



Inter Department Correspondence Sheet

TO: Members of Council

FROM: Richard Allan Bull, City Clerk

COPIES TO: \_\_\_\_\_

SUBJECT: Minutes of City Council Meeting

February 11, 2021

Attached are the minutes from the City Council Meeting held on February 2, 2021.

Richard Allan Bull  
City Clerk

**NORFOLK, VIRGINIA**

**MEETING OF COUNCIL**

**TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 2, 2021**

Mayor Alexander, called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m. and announced This meeting of the Norfolk City Council is being held by electronic communication means pursuant to Item 4-0.01 in House Bill 30 (Chapter 1289) of the 2020 Session.

The purpose of this meeting is to discuss or transact the business statutorily required or necessary to continue operations of this public body and the discharge of its lawful purposes, duties, and responsibilities.

This meeting will be conducted by the following electronic communication means: telephonically and electronically through WebEx. The public may participate by providing their comments in email to the Clerk's Office in advance of the hearing or by WebEx phone or video.

The members of the Council were present by remote/electronic WebEx: Mrs. Courtney R. Doyle, Mrs. Mamie B. Johnson, Mrs. Andria P. McClellan, Ms. Danica Royster, Mr. Tommy Smigiel, and Mr. Martin Thomas Jr. Mr. Paul R. Riddick attended telephonically, and Mayor Kenneth Cooper Alexander attended in person.

**CLOSED SESSION**

Motion for closed session was approved for purposes which are set out in **Clause 7** of subsection (A) of **Section 2.2-3711** of the Virginia Freedom of Information Act, as amended:

- (7) Consultation with legal counsel where such consultation or briefing in an open meeting would adversely affect negotiating posture of the public body.

Yes: Doyle, Johnson, McClellan, Riddick, Royster, Smigiel, Thomas and Alexander.

No: None.

**AGENDA**

**Covid-19 Vaccination Update**

Presenter: Dr. Demetria Lindsay, District Director, Department of Public Health (NDPH)

Dr. Lindsay stated that several streams of vaccine are coming into the state. Virginia receives direct allocation of vaccine from the federal level. Dr. Lindsay presented a slide showing the breakdown of the current allocation for Virginia. A second stream of vaccine is going to two pharmacies, CVS and Walgreens. That vaccine is allocated to the Federal

Pharmacy Partnership and it is directed towards vaccination of individuals in long-term care and assisted living facilities.

Dr. Lindsay next presented a map showing vaccine doses received in Virginia by health district. Norfolk received 74,800 doses. A large quantity of shipments of vaccines went to local hospitals and healthcare systems and was distributed from there. Most of the vaccine going to the healthcare systems has been from Pfizer, which has significant challenges in terms of storage and handling. The Pfizer vaccine requires ultra-cold temperatures and is fragile and must be handled gently.

The healthcare systems have much of the 1A group with hospital workers being the first to receive vaccine. Following that, health districts began to receive smaller amounts, and in recent weeks Norfolk has started to receive a set dose. The Norfolk area receives 2,775 doses weekly. For the entire state, we have had a range of 100-to-110,000 doses coming in weekly and that is distributed statewide with all jurisdictions in the state. Currently with recent changes, the distribution for the various health districts is coming to the health department, but it has to be shared among all partners. Dr. Lindsay provided a slide showing how many vaccinations have been administered across the state. Norfolk has administered 11,759 doses. Citizens fully vaccinated: 2,275 Rate per 100,000: 4,844

#### Council concerns:

Councilman Smigiel noted as an example, a Norfolk teacher or healthcare worker getting a vaccine in Norfolk might in fact be a resident of Virginia Beach. He asked, are we tracking whether the vaccine is going to Norfolk residents? Dr. Lindsay answered no, and she added the same situation is true for Chesapeake, Virginia Beach, Hampton, etc. They are vaccinating teachers and healthcare workers who work in their city, but in fact live in another city.

Councilman Smigiel stated Norfolk citizens are very frustrated. He stated that he too is frustrated he cannot share with constituents the exact number of Norfolk residents getting vaccinated. Councilwoman Doyle added that allocation of vaccine is based on cities' populations. Dr. Lindsay stated that beginning this week they are pushing to get more of the elderly vaccinated.

Councilwoman Johnson and Councilwoman Royster expressed concern about citizens in eligible groups who do not have access to the internet, email, or smart phones. Many citizens are calling on a landline, but they are either not receiving a call back or they are missing the call back. What is being done to resolve that issue, because these citizens are our most vulnerable citizens? Dr. Lindsay answered that these citizens should hear back from someone, but at this point the list is very long and it takes time to reach them. She added it is labor intensive and they need more support to get it done faster. She stated she recognizes there are some groups that are going to need more help and that involves getting out into the communities. They are starting to plan and implement working more in the communities this week.

Dr. Lindsay stated for those without an email address, this is a challenging system. We do have ambassadors who have been working with the elderly. If they do not have a relative with an email address, the only solution is to conduct a special clinic with paper registration. Councilwoman Royster stressed the importance of conducting these clinics because of the digital divide in our communities. We must have a plan in place so our 1A and 1B citizens do not get left behind. Councilwoman Johnson added that flyers with information about the vaccinations have been created by the Council office and she and Councilwoman Royster will personally be delivering them to senior facilities.

Mayor Alexander shared the concerns of his colleagues. He added that the information coming from the state and federal government is very confusing to our citizens. Our residents are angry, anxious, and afraid. He advocated for the city doing more to communicate and engage our citizens and address their concerns. He added we must get our citizens vaccinated. We cannot rely on the state and federal government. Norfolk must step up efforts.

Councilwoman McClellan expressed concern that some employers might not be providing lists of eligible employees. She suggested we work with our local Chamber of Commerce to provide information to our business community.

Councilman Smigiel asked, do the number of vaccinations administered included the military? Dr. Lindsay answered no, and she added they do not receive that information from the Department of Defense.

Dr. Lindsay presented additional slides:

#### Norfolk Vaccine Hotline & Online Portal Pre-Registration

(757)-664-SHOT (7468)

[www.norfolk.gov/covid19vaccine](http://www.norfolk.gov/covid19vaccine)

- 19,418 online preregistrations since online portal inception on Jan 25
- January 25-29: 900+ voicemails (voicemail is answered within 24 hours) and 1,240+ inquiries/pre-registration

#### COVID-19 Regional Hotline

January 25-29: 913 calls

#### Vaccination Registration Process

- Pre-register via online portal of vaccine call center of 3-1-1 (non-emergency) operators
- Call Center provides daily hotline report on pre-registration data for NDPH to review
- Review and prioritization of list is completed by NDPH staff ambassadors for various 1B designated groups
- Follow-up by staff ambassadors with groups/individuals takes place as vaccine becomes available to transition into the appointment phase
- Email is sent to schedule appointment (Dr. Lindsay presented a template of the email sent to participants)

Dr. Lindsay also presented a slide showing the vaccine inventory and how doses are dispensed for the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> dose. She also presented a slide showing the NDPH clinic schedule dates.

#### Continuation of Norfolk Department of Public Health Vaccination Efforts:

- Provider Recruitment
  - Ramped up continuing efforts to recruit and coordinate providers through the process of vaccinating the community
  
- Expansion of Partner Base
  - Medical Reserve Corps (MRC)
  - Universities/EVMS Medical & Graduate Students
  - Hospitals
  - Pharmacies
  - Private Providers
  - Community Providers & Clinics
  
- Focus on the Elderly
  - 65+ and the prioritization of 75+
  - High risk elderly minority populations (71% of hospitalizations and 68% of deaths are in minority populations in Norfolk)
  - Individuals with high-risk medical conditions
  
- Work with 1B businesses through the vaccination process for their employees

#### State Level Updates & Initiatives

- PrepMod – new registration system
- Centralized Call Center & Registration
- Vaccine Dashboard
- Expanded authorization of allowable vaccinators

Councilwoman McClellan stated we need to explain and emphasize to citizens that Norfolk was not part of setting up this process. The local Norfolk Department of Public Health reports to the Virginia Department of Health; however, the city has set up a call center and pre-registration system to assist them. She added that on January 21<sup>st</sup>, 17 municipalities in our region sent a letter to Governor Northam expressing concerns and offering opportunities to help.

Councilwoman McClellan expressed concern that some citizens who registered in the Vaccine Administration Management System (VAMS) are having problems getting their second vaccine. If we are moving to the PrepMod system, how is that being resolved? Dr. Lindsay answered there have been challenges in scheduling the second doses because slots are filled quickly. They are working to try to come up with additional opportunities for citizens to be scheduled for the second dose. Councilwoman McClellan stated she volunteered this past weekend at Sentara's Scope clinic and each person was given a time

and a date when they are to come and get their second shot. She asked why are we not doing that at our clinics? Dr. Lindsay answered they can look at that process.

Councilwoman McClellan stated a retired doctor and nurse contacted her to volunteer to help with vaccinations. She asked how volunteers can be vaccinated so they can assist with getting others vaccinated? Dr. Lindsay stated they do have to go through the same process as anyone else. They would be vaccinated according to their priority group. Councilwoman McClellan added she has been contacted by volunteers that could assist with making telephone calls or registering citizens.

Councilwoman McClellan asked how are undocumented residents and those that have no identification being processed? Dr. Lindsay answered she thinks they follow the same policy when anyone undocumented presents to a clinic, but she will check and provide that information to Council.

Councilwoman McClellan stated that it will be months before all our residents are vaccinated. She asked what are we doing through the NDPH to ensure we are providing testing within our community? Dr. Lindsay answered that NDPH has phased out of testing, so testing would be from other sources such as urgent cares, pharmacies, and hospitals. She added that the NDPH is very limited in terms of staff and resources and are currently focused on trying to maintain vaccination services.

Councilman Smigiel commented the vaccine rollout, from the very beginning, has been awful and starting with the federal government, then state government, and then on to the localities. The process needed more definition, rules, and procedures. He stated there were holes that allowed people to circumvent the system. He added there are so many people in group 1B and that it could have been broken down to smaller groups. He noted there is a lot of frustration about waiting four to eight weeks. He suggested that staff from Communications be assigned to the city's COVID team, so they can organize information about the vaccine and provide it to our citizens concisely and accurately.

Vice Mayor Thomas stated he agreed with his colleagues. He added the NDPH has had a year to plan for the vaccine rollout and it is very clear it is not going well. He stated that the city is doing more of their job than their department is doing. He added that NDPH must do a better job of reaching residents with no internet and get them registered. We cannot leave them behind because they are more likely people who are at risk. The city should not have to be doing the job the state is supposed to be doing. He stated that Dr. Lindsay should talk to her superiors and tell them she needs more money and more staff to get this done.

Councilman Riddick stated Dr. Lindsay is doing the best job that she can under the circumstances with the resources she has been provided with and he did not appreciate his colleagues' treatment of her.

Mayor Alexander stressed that there is no ill intent directed at Dr. Lindsay. He stated that Council is just alarmed by the increase in morbidity and mortality rates in minorities.

Council is equally alarmed that the state has eliminated COVID testing. Council is also concerned about budget cuts monetarily and staff-wise to the NDPH in the middle of a pandemic.

Councilwoman Doyle asked Dr. Lindsay to provide an update on the new call centers that are going to be set up for scheduling. She added that we want to ensure our citizens understand how the new registration system works.

In closing, Dr. Filer stated that the city has five staff members who are working with Dr. Lindsay. He added there are areas where we can take a more active role in assisting her. He commented on slide 9 shown by Dr. Lindsay. We have the capacity to deliver nearly 7,000 vaccinations in a week, but our constraint is we are only getting approximately 3,000 vaccine doses.

Councilman Smigiel asked if a Google Doc could be set up so Council can submit questions and get answers online rather than having to call.

### **NORFOLK'S 2020 HOLIDAY SEASON**

Presenters: Mr. Michael Desplaines, President & CEO, Norfolk Botanical Garden  
Mr. Stephen Kirkland, Executive Director, Nauticus  
Mr. Tom Quaintance, Producing Artistic Director, Virginia Stage Company

Mr. Desplaines stated only seven of the 75 largest gardens in the country remained open this past year and the Norfolk Botanical Garden was one of them. He gave a brief recap of events:

- May 2020 – an American Gardens Forever Stamp was issued, and Norfolk Botanical Garden was included in the series.
- July through August 2020 – Splash pads were closed in the Children's Garden. We are hoping the splash pads will be open in 2021.
- June through October 2020 – 70 Pink Flamingo Topiaries
- November through December 2020 – Dominion Energy Garden of Lights. No walk-throughs this year.
  - 51 nights
  - 39,690 total cars
  - 25k more visitors than last year (average 3 persons per car)

### **2020 Attendance**

#### **Discount Programs**

- City of Norfolk Power Up! – 744 attendees, City of Norfolk program for Medicaid Recipients
- Museums for All – 389 attendees, For individuals on Food Stamps (SNAP)

## 2021 Events

- February 2021 – In Honor of Black History Month, every Thursday this month is free admission to the garden.
- April 2021 – They hope to have a ceremony for the Works Progress Administration (WPA) Memorial Garden and its rededication, but crowd size will be limited and based on any restrictions in place.
- June 2021 – Washed Ashore, an art exhibit made from plastics collected by our own volunteers from beaches in Norfolk and Virginia Beach. The artist has been commissioned to make an eagle holding a menhaden.

Mr. Kirkland gave an update on WinterFest on the Wisconsin. He stated they knew in June of 2020 that Dickens' Christmas Towne could not be held due to the pandemic. WinterFest on the Wisconsin was planned and produced between July and November of 2020.

