

MINUTES
MERIWETHER COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
EMERGENCY SPECIAL CALLED TELECONFERENCE

March 24, 2020

Commissioners Present: Chairman Bryan Threadgill, Vice Chairman Alfred McCoy, Commissioner Shirley Hines, Commissioner Mary Bray, and Commissioner Beth Neely-Hadley
Staff Present: County Administrator Theron Gay, Finance Director Bill Gregory, and Deputy Clerk Allyson Stephens

Staff Absent: County Clerk Beverly Thomas, Attorney Nathan Lee

Others present by telephone: City of Luthersville Mayor Donald Cuttie, Manchester City Manager Doug Westberry, E-911 Director Brin Jones, Public Safety Director Alphonsus Pynenburg, School Superintendent Robert Griffin, Executive Director of Family Connection Rhonda Fuller, and Chamber of Commerce President Carolyn McKinley

I. CALL TO ORDER – Chairman Threadgill called the meeting to order at 3:02 p.m.

INVOCATION – None

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE None

II. ADOPT AGENDA

There was not a formal Agenda for the Emergency Teleconference Meeting. Chairman Bryan Threadgill requested the meeting to discuss additional emergency measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

III NEW BUSINESS

1. Chairman Threadgill opened the meeting and turned it over to County Administrator Theron Gay. