

Emergency Council Meeting  
March 21, 2020

Due to the current public health risk situation involving the Novel Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19), an emergency teleconference was called to order on Saturday, March 21, 2020 at 3:17 p.m.

Members in Attendance: Mayor Buddy Duke, members Terry McClain, Greg Paige, Vivian Sharpe and Jody Greene

Others in Attendance: City Manager John Flythe, City Clerk/Asst. City Manager Rhonda Rowe, City Attorney Tim Tanner, Police Chief Chad Castleberry, Fire Chief Richie Weeks, Asst. Police Chief Audie Rowe, Community Director Randy Lane, and Maria Hardman with the Adel News Tribune.

Invocation: Councilman McClain

Mayor Duke opened the teleconference stating that he felt with the on-going activity in surrounding counties with positive test results, he felt it was in our best interest to be proactive. He noted that the county will be doing the same, with the possibility of the other cities in Cook County following suit.

Declaration #20-01: A declaration of the mayor and council of the City of Adel, Georgia declaring a local public health emergency resulting from the proliferation of the novel coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), was read for consideration by city attorney Tim Tanner. This proposed declaration follows the declaration by the President of the United States declaring a National Public Health Emergency on March 13, 2020 and the declaration by the Governor of the State of Georgia of a Public Health State of Emergency in Georgia on March 14, 2020. The City of Adel's declaration includes the following provisions: (a) the authority to conduct meetings and take votes by teleconference for all city council and all other boards, commissions or agencies of the city; (b) authorizes the city manager, with approval of the mayor, to take actions deemed necessary or appropriate for the public health and safety of the citizens of the City of Adel including the closure of city facilities; (c) restaurants and other eating and dining establishments where food is served must cease offering dine-in services, but may continue preparing and offering food to customers via delivery, drive-through or take-out services; (d) gyms and fitness centers shall close; (e) all public and private gatherings of more than ten (10) people occurring outside a household or living unit are prohibited. (this does not prohibit the gathering of individuals for the purposes of carrying on business activity or the provision of medical or health services; (f) if the city manager, John Flythe, is unable to perform his duties, city clerk Rhonda Rowe shall assume the duties of city manager.

The declaration further imposes a curfew from 9:00 p.m. to 5:00 a.m. for the city. Residents, unless they are "exempt individuals" as defined in the declaration, shall remain in their homes or on their property during this time.

The declaration will expire at 11:59 p.m. on April 17, 2020, unless terminated or extended by further action of the city council.

City Manager John Flythe asked if the declaration includes gatherings by churches. Mr. Tanner advised that yes, it does include religious gatherings. It would be the council's decision to exclude if they wished. They could exclude and encourage individuals to go on-line to view live streaming broadcasts. They have the option of not prohibiting, but encouraging. Councilman McClain stated that he did not think it was wise to not include churches since they are a public gathering. Mayor Duke added that he didn't want to offend, but we have got to do what is safe. Councilman McClain added that most are going on-line due to the proposed health risks. He would hate to make this one exception and regret it later. Councilwoman Sharpe stated that some cases did result from church gatherings and thinks the restriction needs to apply to all gatherings. Fire Chief Richie Weeks added that if the objective is to protect, then you will have to look at churches the same way. It was the consensus of the council to leave the declaration as written. It was noted that adjustments can be made to the declaration later if needed.

Councilman Terry McClain made a motion to adopt the Declaration. Councilwoman Vivian Sharpe seconded. During discussion, City Manager John Flythe inquired about businesses such as Tractor Supply and service stations; city attorney Tim Tanner stated that if persons are conducting their businesses, they are declared as an exempt individual. Mr. Tanner did state that in conversations with the Georgia Municipal Association, it could be a next step to close all non-essential businesses. We do want businesses such as grocery stores and pharmacies to remain open. We do not want a complete economic collapse. Councilwoman Sharpe encouraged taking actions to get a 3 month supply of medications. Mayor Duke stated we are mainly talking about essential versus non-essential, and where people gather with no benefit of being open. Councilman Greene mentioned that some places are requiring nail salons and hair salons to close. Councilman McClain questioned the enforcement of the curfew. Mr. Tanner stated we could add that violations are "punishable in accordance with the code of the city ordinances and establish a fine of up to \$500. We can see how it goes, encouraging residents to get off the street, and could write a citation for "interfering with an officer" if they don't comply. We are not looking to cite people. We just want them off the street and we can add to the declaration as needed. Mr. Flythe noted the need to invoke and warn of the curfew today.

A discussion was held to place the declaration on the City of Adel's website and facebook pages along with notification utilizing the county-wide code red system.

After a call of the votes, all members voted in favor of adopting the declaration. There were no opposing votes.

The meeting was adjourned.

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Rhonda P. Rowe, City Clerk

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Luther L. Duke III, Mayor