

City of Broken Arrow
Minutes
City Council Special Meeting

City Hall
 220 S 1st Street
 Broken Arrow OK
 74012

Mayor Craig Thurmond
Vice Mayor Scott Eudey
Council Member Johnnie Parks
Council Member Debra Wimpee
Council Member Christi Gillespie

Monday, November 23, 2020

Time 5:00 p.m.

Council Chambers

1. Call to Order

Mayor Craig Thurmond called the Special City Council Meeting to order at approximately 5:00 p.m.

2. Roll Call

Present: 5 - Christi Gillespie, Debra Wimpee, Johnnie Parks, Scott Eudey, Craig Thurmond (Council Member Gillespie arrived at 5:08 p.m.)

3. Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag

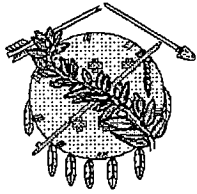
Mayor Thurmond led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

4. General Council Business

A. 20-1485 Consideration, discussion, and possible approval of a resolution relating to the ongoing COVID-19 Pandemic

City Attorney Trevor Dennis reviewed the resolution:

RESOLUTION NO. 1360: A RESOLUTION STRONGLY ENCOURAGING THE USE OF MASKS AND OTHER PROTECTIVE MEASURES TO REDUCE COMMUNITY TRANSMISSION OF THE COVID-19 VIRUS, AND PLEDGING SUPPORT TO THOSE PROPERTY OWNERS AND BUSINESSES WHO REQUIRE THE USE OF MASKS IN THE CITY OF BROKEN ARROW: WHEREAS, an outbreak of COVID-19 (Coronavirus) has resulted in an ongoing global pandemic; and WHEREAS, On July 10, 2020, The Honorable Kevin Stitt, governor of Oklahoma issued the Second Amended Executive Order 2020-20, declaring a state of emergency in all 77 counties within the State of Oklahoma due to the increased threat of COVID-19, and on November 16, 2020, announced several new restrictions effective Thursday, November 19, 2020, including a mandatory closing time for bars, spacing of tables within restaurants, and compulsory wearing of masks for State employees and visitors to state facilities; WHEREAS, COVID-19 cases have recently increased significantly in the City of Broken Arrow; WHEREAS, The Center for Disease Control (CDC) as well as the Oklahoma State Department of Health (OSDH) recommend the continuation of proper social distancing procedures and other precautionary measures, specifically the proper use of masks covering the nose and mouth to prevent the spread of COVID-19; WHEREAS, the CDC guidance on masks recommend that the general public wear cloth face coverings in public settings and when around people who don't live in the same household, especially when other social distancing measures are difficult to maintain; furthermore, cloth face coverings may help prevent people who have COVID-19 from spreading the virus to others; furthermore, cloth face coverings are most likely to reduce the spread of COVID-19 when they are widely used by people in public settings; WHEREAS, in addition to the use of face coverings, the CDC also recommends people keep a minimum distance of six (6) feet from others, avoid touching their face, engage in regular handwashing and avoid group gatherings whenever possible; WHEREAS, the CDC guidance recommends that the general public should also wear face coverings in all outdoor settings where there is exposure to non-household members, unless there exists ample space of six (6) feet of more to practice physical distancing; WHEREAS, exemptions for children of a certain age and individuals with disabilities who cannot wear a mask as outlined by CDC guidelines and health professionals are recognized; WHEREAS, business owners have the right to establish and enforce health safety requirements for individuals entering their place of business which may include the requirement to wear a mask; WHEREAS, business owners have the right to seek assistance from law enforcement in instances where individuals refuse to comply with the standards established by the business owner; WHEREAS, the City of Broken Arrow wishes to encourage the use of masks/facial coverings in workplaces, retail stores, businesses, restaurants & bars, fitness centers, places of worship, businesses providing personal services, and medical and healthcare facilities and wishes to pledge its support to those property owners and businesses requiring masks/facial coverings on their property. NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF BROKEN ARROW, OKLAHOMA, THAT: 1. It is strongly recommended the all Broken Arrow citizens properly wear a mask while in public; 2. It is strongly recommended and encouraged



