

In the Utilities Board Room, 600 E Miller Drive, on Wednesday, August 26, 2015 at 7:30 pm with Council President Dave Rollo presiding over a Regular Session of the Common Council.

COMMON COUNCIL  
REGULAR SESSION  
August 26, 2015

Roll Call: Rollo, Mayer, Volan, Granger, Sturbaum, Neher, Spechler, Sandberg.  
Absent: Ruff

ROLL CALL

Council President Rollo gave the Agenda Summation

AGENDA SUMMATION

The minutes for April 8, 2015 and July 1, 2015 were approved by a voice vote.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Dorothy Granger noted the day, August 26, as Women's Equality Day. She said that Congresswoman Bella Abzug was responsible for this designation in 1971. She read the statement:

REPORTS

- COUNCIL MEMBERS

*This date was selected to commemorate the 1920 passage of the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment to the Constitution granting women the right to vote. This was a culmination of a massive peaceful, civil rights movement by women that had its formal beginning in 1848 at the world's first Women's Rights Convention in Seneca Falls, New York.*

Granger said the day also, to her, called attention to the women's continuing efforts towards full equality.

Tim Mayer lauded organizers and musicians who participated in the 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Jazz Fest over the past weekend. He said the weather was cool and the jazz was cooler.

Volan welcomed students for the beginning of their school year, and noted that students were actual residents of the town as any other citizen, per the US Census. He invited them to reach out to their council representatives.

Sturbaum, approached by the Monroe County Health Department to write a letter of support regarding a health emergency, asked for the council to sign a letter of support for the needle exchange program that Monroe County Government would be asking the state to authorize in the county. He spoke about the program, the public health emergency in our community and about hepatitis and other diseases spread by the use of syringes. Sturbaum moved and it was seconded that the Council authorize distribution of a letter in support of the Monroe County Syringe Exchange Program.

- Authorizing a Letter in Support of the Monroe County Syringe Exchange Program

Sturbaum read the letter that had been prepared for the council to sign in support. *That letter is attached to these minutes.* He introduced Penny Caudill, administrator of the MCHD, who said the letter was eloquently written. She noted the Monroe County Commissioners would have a hearing on September 4, 2015, with the intention of asking the state to allow this program in the community. She said these programs were not new to our nation or state; there were models for these programs. She said syringe exchanges did not increase crime, and noted other safety precautions in an exchange program. She thanked the council for their support.

Spechler asked Caudill how the program was a link to treatment for addictions. He asked what the community was doing for addictions. He asked how the program worked.

Caudill explained the process saying that those exchanging syringes were given intake numbers similar to other programs that required confidentiality. She added that they were also linked to other services so that they could begin a process of becoming more stable and then begin to think of addiction treatment. Caudill said the Health Department was looking to all community partners to provide a plan to provide services to these people.

Spechler asked about the activities of the people who did the intake of the people who came to exchange needles. She said they would be submitting a plan to the state regarding the entire program and would be assessing, re-evaluating and making adjustments as the program progressed. She further explained the process of applying for the program, through the review and approval process to local implementation. She said the project's approval by the state's Health would include a requirement for regular routine reporting.

Sandberg asked about confidentiality and who the partners for coordination of delivery of services would be. Caudill said that for the program to work, there had to be a decriminalization so that the person entering the program could not be followed out of the program and be arrested. She said the program would need to coordinate with law enforcement and the health department.

Neher asked how long it would take for the process of approval and the start of the program. Caudill said the Health Commissioner had 10 days after the submission of the application to approve, deny, or ask for additional information. She said they were already working with community partners on this issue, and added that program implementation within a month was a reasonable expectation.

Volan asked how privacy would be assured and how would she answer someone that was afraid they'd get turned in to law enforcement. He also asked how the intake people were trained for their jobs. Caudill said that some counties used their health department staff to do intake. Monroe County might rely more on partner agencies that already be familiar with that target population. She said rapport built between people and the providers helped get those people to the other types of services they needed. She said the partners already had some of those protocols with regard to confidentiality and disease already in place.

