoza, Clela Lampe and Ashta Rosson, Public Works Director Danny Shaw, Lake Co-Managers Don and Debbie Dutton, Chief of Police Devon Duffield and City Clerk Kristal Sherman.

Visitors included: Mike Lehl, Brock Loesch, Chris Hurd, Lynn German, Erin Harding, Chris Bruckner, Leah and Ed Grover, Lana Darr, Mike Jellison, Jerri McKnight, Kyle Hoffman, Dave Gerstner, Sue Little, Jason Roberts, Gene Pope, Shannon Thompson, Jennifer King, Robert and Teri Sullivan

Mayor Bruckner called the special meeting to order.

Mike Jellison passed around a sheet that gave the history of the current ballfields, in July 1996 it was proposed to the City to help build a new ballfield. The City suggested at that time to start a ballfield committee which he said he was asked to join in 1998. Mike said he has been involved in one way or another with the ballfields ever since, and is currently on the Coldwater-Wilmore Recreation board. He said that “financially the city has backed out to help out, but labor-wise Danny is always available to help out.” He also said the ballfields are getting in pretty bad shape which is why the recreation commission hired a guy to work one of the fields for \$10,000.00 and at this time is all they can afford to do. Mike said he is asking the City to pay for the spraying bill, the total is around \$3,900.00. Mike Bushnell told Mike Jellison it’s not that the city isn’t against helping out the ballfields, we need to know these costs at a certain time of year to get it included in the budget.

Mayor Bruckner told the council the main reason for the special meeting was to discuss opening up the lake now that the Governor has gone to Phase 1.5 instead of Phase 2. She asked for anyone that had an opinion to please speak up and let the council know. Chris Hurd, manager of Venture Foods, said he is still having trouble getting his regular orders, but is keeping the grocery store mostly stocked and said he’s all for opening up the lake. Chris added that he thought they were going to lose the grocery store last year because so many citizens were shopping out of town, he said it has made a big difference the last few months with everyone shopping local. Erin Harding, manager of Dollar General, said she feels the same about opening up, but says she would have a problem keeping up with cleaning on the weekends when the store is full of lake visitors. Dave Gerstner, owner of Dave’s Pizza, said he’s worried about the long-term if we keep turning lake people away, they won’t come back. Dave also said we all know we’ve had Dodge City people come through here, he has seen cars with Ford County tags in front of his business, he’s all for opening the lake to everyone with no restrictions. Sue Little, owner of Ozzie Bakes, said she agrees with Dave, she’s had people in her business from out-of-town, she said she’s for opening up the lake. Teri and Robert Sullivan from Pratt, said they have been coming to the lake ever since it opened and does not see why they can’t come to the lake since they live in Pratt. Teri said she sees lots of people from Comanche County going to Pratt to shop so it doesn’t make sense to keep restricting them from coming down here, she said they spend their money here in our stores when they come to camp. Lynn German told the council he lives at the lake and has a lot of family from Ford and Finney County area that comes to the lake as well. He agrees that we need to open the lake for the sake of the businesses and the economy of our City, he said “if this keeps up, we’re going to have a ghost town and lose a lot of people from the lake.” Council member Clela Lampe made a motion to completely open up the lake, back to normal operation immediately, allowing everyone to come with no restrictions. The motion was seconded by Ashta and the motion carried, there was no one opposed. The crowd applauded the council’s decision. The council asked Lake Manager Don Dutton if he was ok with opening up all the “primitive” bathrooms, he said he was and has the proper equipment to clean the bathrooms, telling them he cleans them now like he always has in the past, but

knows he will need to clean them more often. The council told Don if he needs some extra help with that job to let them know and they'll get someone hired to help out. After discussing the lake operation with Don and Danny, the council asked Sheriff Mike Lehl and Chief of Police Devon Duffield to return to the meeting.....they proceeded to tell them when the people from Dodge City congregate on the west side, they don't always use the bathroom facilities and want them ejected from the lake when that happens. Sheriff Lehl suggested they post the ordinance in Spanish as well as English so you'll have something to show them when it happens.

The council discussed the pandemic with Representative Kyle Hoffman, who told them Thursday will be a big day in Topeka. He said the legislature is reconvening that day to discuss the state moving forward and should have more of an idea about how they're going to move forward by Friday. The council thanked Kyle for coming to the meeting.

Mayor Bruckner asked the council if they still wanted to move forward with opening the pool since the Governor added Phase 1.5 instead of moving to Phase 2 today. The council all agreed that the pool should open on June 1st which will be the first day of Phase 2. City Clerk, Kristal Sherman asked the council their feeling on moving all the lifeguard pay to \$9.00 per hour to coincide with Protection's lifeguard pay since they will probably be sharing lifeguards over the summer. Mike made a motion to raise the lifeguard pay to \$9.00 per hour for all lifeguards, seconded by Cleta and the motion carried.

With no further business presented, Cleta made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:30 p.m., seconded by Robert and the motion carried.