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that all places of business, workplaces, retail stores, restaurants & bars, fitness centers, places of worship, businesses providing personal services, and medical and healthcare facilities in the City of Broken Arrow require the use of masks/facial coverings on such properties; 3. The City of Broken Arrow and the City of Broken Arrow Police Department, pledge their support to those places requiring the use of masks/face coverings and pledge to provide assistance in instances where individuals refuse to comply with the standards established by the business owners or property owners as allowed by Oklahoma State Statute and the City of Broken Arrow Ordinances; 4. It is strongly recommended that, in addition to the use of masks, Broken Arrow residents take further steps to reduce community transmission of COVID-19 by keeping six (6) feet of physical distance from others, avoid touching their faces, engage in regular handwashing and avoid group gatherings whenever possible.

Assistant City Manager of Administration Russell Gale reviewed actions taken by other cities and advised the City Council of Chamber of Commerce actions.

Ms. Kelly VanBuskirk from the Tulsa Health Department spoke. She reported the Tulsa Health Department supported mask wearing in the community to help prevent the spread of COVID. She stated data supported the need for mask wearing. She reviewed the data collected in Tulsa County in the City of Broken Arrow and the City of Tulsa. She stated the CDC also recommended mask wearing. She discussed data collected in other states which also supported mask mandates noting the data collected indicated mask mandates lowered the number of COVID cases. She stated Tulsa Health Department supported the resolution being discussed.

Council Member Christi Gillespie reported the data she reviewed did not show a significant improvement in COVID case numbers for cities which had mask mandates as opposed to cities which did not have mask mandates. Ms. VanBuskirk stated she felt COVID fatigue was setting in and individuals were letting their guard down. She reported when cities first established mask mandates the numbers showed significant improvement; however, with COVID fatigue people were less vigilant about mask wearing and social distancing. She noted COVID was being spread within smaller groups in backyard settings. She stated she believed this was causing the data Council Member Gillespie was seeing.

Council Member Gillespie stated this made her question whether the mask mandate was making a difference in case numbers. She discussed the number of new COVID cases per 100,000 people as of November 17, 2020: in masked cities the number of new COVID cases was 60.1, and in non-masked cities it was 60.7. She apologized for being late to the meeting.

Council Member Wimpee stated Broken Arrow had schools in session with 14,400 students, 2,400 plus teachers and staff members, and parents back to work, without a mask mandate, while Tulsa had no schools in session, with a mask mandate and there was barely a difference in case numbers. She stated she had requested the number of Broken Arrow residents in Tulsa hospitals with COVID. She indicated the health department reported "I do not know the breakdown of patients at hospitals including St. John, nor do I know how many BA residents are presently hospitalized." She noted a couple of weeks ago when it was reported that all ICU beds of Tulsa Hospitals were occupied, a hospital administrator stated "the number of actual hospitalizations change hour by hour, so that information remains very dynamic." She stated to not be able to find out how many Broken Arrow citizens were in the hospital was concerning. She stated she had an issue being told Broken Arrow was the reason ICU beds in Tulsa were full when the data was unknown.

Mayor Thurmond noted there 10 cases of COVID in the hospital a couple of weeks ago and none in Broken Arrow.

Mr. Russell Gale stated the hospitalization data he provided at every meeting was new hospitalizations for the reported time period, not the number of COVID patients in the hospital. He stated Tulsa reported the number of patients was dynamic. He indicated he asked Dr. Dart who advised data was received in the aggregate. He reviewed the data which Council Member Gillespie had discussed noting her data sheet indicated the number of cases from November 1, 2020 through November 17, 2020 was 968 per 100,000 people for cities which had a mask mandate, while cities which did not have a mask mandate showed the number of cases was 1,423 per 100,000 people; this reflected a 47% difference between mask mandated cities and non-mask mandated cities.

