



Staff Report

TO: City Council
FROM: Todd Parton, City Manager
DATE: December 15, 2020
SUBJECT: **Receive an Update Regarding the Existing COVID-19 Pandemic and Provide Direction to Staff**

Background and Analysis:

City operations have been significantly impacted by various Federal and State level mandates and executive orders over the past 9 months. The fluidity of the situation has, at times, caused the closure of facilities like public parks and have necessitated alternative ways to deliver services. This has also included relocating employees, modifying workstations, and establishing employee rotational schedules to meet workplace safety guidelines.

California, as well as the rest of the country, has seen record setting spikes in COVID-19 infections and hospitalizations. Impacts of the Thanksgiving holiday are yet to be felt and resulting infection and hospitalization rates over the next several weeks are expected to remain high as the results of holiday exposures come to light. The State of California projects that the medical system will be at or beyond capacity statewide within the next couple of weeks.

The Christmas and New Year's holidays are also expected to result in the significant spread of COVID-19 infections with impacts being observed well into January 2021. In consideration of the already observed increasing rates of infection and elevated risks of exposure expected during the upcoming holiday season, I have directed that City Hall be closed to walk-up traffic from December 21, 2020, through January 3, 2021. There are five regular business days during this timeframe and the closure has been established to coincide with the conclusion of the December utility billing cycle. Except for the walk-up customer service window, full City operations will remain in effect in the same manner as was achieved with the prior City Hall closure.

A COVID-19 prevention policy was implemented for City staff earlier this year. This policy establishes protocols and practices for the workplace. OSHA has now mandated

that employers develop and implement a “Pandemic Training and Prevention Plan.” As a result, the existing policy is undergoing some minor modifications to meet the new OSHA requirements. A synopsis of the City’s existing COVID-19 policy is included as Attachment A and a full copy of the policy is included as Attachment B to this memorandum.

Several months ago, the Beaumont City Council determined that it was time to reopen public meetings to personal attendance by the general public provided that all social distancing requirements and guidelines were met. Considering the increasing levels of exposure, the few available seats in the City Council Chambers (3 to 4), and the opportunity for the general public to attend and participate remotely, City staff recommends that the City Council again suspend public attendance at meetings until further notice. This will help to reduce opportunities for exposure of the general public, City officials, and City staff.

City staff also recommends that the City Council discuss meeting protocols for those City officials who attend meetings in person during this time of elevated risk. It is recommended that the City Council consider a requirement that all officials observe protocols that are consistent with those of the COVID-19 prevention policy while attending public meetings in person with the notable requirement being to wear a mask while physically attending City meetings.

Due to the fluid nature of the pandemic and changing State and Federal orders and requirements, City staff also recommend that the City Council consider appointing two members as a subcommittee to meet with the City manager and provide direction for necessary policy and operational adjustments. Ideally the subcommittee could review and approve policy and operational protocols on a timing basis that coincides with the review of the City’s emergency declaration or earlier if conditions warrant.

Fiscal Impact:

City staff estimates that it cost approximately \$195 draft to this report.

Recommended Action:

City staff recommends that the City Council establish protocols for City officials who attend public meetings in person and appoint two members as a COVID-19 subcommittee to provide direction to the City manager for necessary policy and operational adjustments relative to changing State and Federal COVID-19 orders and requirements.

Attachments:

- A. Synopsis of City of Beaumont COVID-19 Prevention Policy
- B. City of Beaumont COVID-19 Prevention Policy