

March 15, 2020

5:00 PM

Following the Saturday, March 14, 2020 afternoon update from Governor Roy Cooper and other State officials, and in coordination with State of North Carolina and Forsyth County Emergency Management efforts, the City of King is implementing several special measures to guard the health and safety of our citizens, staff, volunteers and others. We are working with our local, state, and federal partners to ensure we are making responsible and effective efforts to aid in the containment of the COVID-19 virus. On Sunday, March 15, 2020 the King City Council met in special session to discuss steps we can take to ensure the health of those who work in or visit City offices, and ensure services and City functions continue with the most limited interruption possible. As we continue to learn more and respond accordingly, we must err on the side of minimizing the effects on emergency and medical personnel who are working to test patients and contain the spread of the virus, and the effects on those who are more susceptible to sickness such as those with pre-existing medical conditions or compromised immune systems.

A State of Emergency Declaration has been reviewed by the City Council, and will take effect on Monday, March 16, 2020 at 8:30am. This State of Emergency requires no restrictions on citizens, but is accompanied by several temporary changes to City operations designed to limit exposure, allow for cleaning, and allow temporary staffing changes due to any absences related to childcare needs, health concerns, or other reasons as this threat continues.

Please read the following information carefully, as it includes plans for the next several days while schools are closed, and while we continue to learn more and implement additional measures as necessary.

CITY HALL & OFFICE STAFF OPERATION PLANS AND GUIDELINES

Effective Monday, March 16, 2020 at 8:30 am, King's City Hall will be open to the public from 8:30 am until 1:30 pm on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. During these times, the only publicly accessible area will be the lobby and restrooms in the front of the building. All other areas will be designated as "Employee Only" in order to minimize exposure to sickness, as well as to minimize necessary cleaning and sanitizing by limiting areas that might be contaminated.

The public is reminded to keep a safe distance of at least six feet (6') from others, and signage will remind citizens of the safe social distance, hand washing, and sanitizing recommendations from the CDC. The City Hall drive thru will remain open during regular business hours from 8:30 am until 5:00 pm each day Monday thru Friday for utility billing transactions ONLY; other utility transactions (new accounts, terminating service, billing history requests, etc) should be handled inside at the payment window.

The night drop box will remain unlocked for after-hours payments. City personnel handling cash, checks, cards, or other documents will do so using recommended protocols, and personal protective equipment (PPE) will be made available, including disposable gloves until the COVID-19 threat subsides or is at least better understood.

All employees are required to remain available to work on administrative tasks during hours that offices are closed; these intermittent closures will assist with emergency planning efforts as directed, and cleaning and sanitizing personal work spaces, frequently visited areas, and public spaces in City facilities.

Public Utilities

The City Hall drive thru will remain open daily from 8:30am until 5:00 pm, and utility customers may continue making payments via mail or the night drop at their convenience, or at the payment window in City Hall during hours that offices are open to the public. We are also encouraging customers to make payments online or by telephone using the InvoiceCloud system, which is linked from the City's website.

Due to the City's interest in doing its part toward a positive public health outcome, the \$2.95 transaction fee for customers paying with a credit card will be credited to the user's utility account until the State of Emergency is lifted. City Staff will keep accurate records and receipts for these remote payments for the purpose of submitting with emergency expenditures.

Utility connection and repair work orders received or scheduled outside of the modified operating hours stated above will follow priority response guidelines for utility personnel based on the severity or urgency of the request. Customer questions or guidance may be handled via telephone during regular business hours

Effective Monday, March 16, 2020 until the City of King's State of Emergency declaration is lifted, City of King utility customers will not be subject to disconnection of services due to non-payment, or paying the associated reconnection fee for accounts that would have been disconnected following the Emergency Declaration. We recognize that during a public health emergency, it is essential that all customers have the ability to wash hands and sanitize frequently touched surfaces, practice good personal and home hygiene, and have access to clean and safe drinking water. This is a temporary grace period to ensure everyone's health during this emergency, and customers are reminded that they will be responsible for payment of the total bill owed and accrued due to consumption and any late fees or penalties incurred. Utility accounts will be subject to disconnection after no more than 10 calendar days following the City of King's State of Emergency being lifted.

Planning, Zoning, and Inspections

Contractors, homeowners, and any other customers who need planning & zoning or permitting & inspection services will be able to transact business with staff at the City Hall utility payment window. These transactions will be permitted ONLY during the hours City Hall is open to the public (8:30 am until 1:30 pm, Monday, Wednesday and Friday). Inspections requests and other transactions will need to be handled via email and phone calls or on an appointment basis at other times. Contracted inspectors may be utilized to handle requests due to staff shortages.

