

RESOLUTION

NO.

A resolution re-imposing a Public Health State of Emergency in Columbus, Georgia; providing for public meetings to be held using telephonic or video participation; confirming the Mayor's current directive that facemasks be worn in all Columbus Consolidated Government indoor facilities; providing authorization for the Mayor to respond to ongoing COVID-19 developments by Executive Order; and for other purposes.

WHEREAS, Columbus, Georgia, has experienced an event of critical significance as a result of the Coronavirus disease ("COVID-19") which has continued to worsen over time; and

WHEREAS, on June 30, 2021, the last Public Health State of Emergency declared by Governor Brian Kemp in Georgia expired; and

WHEREAS, the Charter of the Columbus, Georgia grants to this Council the power to protect the safety, health, peace, security and general welfare of the inhabitants of the consolidated government. Columbus Charter §3-104 (2); and

WHEREAS, according to the Georgia Department of Public Health Daily Status Report for Thursday, August 26th, 2021, Georgia has seen a resurgence in the number of confirmed cases of COVID-19, including 666 new confirmed cases per 100,000 residents during the last 14 days in Columbus, Georgia/ Muscogee County; and

WHEREAS, if COVID-19 continues to spread in Columbus, Georgia, and the surrounding communities, the number of persons relying on medical, pharmaceutical, and general cleaning supplies will increase, the private and public sector work force will be negatively impacted by absenteeism, and the demand for medical facilities may exceed locally available resources; and

WHEREAS, the CDC indicates that there is evidence of increased community transmission due to the Delta variant in Georgia; and

WHEREAS, the CDC and public health officials expect that additional cases of COVID- 19 will continue to be identified in the coming days; and

WHEREAS, taking measures to control outbreaks minimizes the risk to the public, maintains the health and the safety of the residents of Columbus, and limits the spread of infection in

our communities and within the healthcare delivery system;
and

WHEREAS, it is vitally important that we all work together to decrease the widespread proliferation of COVID-19 among us now rather than suffer the unfortunate and devastating medical and economic consequences later; and

WHEREAS, O.C.G.A. §38-3-51, authorizes the Mayor and Council to use emergency powers set forth in O.C.G.A. §§38- 3-1 through 38-3-64; and

WHEREAS, in the judgment of the Mayor and Columbus Council, with advice from other subject matter experts, there exist emergency conditions as a result of the recent resurgence of cases of COVID-19, particularly the highly contagious delta variant, within the geographical boundaries of the Consolidated Government requiring extraordinary and immediate corrective actions for the protection of the health, safety, and welfare of the citizens of Columbus, Georgia and the surrounding communities as permitted by Section 1-102 of the Charter; and

WHEREAS, this Mayor and Council have determined that it is necessary to reimpose its Declaration of a Local State of Emergency; and

NOW THEREFORE, THE COLUMBUS COUNCIL HEREBY RESOLVES AS FOLLOWS:

Section 1.

The Mayor and Council adopt and make the findings discussed in the "Whereas" paragraphs the factual findings of the Council.

Section 2.

The Mayor and Council hereby reinstitute the declaration of a local state of public health emergency in Columbus, Georgia.

Section 3.

During this local public health emergency, this Council and all Boards and Commissions of the Columbus Consolidated Government are hereby authorized to meet by video or teleconference during the period

of emergency as long as the requirements of O.C.G.A. 50-14-1(g) pertaining to public access are met.

Section 4.

In an effort to protect public employees and due to the low vaccination rate in Columbus, Georgia, masks or face coverings are still mandated to be worn by all persons entering any indoor building or facility of the Columbus, Georgia Consolidated Government. Any person entering such buildings or facilities who do not follow posted face covering and distancing requirements may be refused admittance to such building or facility unless the person's purpose for entering the building is to vote, a health condition prevents the use of a mask, or the person is a child under 10. This provision shall not apply to facilities being used for indoor sports which are subject to separate regulation by the league or association governing the sports organization sponsoring the event.

Section 5.

In accordance with current CDC guidelines, citizens, whether vaccinated or unvaccinated are strongly encouraged to wear masks in indoor settings, and unvaccinated citizens are strongly encouraged to get vaccinated.

Section 6.

During the period of local public health emergency declared by this Ordinance, this Council hereby expressly delegates to the Mayor the authority to take any additional steps necessary by Executive Order or other means to enforce or replace social distancing and face mask requirements in response to any future Executive Orders of the Governor as well as such further actions as the Mayor may deem necessary to respond to changing conditions in the COVID-19 outbreak in Columbus.

Section 7.

This Resolution shall become effective immediately upon passage and remain in effect until it is rescinded, superseded, or amended by further resolution or ordinance of this Council.

Introduced and adopted at a regular meeting of the Council of Columbus, Georgia, held on the 31st day of August, 2021 by the affirmative vote of ____ members of Council.

Councilor Allen	voting	_____
Councilor Barnes	voting	_____
Councilor Crabb	voting	_____
Councilor Davis	voting	_____
Councilor Garrett	voting	_____
Councilor House	voting	_____
Councilor Huff	voting	_____
Councilor Thomas	voting	_____
Councilor Tucker	voting	_____
Councilor Woodson	voting	_____

Sandra T. Davis
Clerk of Council

B.H. "Skip" Henderson, III
Mayor