Council Member Gillespie and Mr. Gale discussed the data noting the growth rate for cities with mask mandates versus cities without mask mandates were similar (60.1% versus 60.7%); however, the number of cases in mask mandated cities was substantially lower than in non-mask mandated cities.

Mayor Thurmond stated this was a moot point as a mask mandate was not being discussed.

Mayor Thurmond opened the floor to public comments.

Citizen Michael Gillespie stated his address was 4013 S. Palm Avenue. He indicated Council Member Gillespie was his wife. He noted it was sad this was becoming such a big issue, causing strife in families, breaking up friendships, with non-mask shaming, etc. He noted there was no science behind mask wearing, it was all opinion. He indicated he appreciated and respected anyone who chose to wear a mask. He indicated he did not wish to wear a mask. He stated he was not in favor of any resolution. He thanked City Council for taking time to address this situation. He stated he did not understand why a resolution was important at this time.

Citizen Jason Coan stated his address was 1716 S. Narcissus Place. He stated he was opposed to this resolution as he believed it was a political smoke screen to dance around the topic. He stated seven of the top ten states with the most COVID cases per 100,000 people had no mask mandate prior to November 1, 2020. He stated this showed masks did work. He noted it was not a gas mask and it was not a hazmat suit, but it did help. He commented the City Council Members did not all believe masks worked, but when asked would wear a mask. He stated no one should have to ask you to wear a mask to protect others. He stated, "we proclaim to be Christians, but we are going to be selfish and think about ourselves and whether or not a mask was comfortable or uncomfortable for us." He stated this whole façade of a resolution should be a mask mandate. He encouraged the City Council to proclaim a mask mandate and hire the needed personal to enforce said mandate.

Citizen Tricia Washburn stated her address was W. Ashville Street. She stated the data being reported was from the CDC which had been caught lying since March. She stated the case numbers did not mean anything; many positive cases were asymptomatic. She noted there was a 50% fallibility for COVID tests. She stated the Tulsa County Health Department was untrustworthy. She indicated she would never comply with a mask mandate as she believed it was unconstitutional.

Mayor Thurmond and Vice Mayor Eudey indicated the resolution was not a mask mandate. Ms. Washburn indicated she believed it was close to a mandate. She stated she understood the City Council Members were under pressure at this time. She noted she understood this was a "strong suggestion" resolution. She indicated this resolution was an attempt to satisfy the "leftist mob" the "mask mandate people;" however, she believed these individuals would not be satisfied with a resolution. She noted businesses in Broken Arrow would suffer as a result of this resolution. She asked for the resolution to be dismissed.

Citizen Misty James stated her address was 409 W. Key West Street. She indicated she was a lifelong citizen of Broken Arrow. She stated she was proud of how the Broken Arrow City Council had handled the COVID pandemic. She indicated she did not feel the resolution was appropriate and would cause revenue loss. She stated she felt this resolution was the first step towards taking away her freedoms. She stated the majority of the population in Broken Arrow would perceive this resolution as a mandate which would cause division in the community.

Mayor Thurmond commented the resolution was not a mandate.

Vice Mayor Eudey noted he did not see how the situation could be more divisive than it was currently.

Ms. James stated by standing firm and saying no to the mask mandate even while the surrounding communities were pushing for the mandate set a precedent for other communities and opened the lines of communication.

Citizen George Poteet stated his address was 1046 Kenosha Drive. He indicated he agreed with the Ms. James and Ms. Washburn. He discussed death threats to his church as a result of holding events during COVID. He stated he did not believe the masks helped; there was no scientific evidence to support mask wearing. He indicated no one wanted to wear masks and should not be forced to wear masks. He discussed the violations of other freedoms such as worshipping God in church, the cost of ammunition going up, keeping schools open, keeping churches open, keeping businesses open. He encouraged the City Council to set an example for the surrounding communities by standing its ground and ensuring resident freedoms.

