

February 5, 2024

COUNCIL WORK SESSION
Harold E. Getty Council Chambers
4:45 p.m.

Roll Call

Members present: Mayor Pro Tem Ray Feuss in the Chair. Mr. Boesen, Mr. Nichols, Ms. Creighton-Smith, Mr. Chiles, Mr. Simon, Ms. Wilder and Mr. Feuss.

Agenda, as proposed or amended

Nichols/Wilder

that the agenda as proposed, be approved. Voice vote-Ayes: Seven. Motion carried.

Approval of Minutes of January 16, 2024, as proposed or amended.

Nichols/Wilder

that the minutes of January 16, 2024, as proposed, be approved. Voice vote-Ayes: Seven. Motion carried.

Discussion of an amendment to the City of Waterloo Travel Policy.

Bridgett Wood, Finance Director, provided an overview of the amendment to the travel policy.

City council members discussed the amendments to the City of Waterloo Travel Policy with the Finance Director.

Nichols/Wilder

to recess at 4:48 p.m. Voice vote-Ayes: Seven. Motion Carried.

Wilder/Chiles

to adjourn recess at 4:53 p.m. Voice vote-Ayes: Seven. Motion carried.

Discussion of a resolution titled, "Resolution supporting a permanent ceasefire in Palestine and Israel, the return of all hostages, and the delivery of humanitarian aid; and affirming opposition to antisemitism, Islamophobia and anti-arab bigotry with the aim of achieving a just and lasting political solution."

Abraham Funchess, Human Rights Director, provided an overview of the proposed resolution. He shared that this resolution is consistent with the International Human Rights Proclamation.

Mr. Feuss commented that he has been asked why we as city counselors should be concerned and why should we pass the resolution.

Abraham Funchess shared that people within our borders are being impacted by what is happening in the Middle East, similarly to how the killing of George Floyd impacted people living in Waterloo. He shared that it is further a demonstration of their sensitivity to people at Tysons and at the Universities and Colleges that are impacted by what is happening in other parts of

the world.

Mr. Feuss questioned if this will be brought forth in Cedar Falls and the Black Hawk County Supervisors.

Mr. Nichols questioned if the Human Rights Commission has any initiatives planned in connection with this resolution.

Abraham Funchess commented that teach-ins would be held regarding the historicity of the conflict in Israel and Palestine and hopefully learn about probable solutions.

Mr. Boesen questioned if the resolution does not pass could the Human Rights Commission continue to move forward with education.

Abraham Funchess commented that they would continue to advocate for the populations involved.

Mr. Boesen commented that he does not believe this is within city purview and questioned where was the outcry when Russia invaded Ukraine and considering all that is happening across the world, why this conflict and ignore the rest of the world.

Abraham Funchess shared that citizens in Waterloo approached the Human Rights Commission about this particular situation.

Ms. Creighton-Smith commented that part of the reason so many cities in Iowa are responding to this conflict is the amount of money coming from Iowa that is paying for the war. She shared that the comments about black lives matter really resonate with her as she recalls watching people across the world protesting the killing of George Floyd. She stated that some students have not been willing to come to class due to being overwhelmed with fear for themselves and that they don't know where their loved ones are. She commended Mr. Funchess and the commission for their courageous move.

Ms. Wilder commented that Iowa taxpayer dollars are contributing over twenty-five million to the war, and over one million of that is coming from Waterloo and questioned why someone would not consider this to be a Waterloo issue. She asked what type of environment might be produced if the cities in Iowa decided to take a stand against this type of behavior.

Abraham Funchess explained that this would produce a friendly environment for those who come from out of town who may be considering whether to make Waterloo their home. It would also send a powerful message to our very diverse population that we are truly concerned about enriching the lives of those that are diverse and living in our community.

Mr. Simon shared that during his campaign he was told by hundreds of people that they don't want divisive politics brought to the city council. He thanked Mr. Funchess for his work and dedication and said that this is a human rights issue that would best be managed by the Human Rights Commission, not the City Council.

Mr. Chiles shared that he does not believe that this resolution achieves the goal that it states, and as a council, our resolutions are law. This would simply be a symbolic jester and he prefers to focus on what's going on in Waterloo and our current budget situation. He very much

supports the work the Human Rights Commission is doing but does not feel this falls within the purview of the City Council. He stated that he has received a significant amount of emails from constituents in his ward that do not believe this belongs before the city council.

Mr. Nichols commented on why he believes this is a tangible matter for City Council to consider.

Mr. Feuss asked that the director come back to the next work session on February 19th to continue discussion.

Abraham Funchess highlighted the fact that this is a human rights issue.

ADJOURNMENT

Boesen/Chiles

that the council adjourn at 5:12 p.m. Voice vote-Ayes: Seven. Motion carried.

Kelley Felchle
City Clerk