



CITY OF WHEATLAND

CITY COUNCIL MEETING STAFF REPORT

April 28, 2020

SUBJECT: Wheatland COVID 19 Local Emergency Update
PREPARED BY: Jim Goodwin, City Manager

Recommendation

Receive and file report.

Background/Discussion

In March both the State of California and Yuba County declared emergencies related to the COVID 19 pandemic impacting the globe. Although Wheatland is covered by these broader emergency declarations, Wheatland declared the existence of a local emergency on March 26, 2020. Once declared, the local emergency remains in effect until the City Council, by resolution, declares an end to the local emergency.

As a public health emergency, much of the public response has been conducted at the county level. Sutter and Yuba Counties have been working together, with support of the four cities in the region, on a collaborative response. Communication between agencies has been excellent.

Below is the latest update on how your city staff is responding to the emergency and the obligation to provide essential services and observe social distancing.

1. We have a small staff, so all our permanent employees are deemed essential and must be available to provide services to Wheatland residents.
2. With that said, within our workforce both age and the presence of underlying medical conditions place some employees at higher risk of serious complications should they contract the virus. We have taken measures to be able to continue providing services and take good care of our workforce. The following measures are in effect:
 - a. We are operating with minimum staffing within City Hall, with all employees present exceeding the 6' recommended social distancing requirement. When employees are at home and not at City Hall, they are expected to be available as necessary to answer questions and/or perform whatever tasks they can from home. Key staff have remote VPN connections to the city server.

- b. City Hall is closed to the public and the minimum staffing is present Monday through Thursday from 8:00 a.m. to 5 p.m. to provide service via phone and email. Utility payments are being accepted by mail, the drop box at City Hall or over the phone. Masks are worn in common areas, gloves are worn when handling the mail, and high touch areas are cleaned frequently. We will be able to sustain this level of service if our team stays healthy.
 - c. Our Department Heads are back on a regular meeting schedule, with one Department Head meeting each week on Wednesdays at 10:30 a.m. This meeting is conducted as a Zoom meeting.
 - d. Public Works personnel are working on the most important tasks required to ensure water and sewer operations and other basic maintenance of city property and equipment. Personnel work as individuals unless a team is required. Masks are to be worn and frequent cleaning and sanitizing of high touch surfaces.
 - e. The Wheatland PD is continuing normal operations. Officers are now wearing face masks when in public. The Police Department is closed to the public. There is frequent cleaning and sanitizing of high touch surfaces.
 - f. Wheatland Fire Authority is continuing normal operations.
 - g. We are currently preparing for our employees returning to work within City Hall and to maintain Monday through Friday staffing. We have plans to install clear extensions of the cubicle walls to provide better social distancing between employees. We are also exploring installing a clear barrier along the top of the City Hall counter to provide a stronger social distancing barrier to facilitate public access to City Hall. Our current planning is for a return to regular work schedules on May 4. I will provide an update next week.
3. The Mayor and City Manager participate in regular Yuba Sutter regional briefings. There has been tremendous collaboration among agencies during this emergency. The City Manager is also participating in a weekly administrator's conference call specifically regarding the COVID 19 emergency.
 4. The Police Chief and City Manager have been active in a Yuba Sutter Compliance Working Group to ensure a common, regional approach for compliance with both statewide and local Stay at Home orders. We did close our playgrounds and encouraged private complexes with playgrounds to take similar action. Wheatland is not experiencing significant problems with compliance.
 5. The regional compliance group has become a regional coordinating body to create recommendations for easing the current bi-county Stay at Home Order. Three subgroups are at work—Businesses, Gatherings and Recreation—creating recommendations for Bi -County Health Officer Dr. Luu. It is anticipated this work will be reflected in an order from Dr. Luu beginning May 4. The current order ends on May 3.
 6. Assemblyman James Gallagher and Senator Nielsen are working with local governments in their districts to encourage the Governor to allow local Public Health Officers to determine appropriate local actions and move away from a “cookie cutter” statewide approach. Mayor West has participated in this effort.
 7. We are doing our best to share information on the wheatland.ca.gov website and both the City of Wheatland and the Wheatland PD Facebook pages. Our City Clerk and Police Chief have been working together to make sure key information appears in all three places when appropriate. Many City of Wheatland posts have been shared on other local Facebook pages or groups like Friends of Wheatland, Real Friends of Wheatland, and Wheatland Friends Network. The website has a dedicated page for COVID 19 emergency updates.
 8. We collaborated with our school districts to share a message through social media from the Mayor encouraging the community to observe social distancing.

9. We are facilitating public meetings via Zoom. We conducted a Public Meeting regarding the Housing Element on 3/31, the Planning Commission met on April 7, the City Council met on April 14 and tonight's meeting (April 28). Currently I anticipated remote meetings through May, with a return to a normal meeting format in June.
10. A financial impact report was shared at the April 14 City Council meeting. Staff is working toward a FY 20/21 budget discussion on May 12 and hopes to have more information to share regarding COVID 19 emergency impacts and strategies to mitigate those impacts.

I will continue to keep you informed regularly and will include a similar report on each City Council agenda until the emergency is behind us.