

## City Council Emergency Meeting

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Meeting Date: 04/03/2020

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**Information****SUBJECT**

Consideration and action on approving an ordinance extending the disaster declaration for the COVID-19 (Coronavirus) pandemic. **Bradi Diaz, Mayor**

**BACKGROUND/HISTORY**

In December 2019, a novel coronavirus, now designated COVID-19, was detected in Wuhan City, Hubei Province, China. Symptoms of COVID-19 include fever, cough, and shortness of breath. Outcomes have ranged from mild to severe illness, and in some cases death. On January 30, 2020, the World Health Organization Director General declared the outbreak of COVID-19 as a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC), advising countries to prepare for the containment, detection, isolation and case management, contact tracing and prevention of onward spread of the disease. On March 5, 2020, the World Health Organization Director General urged aggressive preparedness and activation of emergency plans to aggressively change the trajectory of this epidemic. On March 11, 2020, the World Health Organization declared that the COVID-19 outbreak should be characterized as pandemic.

President Donald Trump declared a national emergency on March 13, 2020. Governor Greg Abbott declared a public health disaster on March 13, 2020. On March 15, 2020, the Center for Disease Control ("CDC") lowered the recommended number of persons at mass gatherings to 50 persons. On March 16, 2020, the CDC lowered the recommended number of persons at mass gatherings to 10 persons. On March 30, 2020, the CDC released the President's Coronavirus Guidelines for America: 30 Days to Slow the Spread.

On March 19, 2020, Texas Governor Greg Abbott issued Executive Order GA-08 prohibiting social gatherings in excess of 10 people, avoid eating in restaurants, and prohibit general visitations at long-term care facilities. Texas Commissioner of Public Health Doctor John Hellerstedt issued a Declaration of a Public Health Disaster in the State of Texas on the same day. Since March 19, 2020, the Governor issued several orders dealing with hospital care and other services during this crisis, and, at his March 22, 2020 press conference, the Governor acknowledged that the urban centers may need to enact more stringent measures to address this public emergency and stated that he would applaud the cities for doing so.

The COVID-19 virus spreads between people who are in close contact with one another through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes. The scientific evidence shows that at this stage of the emergency, it is essential to slow virus transmission as much as possible to protect the most vulnerable and to prevent the health care system from being overwhelmed. One proven way to slow the transmission is to limit interactions among people to the greatest extent practicable. The CDC recommends in the President's Coronavirus Guidelines for America:

- Listen to and follow the directions of your state and local authorities.
- If you feel sick, stay home. Do not go to work. Contact your medical provider.
- If your children are sick, keep them at home. Do not send them to school. Contact your medical provider.

- If someone in your household has tested positive for the coronavirus, keep the entire household at home. Do not go to work, Do not go to school. Contact your medical provider.
- If you are an older person, stay home and away from other people.
- If you are a person with a serious underlying health condition that can put you at increased risk (for example, a condition that impairs your lung or heart function or weakens your immune system), stay home and away from other people.

Do your part to slow the spread of the coronavirus:

- Work or engage in schooling from home whenever possible.
- If you work in a critical infrastructure industry, as defined by the Department of Homeland Security, such as healthcare services and pharmaceutical and food supply, you have a special responsibility to maintain your normal work schedule. You and your employers should follow CDC guidance to protect your health at work.
- Avoid social gatherings in groups of more than 10 people.
- Avoid eating or drinking at bars, restaurants, and food courts – use drive-thru, pickup, or delivery options.
- Avoid discretionary travel, shopping trips, and social visits.
- Do not visit nursing homes or retirement or long-term care facilities unless to provide critical assistance.
- Practice good hygiene:
  - Wash your hands, especially after touching any frequently used item or surfaces.
  - Avoid touching your face.
  - Sneeze or cough into a tissue, or the inside of your elbow.
  - Disinfect frequently used items and surfaces as much as possible.

The number of tested and confirmed COVID-19 cases and resulting deaths in the United States and Texas is a constantly changing number. The most current information can be accessed at [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov) and [www.dshs.state.tx.us](http://www.dshs.state.tx.us).