### By the Numbers:

- More than 31,000 guests
- 78% Hampton Roads
- 10% Out of state
- 30+ Media Mentions (Southern Living, etc.)
- 250 Live performances
- 350 gallons of hot chocolate consumed

Mr. Quaintance gave an update on the Virginia Stage Company's 2020 holiday season.

- Mistletoe Market – an online marketplace featuring local artists, artisans, and vendors.
- Escape Room: *A Christmas Carol* Edition – a great event to engage students digitally. VSC hosted 15 different sessions with schools from Norfolk, Virginia Beach, Smithfield, and Chesapeake.
- *A Christmas Carol* – free live and streaming performances December 16-24, 2020.
  - 10 live performances with 100 maximum capacity (18% of house)
  - 2,672 streamed tickets
  - \$9,495 raised in donations
  - Nearly 50% of registered guests or the online video were new to file
  - Online video viewing reached beyond the Hampton Roads community. Some viewers came from California, Texas, and New York.
- Flyloft Renovation – (photographs of before and after presented).



## ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY PROGRAM UPDATE

Presenter: Ms. Esi Langston, Environmental Services Manager

Ms. Langston stated that much progress has been made with the Environmental Sustainability Program. She noted that the Jordan-Newby Anchor Branch Library has been selected as one of 25 U.S. libraries to participate in a program called Resilient Communities, which is an initiative from the American Library Association (ALA) that helps libraries engage their communities in programs and conversations on the climate crisis.

Last year, the Broad Creek neighborhood was chosen as the project site for the city's climate action plan. Programming will begin in March 2021 and continue throughout the year. The library will use their \$1,000 cash grant to host different programs:

### Broad Creek Resilience Hub

- Virtual screening of *"The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind"*
- Citizen science events
- Retain Your Rain demonstration
- Seed Library
- Environmental Justice training

### More Accomplishments:

- Commercial Property Assessed Clean Energy (C-PACE)
- Continued community engagement
- Progress on solar

### Southeastern Energy Efficiency Alliance grant \$112,000 Energy Roadmap (Completed)

- Summer graduate student trained in energy efficiency
- Will identify enterprise-wide energy savings

### Energy Treasure Hunts (on hold)

- Teams of people go through buildings and identify energy opportunities with payback of less than one year
- Currently identifying good test sites

### Grant-funded Position (in progress)

- Continue momentum from Fellow
- Implement strategy in energy roadmap

### Energy Roadmap

- Brought in summer energy analyst
- Analyst audited energy use from city buildings – improved data quality
- Calculated energy use baseline
- Identified energy savings opportunities
- Recommended energy reduction and renewable energy goals

## Energy Use Baseline

They have looked at 132 city-owned buildings

6.4M square feet of space

230kbtu/sq.ft. energy use intensity

Norfolk's energy use intensity: 230 kBtu per square feet (based on a 2018 baseline)

## Next Steps:

### Expand Energy Team

- 0.5 FTE Data Analyst
- Full-time grant-funded Energy Coordinator

### Complete Portfolio Baseline

- Remaining 30 buildings

### Commit to Energy Goals

- Energy reduction goal
- Renewable energy generation goal

### Energy Goal-Setting

The U.S. Department of Energy offers guidance through their Better Buildings Challenge and they encourage enrolled jurisdictions to lower their energies by at least 20%. For Norfolk that would be at least 20% of reduction from our 2018 baseline by 2030.

### Benefits to our city:

- Shows regional leadership
- Drive decision-making
- Strengthens energy strategy
- Align with Commonwealth's environmental priorities

Councilwoman McClellan suggested having a strategic plan as relates to electrification, not only to address electric vehicles our city fleet but with our citizens as well.

Councilman Smigiel suggested involving Norfolk Public Schools in our energy saving goals. He asked that the topic be included on the agenda for the joint meeting with NPS in March.

Councilwoman Johnson suggested that Ms. Langston's events be added to the library's schedule of activities and to also partner with OpenNorfolk.

## COUNCIL INTERESTS

Councilman Smigiel stated that census data will be available in March or April and the state will be looking at congressional boundaries and delegates. He asked if Council wants to consider diversity of our Wards as we move forward and consider some of the items that the state is considering. Vice Mayor Thomas relayed that he spoke with Ms. Iles and she stated she did not know the exact timeline, but she estimates from April to July is when we will get the census data from the state. At that point we wait for redistricting to be done for congressional senate and house districts and then we can look at ours and react from there. Councilman Riddick stated that at this point we do not know what the demographics are going to be if the city is successful with the gentrification of Tidewater Park. He added that there might be issues that have to go back through the courts. Mr. Pishko commented it would depend upon the extent of the changes proposed as to whether it would require justice department approval.