Parks and Recreation Programs

All events with anticipated attendance of 100 or more participants are to be cancelled or postponed in accordance with the Governor's recent order. The City of King has cancelled the travel softball tournament scheduled for Saturday, March 21, 2020 and is closely monitoring conditions and emergency management updates to make a decision concerning the City's Easter Egg Hunt, scheduled on Saturday, April 11, 2020 at Central Park.

Parks and Recreation programs of less than 100 attendees will be reviewed on a case by case basis based on the ability to comply with the most recent accepted public health guidelines. As activities are cancelled or postponed, advance notice will be provided ASAP.

Senior Center Programs

Effective Monday, March 16, 2020 at 8:00 am, all Senior Center Activities are suspended until further notice. If deemed necessary to suspend regularly scheduled programs for an extended time period, appropriate notice will be given. The Senior Center will remain open during modified City office hours to assist patrons with accessing needed resources, as well as to check on and ensure the welfare of patrons to the extent necessary and able.

All Other City Departments and Functions

All other operations, including Public Safety, Public Works, Public Utilities, and Water Plant processes will operate on a normal schedule. Until further notice, public access will be restricted to lobbies or waiting areas, except in limited situations and certain areas when necessary.

Staff are requested to maintain all records and receipts of any financial transaction related to the City's emergency response, as they will be required to for reimbursement purposes.

Signage will be placed at all city facilities to remind the public of CDC guidelines for social distancing, hand washing, sanitizing, and other selected guidelines released by health experts and authorities.

Due to the closure of public schools, childcare issues are now a major concern in addition to exposure concerns for vulnerable individuals due to risk factors identified by public health officials. To help minimize exposure risks, some employees may be eligible to work off-site or on a reduced schedule with the approval of their Department Head and City Manager. All employees will be required to keep accurate records of work time and time away from work related to public health concerns on City of King time sheets.

Meetings of City Boards and Committees

All face to face meetings are suspended until further notice except in the event of an emergency, or as deemed critical to City operations or emergency protocols. This includes city boards and other scheduled meetings involving participants outside of city employment. The City Council will be provided regular updates of major developments by the City Manager and by City Staff as authorized. The City Council will meet on Friday, March 20 at 3:30 pm to evaluate how processes are working during this period, and discuss relevant updates related to COVID-19 and our response.

Other Updates

Onsite meals for senior citizens at the Recreation Acres Community Building have been suspended; plans are to still use the site for meal deliveries. Facility rentals will be evaluated on a case by case basis, and may be held if within mandatory guidelines issued in the Governor's Executive Order.

WalMart stores nationwide have announced they will be closing at 11:00 pm and reopening at 6:00 am each day, and they and other local businesses are keeping the City and emergency responders informed of their plans, as well as supply and logistics updates as needed. We are working with local businesses

and our strategic partners from other agencies to coordinate our efforts as closely as possible to ensure health and safety, and to keep up with the latest updates.

These decisions have a need for fluidity which will be expressed to employees, the City Council, and to the public as necessary moving forward. The positive case count for COVID-19 has reached 23 cases in 12 North Carolina counties as of Saturday afternoon; operations may need to be adjusted for additional closures if cases increase.

We remind everyone to follow these guidelines:

- o Stay home when you are sick. Those experiencing symptoms should avoid public areas, avoid public transportation, and separate as much as possible from others in the same household or other confined space.
- o Wash your hands frequently (after sneezing, blowing your nose, before eating or preparing food, after unavoidable direct contact with another person in public spaces) with warm, soapy water for at least 20 seconds
- o Cover your mouth with tissues whenever you sneeze or blow your nose, and discard used tissues in the trash.
- o Avoid people who are sick with respiratory symptoms, or facilities where more vulnerable (sick or elderly) individuals are gathered, i.e. hospitals, assisted living facilities, etc.
- o Clean frequently touched surfaces regularly
- o Avoid direct personal contact, such as shaking hands, as much as possible while in public spaces and in your encounters with others. A six-foot distance between you and another person is recommended

This effort to maintain the continuity of City operations as we continue to address this rapidly changing COVID-19 public health emergency requires the attention, action, cooperation, and flexibility of all City of King officials and personnel and that of the general public. In certain circumstances, it may be necessary to take further action in order to address safety and health concerns. In those instances, we will strive to provide updates to all interested parties in an appropriate format and as quickly as possible.

Thank you for everyone's continued patience and understanding.

Homer Dearmin

City Manager