

**Minutes of the Claremore City Council Special Meeting
Claremore, Oklahoma November 20, 2020
Claremore Community Center
2301 N. Sioux Ave.**

CALL TO ORDER

Meeting called to order by Mayor Bill Flanagan at 6:00 P.M.

Mayor Flanagan asked Deputy City Clerk Lisa Rogers to note that members are present/absent as indicated below:

Present: Ken Hays, Will DeMier, Bill Flanagan,
Brian Callender, Justin Michael, Dennis Grace, Scott Savage

Absent: Jennifer Lewis, Herb McSpadden,

Staff Present: John Feary, Bryan Drummond, Sarah Sharp, Tim White, Sean Douglas

CALL TO THE PUBLIC

Statement was read by City Attorney Bryan Drummond:

The deadline for submitting e-mail or voice mail public comments was noon today. As of noon, 169 total e-mails and voice mails had been received with 77 in favor of the mask ordinance and 91 against the mask ordinance and one just asking a question. All the e-mail and voice mail public comments, received before the deadline were made available to the member of the City Council after the noon deadline.

Tonight, 5 people have signed up to speak in person on the mask ordinance. We will take each in the order they signed up. When it is your turn to speak, if you believe the prior speakers have covered what you were going to say, you have the right to say, I am in favor or opposed to the mask ordinance and waive my additional time since I have nothing to add to the comments already made. Remember each speaker has a total of 3 minutes.

Kathy Abbott- Ms. Abbott stated she is against the mandate, stating she chooses to wear a mask when required, but believes it should be a person's choice. Abbot states she does not like to be told what to do outside of the law, and people should be allowed to make their own decisions. Abbott stated Oklahomans will begin taking the vaccine in 2 weeks and we just need to hold on.

Sarah Jo Poff- Ms. Poff stated that she is against the mandate; her and her family just moved here from Minnesota because they have more freedoms here than they did in Minnesota. Poff states that she is a homeopathic practitioner and believes PCR tests are no reliable. Poff states that 3% of every positive case is an infection. Poff states we need to look at research and see how the numbers are gathered.

Annette Brouse- Ms. Brouse stated she is against the mandate, noting that several states with mask mandates still have high numbers and there is no statistical difference in cases between those that do or do not wear masks. 80% of people that test positive have no symptoms because they already have immunity. Brouse states that she will not shop in Claremore if there is a mandate.

Boyd West- Mr. West stated that he has been an essential employee through all of this, and has just practiced basic hygiene and has not had even a sniffle. Boyd stated we're here to make our own choices; people should have a choice to wear or not wear a mask.

David Starkey- Mr. Starkey stated $\frac{1}{4}$ of a million deaths from COVID was reached yesterday. Starkey states he is in the business of killing COVID and is in favor of wearing mask.

CURRENT BUSINESS

- (1) Discussion and vote to Approve/Reject Ordinance No. 2020-_____ regarding face covering and social distancing during Covid-19 pandemic civil emergency.

Emergency Management Director and Fire Chief Sean Douglas presented current data from the Oklahoma Department of Health. Douglas stated the as of this date 10% of Claremore's population has tested positive for COVID and we are currently at a record high of positive cases in Claremore. Statistics from Rogers County were given as well. Douglas is in contact with the local hospital, and there are currently 6 COVID beds in Claremore. Patients have been sent to neighboring states to receive care. Douglas reported Claremore Public School have a mask mandate and post daily information on their website, and Justice-Tiawah has closed indefinitely. Douglas stated that there is an effort to avoid economic closures as in the early months.

Mayor Flanagan stated that he has spoken with Claremore Regional and their staff is under stress, and they do not want to get into a position where elective surgeries are canceled. It will still take 2 weeks to see the results of a mask mandate and will take up to 6 months to see the effects of the vaccination. Flanagan states that we need to protect the schools, workforce, and small business.

Councilor Michael stated that Tulsa has had a mask mandate since July and cases are not going down. All mandates are not enforced so what is the point? The 11 pm bar mandate is garbage; nothing changes after 11 pm.

Councilor Callender stated he is against the mandate, stating that if you are wearing a mask, you touch your face even more, and all the bacteria and germs are trapped in the mask. Callender believes that masks are a false sense of security and the issue all boils down to handwashing. Callender stated that we would get better results if handwashing stations were required instead of masks.

Councilor Savage stated that the science of mask wearing is clear; masks protect. Savage stated that passing the mandate will make Claremore safer.

Motion by DeMier, second by Grace to approve No. 2020-19, regarding face covering and social distancing during Covid-19 pandemic civil emergency. Roll call vote: Hays, yes; DeMier, yes; Flanagan, yes; Callender, no; Michael, no; Grace, yes; and Savage, yes. Motion carried.

(2) Discussion and vote to Approve/Reject emergency clause for Item #1 that Ordinance No. 2020-____ shall be in full force and effect immediately from and after its passage, approval and adoption.

Item #2 was not voted upon.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Callender, second by DeMier to adjourn. Roll call vote: Hays, yes; DeMier, yes; Flanagan, yes; Callender, yes; Michael, yes; Grace, yes; and Savage, yes. Motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 7:02 P.M.

Sarah Sharp

Sarah Sharp, MMC
City Clerk