#### FINDINGS/CURRENT ACTIVITY

Pursuant to the Texas Disaster Act of 1975, the mayor is designated as the emergency management director of the City of Copperas Cove, and may exercise the powers granted to the governor on an appropriate local scale. A declaration of local disaster and public health emergency includes the ability to take measures to reduce the possibility of exposure to disease, control the risk, promote the health and safety of Copperas Cove residents, compel persons to undergo additional health measures that prevent or control the spread of disease, including isolation, surveillance, quarantine, or placement of persons under public health observation. Additionally, a disaster declaration must be issued to be eligible for expense reimbursement from state and federal sources for actions and activities responding to a disaster.

On March 20, 2020, Mayor Diaz has made a Declaration of Public Health Emergency consistent with Governor Abbott's Executive Order GA-08, and further declared all rules and regulations that may inhibit or prevent prompt response to this threat were suspended for the duration of the incident. On March 26, 2020, City Council approved Ordinance 2020-21 to extend the declaration through April 3, 2020, and did not approve a "shelter-in-place" ordinance.

The City of Copperas Cove is working collaboratively with Coryell, Bell and Lampasas Counties, and other area agencies and political subdivisions to ensure that all appropriate and necessary measures are taken to limit the development, contraction and spread of COVID-19.

On March 31, 2020, Governor Abbott issued Executive Order GA-14 with the following rules and regulations effective April 1, 2020 at midnight:

- In accordance with guidance from DSHS Commissioner Dr. Hellerstedt, and to achieve the goals established by the President to reduce the spread of COVID-19, every person in Texas shall, except where necessary to provide or obtain essential services, minimize social gatherings and minimize in-person contact with people who are not in the same household.
- “Essential services” shall consist of everything listed by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security in its Guidance on the Essential Critical Infrastructure Workforce, Version 2.0, plus religious services conducted in churches, congregations, and houses of worship. Other essential services may be added to this list with the approval of the Texas Division of Emergency Management (TDEM). TDEM shall maintain an online list of essential services, as specified in this executive order and in any approved additions. Requests for additions should be directed to TDEM at [EssentialServices@tdem.texas.gov](mailto:EssentialServices@tdem.texas.gov) or by visiting [www.tdem.texas.gov/essential-services](http://www.tdem.texas.gov/essential-services).
- In providing or obtaining essential services, people and businesses should follow the Guidelines from the President and the CDC by practicing good hygiene, environmental cleanliness, and sanitation, implementing social distancing, and working from home if possible. In particular, all services should be provided through remote telework from home unless they are essential services that cannot be provided through remote telework. If religious services cannot be conducted from home or through remote services, they should be conducted consistent with the Guidelines from the President and the CDC by practicing good hygiene, environmental cleanliness, and sanitation, and by implementing social distancing to prevent the spread of COVID-19.
- In accordance with the Guidelines from the President and the CDC, people shall avoid eating or drinking at bars, restaurants, and food courts, or visiting gyms, massage establishments, tattoo studios, piercing studios, or cosmetology salons; provided, however, that the use of drive-thru, pickup, or delivery options for food and drinks is allowed and highly encouraged throughout the limited duration of this executive order.
- This executive order does not prohibit people from accessing essential services or engaging in essential daily activities, such as going to the grocery store or gas station, providing or obtaining other essential services, visiting parks, hunting or fishing, or engaging in physical activity like jogging or bicycling, so long as the necessary precautions are maintained to reduce the transmission of COVID-19 and to minimize in-person contact with people who are not in the same household.
- In accordance with the Guidelines from the President and the CDC, people shall not visit nursing homes, state supported living centers, assisted living facilities, or long-term care facilities unless to provide critical assistance as determined through guidance from the Texas Health and Human Services Commission.

The rules and regulations in GA-14 does not mandate sheltering in place. All critical infrastructure will remain operational and government entities and businesses will continue providing essential services. For offices and workplaces that remain open, employees should practice good hygiene and, where feasible, work from home in order to achieve optimum isolation from COVID-19. The more that people reduce their public contact, the sooner COVID-19 will be contained and the sooner the Governor’s executive order will be rescinded.

The attached local ordinance extending the disaster declaration again aligns our City’s actions with the Governor’s Executive Order GA-14.

#### ACTION OPTIONS/RECOMMENDATION

Mayor Diaz recommends City Council approve the disaster declaration for COVID-19.

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#### Attachments

Ordinance No. 2020-22

CDC Coronavirus Guidance

Texas Declaration of Public Health Disaster

Governor Abbot - Exec Order GA-14

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