

**Minutes**  
**Special Minnetonka City Council**  
**Thursday, February 17, 2022**

**1. Call to Order**

Mayor Brad Wiersum called the special meeting to order at 1:32 p.m.

**2. Roll Call**

Council Members, Rebecca Shack, Kimberly Wilburn, Deb Calvert, Bradley Schaeppi, Kissy Coakley, Brian Kirk and Brad Wiersum were present.

**3. Approval of Agenda**

Calvert moved, Kirk seconded a motion to accept the agenda with addenda to Item 4. All voted "yes." Motion carried.

**4. Discussion of city-wide face mask mandate**

Acting City Manager Mike Funk gave the staff report.

Coakley acknowledged the emails she has received and noted she has seen them.

Calvert indicated she has read all of the emails she received. She stated she appreciated all of the respectful public feedback. She explained it was devastating that not all of the feedback was respectful and expressed concern with the false division that was being created in the community. She reported this was not a political decision and not one she made based on popular opinion, rather this was a decision she was making based on public safety. She stated her faith leads her to protect life and she was of the opinion masks were needed in order to slow the spread of the virus. She understood everyone hated masks but she wore one because she believed it was the right thing to do. She stated there were people in the community counting on her to keep the mask mandate in place, but this was not necessarily what she was going to do. She indicated there were people who can't work because they were not safe in public. She commented further on the experiences she has had with COVID over the past two months and discussed how her friends and family members had been impacted. She apologized up front for the people she would be disappointing.

Schaeppi appreciated the feedback the city council has received to date. He was of the opinion the ordinance has run its course and the rates were now below the threshold and the mask mandate could now be lifted. He understood there were people out there being impacted, but he wanted to see the council taking action

on the people who were calling and emailing. He supported the city council terminating enforcement of the ordinance as of today.

Schack agreed the ordinance has served its purpose but she did not want to be in a position where the loudest voice was the one that had to carry the day. She indicated she had read every email, which was difficult because people were very mean. She reported the city council was made up of neighbors who were trying to do the best they can to protect the community. She encouraged residents to offer their neighbors and city officials more grace, and to communicate kindly, because they don't know what people are facing. She hoped the action taken at this meeting would assist with curing some of the division in the community. She feared there was some confusion in the community and reported the city council would begin meeting in the council chambers again on Monday, February 28.

Kirk stated two years ago when the council began making decision regarding the pandemic it was his position that the city follow the Minnesota Department of Health and the CDC. He believed the city council has been honoring this. He was of the opinion the pandemic was far from over, but he did not believe a mask mandate should be pursued. For this reason, he encouraged residents to protect themselves and to consider how they are impacting other residents in the community. He encouraged residents to focus on the science and noted he would be supporting the resolution that would suspend enforcement of the ordinance.

Wiersum thanked the city councilmembers and noted this has been a challenging time for all of them. He understood the council has been receiving a large number of "nasty-grams" from the public. He believed each councilmember was committed to doing the best for the City of Minnetonka. He also understood each councilmember may come to a different conclusion on what was best for the community. He explained he was troubled by how the community reacted to this divisive issue, and how public health had become politicized. He stated public health was vitally important that should not be a part of partisan politics. He encouraged the public to be respectful to one another as councilmembers, neighbors and residents. He recommended all residents extend a little more grace to one another as a sign of respect.

Schaeppi asked if the effective date for the resolution could be February 17, 2022. City Attorney Corrine Heine reported this would be sufficient noting staff could fill in the date on the resolution.

Schaeppi moved, Schack seconded a motion to adopt Resolution 2022-012 suspending enforcement of Ordinance 2022-01, effective immediately on February 17, 2022.

Calvert thanked the mayor and her fellow councilmembers for their comments. She reviewed several data points noting Hennepin County was now tracking COVID density in sewage. She requested staff continue to provide the council with weekly updates on the numbers going forward.

Coakley explained why she has not read and responded to all of the emails she received. She reported as she received emails and phone calls, one phone call in particular was extremely racist and this made her uncomfortable. She noted this call came from a Minnetonka resident. She understood people wanted the mask mandate to be over, but indicated she would not allow people to speak to her in a disrespectful manner. She discussed the amount of time she spent serving as a volunteer for the City of Minnetonka and encouraged residents to be respectful with their comments.

Wiersum thanked Councilmember Coakley for her comments. He indicated none of the councilmembers served because of the money, but rather because they care about the community. He explained the city council can disagree, but always deserved the respect of one another and the public. He thanked Councilmember Coakley for sharing her experience and stated no one should have to put up with disrespectful or racist comments.

All voted "yes" (Wilburn excused from the vote). Motion carried.

## 5. Adjournment

Schack moved, Calvert seconded a motion to adjourn the meeting at 2:00 p.m.  
All voted "yes" (Wilburn excused from the vote). Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,



Becky Koosman  
City Clerk