Citizen Caleb Mayo stated his address was 10412 S. 198th East Avenue. He stated he was against the resolution. He stated if the resolution were approved it would embolden those who believed everyone needed to wear a mask and would allow discrimination against those who did not wear masks. He noted the CDC changed its mind continually about mask wearing and the data was inconclusive. He discussed the manner in which this resolution could negatively affect the community and could lead to further freedom restrictions. He discussed individuals who could not wear masks due to health reasons and the possibility of businesses demanding information and proof regarding health issues and records. He stated the resolution gave businesses the right to enforce "whatever they want."

Vice Mayor Eudey disagreed. He stated this was a non-binding resolution and nowhere in the resolution did it allow a business to enquire about a citizen's health or make a determination about a citizen's health.

Mr. Mayo stated the resolution read: "business owners have the right to seek assistance from law enforcement in instances where individuals refuse to comply with the standards established by the business owner." Vice Mayor Eudey commented this was the law currently. Mr. Mayo asked what happened if a business owner indicated his standards were to know what a resident's health issue was prior to entry. Vice Mayor Eudey stated the law in the United States included property rights for citizens and businesses. He noted business owners had the right to refuse service to any it wished; this was a right given to business owners in the constitution.

Mr. Mayo claimed the resolution would lead to a mandate. He stated a mandate would lead to civil unrest.

Mayor Thurmond reiterated a mandate was not being discussed. Mr. Mayo disagreed. He asked if the upper levels of government were already recommending mask wearing, why was it necessary for the local government to recommend mask wearing.

Mayor Thurmond stated this resolution was not a mandate.

Citizen Sarah DeNeui stated her address 908 S. Redbud Avenue. She stated she opposed this resolution. She stated she would always oppose any resolution which expanded government or dabbled with overreach. She stated she would always oppose a rule which was created for the sake of creating more rules. She noted this resolution did not accomplish anything from a lawful standpoint. She stated she was surprised to hear the Mayor calling for this resolution. She noted this resolution would lead to a mandate.

Vice Mayor Eudey asked why Ms. DeNeui believed this resolution would lead to a mandate. He stated it was fair to doubt or be concerned something would lead to a next step but stating with certitude it would was an unfair statement. He noted this issue was discussed for over an hour at the previous meeting and it was decided it was worth further discussion; this was the reason for today's meeting. He stated it was perceived there were many who would wish to discuss this subject. He stated he did not support a mandate, and would never support a mandate, but this was not a mandate and to claim it would become a mandate was false. He indicated he had been saying this from the beginning, it was not new information. He stated this discussion was being held to allow all who had an opinion to voice said opinion.

Ms. DeNeui stated the recommendations already existed and the rights outlined already existed; this was "rules for the sake of rules" and she was opposed. She indicated she wished to know the Mayor's stand regarding a mandate.

Mayor Thurmond indicated he made it very clear he did not support a mandate.

Citizen Richard Powell stated his address was 4304 S. 2nd Street. He thanked the City Council for investing in the betterment of Broken Arrow. He stated he was opposed to the resolution. He discussed the idea of a resolution requiring a resident to attend a certain doctor which no one would approve. He discussed the incident when he was chased down the aisle of a Walmart for not wearing a mask. He stated this resolution could be construed as practicing medicine without a license. He stated this resolution would place additional pressure on businesses. He stated his body was his own.

Citizen Nick Jackson stated his address was 7500 E. Forest Ridge Blvd. He noted he recently moved to Broken Arrow and he loved Broken Arrow for its friendliness. He discussed the Danish study which showed there was no difference in transmission rates with masks. He asked the City Council to not accept the resolution.

