

March 19, 2020

Message from Mayor Struck

In the wake of the COVID 19 virus, the City of South Bend has taken several steps I would like you to be aware of.

First, we are encouraging everyone to use the drop box for their payments located to the right of the entrance door to City Hall. If you have paperwork to turn in – we are asking you to please mail it, place it in the drop box or e-mail it to the city. Beginning Monday, March 23rd the lobby door will be locked. Please don't hesitate to call if you would like to talk to someone from the city. The number to call is 360-875-5571 and it is posted on the door. If your need is urgent, we can open the door for you. Please call first. We are limiting staff contact with the public in order to avoid infection.

Second, the Water Treatment Plant is fully operational. In the event one of our plant operators contracts COVID 19, we have a backup operator. The plant can also be monitored and adjustments to the controls can be made via cell phone. If those measures prove to be insufficient, there is a state network of operators that are available as a backup and Gray & Osbourne Engineering Firm also is able to operate our plant. The Water Treatment Plant is a self-contained, isolated facility. There is no public access.

Third, our police officers and public works crew are avoiding close contact with the public as much as possible. They are still answering emergency calls, monitoring neighborhoods and are available to help any citizen that asks. They are utilizing "social distancing" methods whenever possible and using hand sanitizers liberally.

Fourth, our City Council meetings will still be held. We will only place necessary items on the agenda until the COVID 19 threat has passed. City Councilors will be given the option to attend the meetings by phone. Chairs will be placed in the council chamber six feet apart for the public. As always, the meetings will be taped and can be listened to on the City Website on demand within 72 hours after a meeting.

I have been staying in daily contact with the PC Emergency Operations Director, Scott McDougall and the PC Health Services Program Manager, Stephanie Michael. Both agencies are working together closely to guide elected officials and citizens in Pacific County as to how best prepare and defend against the COVID 19 virus. They are consulting with Dr. Steven Krager, the WA State

Public Health Officer for Pacific County. At this point, it is best to use the “social distancing” method to avoid a large-scale outbreak. Stay home as much as possible and if you do have to be out, stay at least six feet away from each other. Wash your hands often and don’t touch your face.

One of my greatest concerns is for our local restaurants and other businesses that have been asked to cease doing business as usual. I have been in contact with several legislators asking for some kind of help in the form of a grant or bailout that doesn’t have to be paid back to help these folks. Through no fault of their own, their livelihoods are in jeopardy. If you are one of the lucky ones that is still receiving a full paycheck and has a bit extra to share, I encourage you to reach out to them and give them a donation. Buy a meal to go and leave a generous tip if you can. Stop by City Hall and pay their water bill or go to the PUD and pay their electric bill. It’s time to pull together and help each other as much as possible. These businesses are sponsors of your children’s ball teams, donate to local service clubs and school events and are continuously giving to our community. It is time for us to return the favor. Let’s give them a hand up in this difficult time. Maybe you know someone that is out of work because of this. Help them if you can.

Local foodbanks and non-profits also need donations. The demand is high right now and the larder is low. Supplies are increasingly difficult to get. Cash donations will help tremendously.

Lastly, I’ll say thank you to all of our healthcare workers, first responders and police officers that safeguard our community and help each person in need – even with an increased risk to yourselves and your families. Your efforts are noticed and appreciated.

Should you have any questions, comments or concerns, I am normally available at City Hall Monday through Friday from 7:30 a.m. until 11:00 a.m. and from 2:30 p.m. until 4:00 p.m. 360-875-5571. Please don’t hesitate to reach out.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Mayor Julie K. Struck".

Mayor Julie Struck