Sandberg asked what other options were available for those who wanted a second step, actual drug treatment. Caudill said it was a fact that there were not enough resources in Monroe County for folks to have help exactly the day they want it. Centerstone had been part of the partnership in the program, but there were also some grants to fill gaps in treatments options that the health department was looking for.

Spechler said there was a danger of a person who had Hepatitis C or HIV passing a needle to someone else for their use, i.e., sharing needles. Caudill noted that many addictions start as a prescription drugs addiction and then the person might move to heroin because it was cheaper. She said then they ended up using the drug in order to not be sick and feel awful. Spechler asked if the needles could be obtained for another person.

Caudill noted that the needle exchange would be preventing the use of needles that had been used before, as even one person using the same needle repeatedly posed health issues. Rollo noted that there was a hazard having used needles left around, and that it would be an educational effort to get the needles back.

Spechler said the press should know the council was trying to mitigate harm, and was not endorsing the use of illegal drugs.

Mayer thanked Sturbaum, Dan Sherman, and Stacy Jane Rhoads and Penny Caudill for collaborating and for their help in crafting this letter.

Sandberg said she had gotten a letter from social worker Donyel Byrd who related a story of a person who was addicted, overdosed and ended up, while getting treated, having criminal charges levied. Sandberg said that it was overwhelming that someone who was trying to get help had that burden of those charges added to the issues faced. She thanked Caudill for answering all the questions.

Neher said "opposition to needle exchange programs are both stupid and dangerous," while quoting a news headline. He said the Syringe Exchange Program would save lives, not in just keeping people from dying, but in protecting people through programs that have been proven to be effective. He noted the long-time successful exchange program in San Francisco as an example. He said San Francisco had one eighth the number of discarded needles on the street as Miami, even though Miami had half the number of users. He said the cost of treatment of HIV was about \$120,000 per year, and the protection of even one person was the right thing for this community to do. We should celebrate this rather than push back and say it was a wrong thing.

Council letter supporting needle exchange program (cont'd)

Sturbaum said there had been seven deaths this year due to heroin related overdoses in Monroe County. He said the needle exchange program could give people a true point of entry into a system of help. He said addictions could make someone so isolated that they didn't have access to health care or the kind of drug that could stop one from dying of an overdose. He said he was glad the Monroe County Health Department was working on this, and thanked the council for supporting the letter.

Rollo asked Caudill to come back to report to the council after the program had been instituted.

The motion to support the Monroe County Syringe Exchange Program with a letter from the council received a roll call vote of Ayes: 8, Nays: 0.

There were no reports from the Mayor or other City Officers.

- The MAYOR AND CITY OFFICES

There were no reports from council committees at this meeting.

- COUNCIL COMMITTEES

President Rollo called for public comment. There was none.

- PUBLIC

There were no appointments to Boards or Commissions at this meeting.

APPOINTMENTS TO BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

There was no legislation for Second Reading or Resolutions at this meeting.

LEGISLATION FOR SECOND READING AND RESOLUTIONS

Ordinance 15-16 To Amend Title 2 of the Bloomington Municipal Code Entitled "Administration and Personnel" - Re: Amending Chapter 2.21 Entitled "Department of Law" to Include "Veteran Status" and "Housing Status" as Protected Classes in the Bloomington Human Rights Ordinance

LEGISLATION FOR FIRST READING

Ordinance 15-16

There was no public comment at this portion of the meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Dan Sherman, Council Attorney/Administrator noted the council would meet in the Utilities Board Room on September 2, 2015, and that meetings on September 9<sup>th</sup> and afterwards would be in the council chambers.

COUNCIL SCHEDULE

The meeting was adjourned at 8:14 pm.

ADJOURNMENT

APPROVE:

ATTEST:



Dave Rollo, PRESIDENT  
Bloomington Common Council

Regina Moore, CLERK  
City of Bloomington