Citizen George Shelton stated his address was 2505 W. Commercial Street. He discussed the vaccine. He noted he was 70 years old, had COVID, and did not need hospitalization. He stated he was not afraid of COVID. He indicated fear was the biggest problem. He stated he respected the statements of the City Council. He stated he was concerned about the imposition of this type of resolution and he was concerned about what it might lead to. He noted the flu caused hospitalizations and deaths as well, and mask wearing had never been required to reduce the spread of the flu. He stated he was opposed to masks.

Citizen Danette Carney stated her address was 1212 S. Umbrella Avenue. She thanked City Council for listening to the public. She stated she was proud of the Broken Arrow City Council. She stated she worked as a CPA and 2019 was an excellent year financially for businesses and 2020 had been extremely rough for businesses to date. She discussed businesses and mask wearing policies. She stated she was concerned if this resolution passed

businesses and citizens would become confused and some would feel this was a mandate even though it was not. She stated she supported the Broken Arrow City Council, she loved the City of Broken Arrow, and she asked for this resolution to be denied.

Citizen Mark Ostrom said a prayer. He thanked City Council. He stated his address was 317 W. Memphis Street. He discussed the original COVID fears which did not come to fruition. He noted COVID was not like the bubonic plague; people were not dying in the streets. He stated he was very concerned about the state of the nation and the freedoms of Christians. He indicated he was opposed to this resolution. He noted residents were in fear of either death or losing freedoms which was causing anger on both sides of this issue. He stated he understood the biggest difficulty in Broken Arrow was division. He stated he understood City Council had a heart to do right. He stated he understood City Council was trying to do a good thing by encouraging mask wearing through this resolution, but he had concerns about how this would affect businesses. He stated he was praying for City Council. He asked City Council not to rush into the resolution, but to wait a few more weeks.

Citizen Hope Ellis stated her address was 10305 S. 248th E. Avenue. She stated she opposed this resolution. She thanked City Council for its efforts. She stated she appreciated the freedom Broken Arrow residents had to choose to wear or not wear a mask. She indicated her children suffered headaches from wearing masks; therefore, she taught them other methods of safety and social distancing such as increased distance between strangers, extra hand washing, etc.

Citizen Joshua Stenros stated his address was 3901 S. 201st E. Avenue. He stated he was opposed to the resolution as it was purely political and nonfunctional. He stated it would only cause more division. He stated Broken Arrow was a shining beacon for NE Oklahoma and this resolution would ruin the example Broken Arrow was setting. He stated this resolution caved to those who wanted something to be done but did not know what to do. He stated this resolution encouraged businesses to mandate. He agreed there was no science behind mask mandates.

Citizen Laura Burkett stated her address was 1915 S. Cheyenne. She stated the science did not support mask wearing, impeded oxygen intake and impeded childhood development. She discussed the fake study which encouraged mask wearing at the beginning of COVID and promoted fear. She stated only 6% of the individuals who originally died of COVID were actual COVID deaths, the rest were due to comorbidities. She stated Broken Arrow was a shining example to others. She stated she loved America and she loved Broken Arrow. She encouraged Mayor Thurmond to continue to set an example. She stated she did not want to be a "wimpy sell-out to the globalists who had an agenda" promoting fear. She stated science showed a 99% recovery rate for COVID. She thanked City Council.

Citizen Rhonda Vuillemont Smith stated her address was 701 Meadowood Drive. She stated this resolution had no purpose and no meaning. She stated COVID was a virus, a cold, and was here to stay. She noted there was a 99.9% recovery rate and there was nothing to fear. She asked City Council to allow residents to make decisions for themselves. She indicated she was proud of Council Member Wimpee and Council Member Gillespie for standing up for what was right. She encouraged the rest of City Council to act likewise.

Citizen Charles Martin stated his address was 227 Kenosha Street. He stated the news was reporting a lot of propaganda regarding COVID and much of what was reported was untrue. He stated he believed the news channels were propaganda outlets. He stated it was not deemed a pandemic when 800 people in Oklahoma died of the flu last year, but this year it was considered a pandemic when 1500 people in Oklahoma died of COVID. He encouraged residents to thoroughly research the facts and not simply watch propaganda news. He discussed Elon Musk who took four COVID tests: two were positive, two were negative. He discussed the other leading causes of death which could be prevented with improved diet and which had much higher death rates than COVID such as heart attacks; 8,000 people died in Oklahoma last year of a heart attack. He thanked City Council for its service.

Citizen Kay Cobb stated her address was 915 N. Elm Place. She discussed how her business coped with COVID. She stated COVID was a virus and residents simply needed to boost immunity to help fight off viruses. She stated she would wash her hands, practice social distancing, and protect herself as she deemed appropriate, but she did not want to wear a mask. She encouraged residents to be sensible and protect themselves accordingly. She stated residents needed to be responsible for their own actions and health. She noted she did not even agree with everything her doctor recommended. She stated she appreciated City Council's "err on the side of freedom" attitude.

Citizen Glen R. Graham stated this resolution could have an economic impact on the community. He indicated he preferred to eat, do business, shop, and buy groceries in Broken Arrow due to the lack of a mask mandate. He stated he understood sales revenues were up in Broken Arrow. He stated Tulsa was suffering economically due to the mask mandate as

Tulsa residents preferred to shop in Broken Arrow. He stated while this was a resolution it could be felt as a mandate. He quoted Vice Mayor Scott Eudey and asked City Council to “err on the side of liberty.” He noted small businesses were struggling. He thanked City Council.

Citizen Brian Dean stated his address was 4320 S. Dogwood Avenue. He stated according to Yelp 163,000 business closed between March 2020 and September 2020 and 60% of these were permanently closed. He stated most of these businesses were smaller business owners who created jobs and helped nonprofit organizations survive as well. He reported Japan, the “health standard” of the world, suffered 2,153 deaths by suicide in October 2020. He reported military suicides were up 30% from 2019. He reported teen suicides were up this year and one out of every four teens surveyed reported suicidal ideations this year. He stated there was no scientific data which supported a mask wearing mandate. He noted there were too many variables which were attributed to the spread of COVID.

Citizen Michelle Dean stated her address was 4320 S. Dogwood Avenue. She stated she loved Broken Arrow. She indicated as a business owner she had patrons which came from all over Oklahoma to her establishment thanks to there being no mask mandate in Broken Arrow. She noted people who were hard of hearing could not read lips when someone was wearing a mask. She reported she only had one complaint over the past six months about the lack of masks in her establishment. She commented this resolution could be construed as a mandate. She noted many residents in Broken Arrow wore masks. She stated she believed the resolution would hurt her business and others as residents would believe it was a mandate.

Citizen David Good stated his address was 1108 W. Louisville Street. He noted there was mixed data across the board, but mostly the problem was fear. He stated fear was what people were fighting more than anything else. He noted heart disease was the number one killer in the U.S. and stress worsened heart disease. He stated this resolution would feed fear and stress. He discussed suicide rates in the U.S. increasing due to COVID. He discussed the importance of family gatherings. He noted the resolution encouraged fewer gatherings when residents needed gatherings now more than ever.

Citizen Matthew Griffiths stated his address was 2505 W. Dallas Court. He stated people would do whatever possible to avoid accepting this virus was a real threat. He stated this resolution was more than just a response to the pandemic. He stated he was present a week ago asking for action. He stated any action was progress. He indicated he was present on behalf of the many citizens in Broken Arrow who appreciated this discussion and this resolution. He stated this resolution showed the City’s solidarity with local businesses and did not place a burden on the City’s police officers. He stated this resolution was not a mandate. He stated he was thankful to live in a city where the governing body was transparent. He stated he had a firm faith in God, was blessed to live in Broken Arrow.

Citizen Joshua Jackson stated his address was 13689 E. 61st Street. He stated he was the regional manager of five stores with one in Broken Arrow. He stated regardless of how it was worded this resolution could be viewed as a mandate. He discussed his business records noting currently his business was bringing in 15% less than it should be due to COVID and he worried this resolution would worsen the situation. He stated Broken Arrow was currently a beacon for surrounding municipalities; patrons came to Broken Arrow for services and shopping and this resolution would discourage this. He stated any businesses which did not enforce a mask mandate would be publicly shamed by the media if this resolution were passed.

Citizen Rosemary Korb stated her address was 4309 S. 2nd Street. She stated she was a registered nurse with a Ph.D. She stated she loved Broken Arrow. She stated she prayed for Broken Arrow daily. She stated she believed Broken Arrow needed circumspect governance to overcome a manufactured panic to control and manipulate people, change laws, limit and confiscate freedom. She asked what had been done in Broken Arrow to alleviate fear, and to build up the population with education, support, assistance with health practices, and nutritional guidance. She asked where were the mandates which educated people regarding how to build up immune systems. She stated a nation could not survive a traitor and treason from within. She stated COVID was not the only enemy of the U.S. She asked for new paradigms of governance and health guidelines which would facilitate safeguards which helped and protections which were effective. She stated the community needed to unite, love each other, and consolidate as a single unit to overcome this giant. She stated Broken Arrow could be the “city on the hill” and a prototype for others to follow. She quoted an email from a friend of hers who was suffering from chronic pain.

Mayor Thurmond noted Ms. Korb was the final speaker and now the City Council Members would deliberate. He stated he personally did not feel a mask was the effective solution. He noted it was important to practice good hygiene, social distancing, and work to build up immunity. He stated it was important to take vitamins and exercise, but as a City this would never be mandated, nor would mask wearing be mandated. He noted Broken Arrow would

never say how much soda an individual was permitted to consume. He indicated the business portion of the resolution could be cut and the resolution could simply encourage residents to social distance and if social distancing were not possible then encourage residents to wear a mask to respect others.

Council Member Wimpee stated she was against the portion of the resolution which cautioned against gatherings.

Mayor Thurmond stated he was fine with removing this portion of the resolution. He noted there would be gatherings.

Council Member Gillespie noted Broken Arrow was following the governor's orders. She indicated she was raised not to fear, but she did not judge others who were more fearful. She noted this resolution was simply a reiteration. She noted the resolution which was passed in Owasso was reported as a mandate by the media. She indicated she worried many residents would use this resolution to push mask wearing on others. She discussed the data which was contradictory regarding the efficacy of mask use. She discussed a published study from Mount Sinai indicating statistically masks made no difference in the spread of COVID, nor did social distancing or quarantine. She commented on the fact that non-symptomatic individuals were being tested for COVID which increased the numbers of cases; this was not done for the flu or any other virus, therefore, the numbers were not comparable. She discussed the importance of practicing common sense. She discussed her concerns for Broken Arrow's long-term care facilities (which followed all health and mask precautions) from which one third of the COVID deaths emanated. She stated she was opposed to this resolution but would like to see a resolution in the new year which addressed how citizens could become healthier.

Council Member Parks stated there would not be a mask mandate if it was not initiated by Mayor Thurmond. He stated Broken Arrow always led the State of Oklahoma. He stated he was in support of a mask mandate if the case numbers kept rising. He discussed case numbers in Broken Arrow compared to Tulsa and Edmond. He stated he would like to see the case numbers go down in Broken Arrow. He stated he felt the resolution was good but gatherings with social distancing should not be discouraged. He stated business owners already had a right to not serve an individual who did not follow business regulations; this included mask regulations. He stated he felt the resolution would help support the business community. He noted the press needed to understand this was not a mandate. He noted a mandate could come from the governor if the case numbers kept increasing.

Vice Mayor Eudey asked the audience to be respectful of the City Council Members and cease interruptions.

Mayor Thurmond stated the same decorum as expected in a court of law was expected in the Council Chambers. He noted continued outbursts would not be tolerated.

Vice Mayor Eudey stated Tulsa World claimed the City Council's discussion last week regarding COVID did not provide any real information which he felt was a misstatement. He noted four of his family members attended Rhema Bible Training College. He stated he and Council Member Parks prayed together many times. He noted Council Member Parks prayed before every City Council Meeting. He stated he believed all the City Council Members prayed before each meeting. He noted the City Council did not take its job lightly. He stated God had not given him a spirit of fear, but had given him a spirit of peace, love and sound mind which gave him the ability to think things through clearly. He noted Council Member Parks had wanted to give anyone who wished to address this issue an opportunity to speak. He indicated the Bible said "come, let us reason together;" this was being done today. He stated the purpose of this meeting was to allow the City Council to hear from the public, reason together reasonably and appropriately, and make the best decision possible given the information available. He stated he believed he, speaking as an elected official and an attorney, lacked the legal authority to mandate masks. He stated he certainly felt he lacked the authority to criminalize the non-wearing of a mask. He stated he felt it was unconstitutional and illegal to criminalize the failure to wear a mask even if it would be wise. He stated he believed there was some science which showed mask wearing was beneficial just as there was some which showed it was not. He noted this was his opinion and reasonable people could differ in opinions. He stated he believed COVID was real as he had seen individuals die as a result of COVID. He noted these individuals were over the age of 80 and had comorbidities, but these were still people, someone's grandmother or grandfather. He stated COVID-19 could be deadly for the elderly and those with comorbidities. He noted he restricted his visits with his 73-year-old mother who had comorbidities and his 91-year-old grandmother because he did not want to run the risk of exposing either to the virus. He stated this was not fear, this was common sense. He stated he supported and encouraged social distancing, and he supported mask wearing if an individual so chose. He indicated he read all the data which was sent to him by the public. He stated he supported any preventative measure such as vitamin C and zinc. He noted he understood there was much controversy

regarding this issue, but he would follow his conscious and common sense. He stated he received numerous emails after the resolution was published saying the resolution was "stupid, half-witted," etc., and mostly these were from individuals who wanted a mask mandate. He noted he received emails from individuals against the resolution believing it would take away freedoms. He stated he walked into this meeting with an open mind about the resolution, wishing to hear what the public had to say, and he thanked the public for the courteous comments. He stated because most were opposed to this resolution and those who wanted a mask mandate would not be satisfied by the resolution, he did not support this resolution. He stated he was disappointed in general and wished others could understand and respect the fact some felt the mask was highly beneficial. He stated it was poor behavior to berate those who felt the mask was beneficial, as well as to berate those who did not. He stated this resolution was intended to remind the public to be respectful of others and support businesses which chose to require masks, as well as those which did not. He stated he was disappointed as he had hoped the community could come together as a group and reason together. He thanked the public for its input.

Council Member Wimpee stated the City had always encouraged the citizens of Broken Arrow to behave appropriately and respectfully and stay safe. She noted she felt the City was continuing to encourage the public to stay safe.

MOTION: A motion was made by Christi Gillespie, seconded by Debra Wimpee.

Move to deny Resolution No. 1360

The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 4 - Christi Gillespie, Debra Wimpee, Scott Eudey, Craig Thurmond
Nay: 1 - Johnnie Parks

The resolution was denied.

5. Adjournment

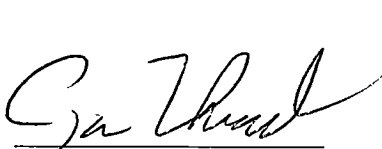
The meeting adjourned at approximately 7:40 p.m.

MOTION: A motion was made by Johnnie Parks, seconded by Scott Eudey.


Move to adjourn

The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 5 - Christi Gillespie, Debra Wimpee, Johnnie Parks, Scott Eudey, Craig Thurmond



Mayor



City Clerk

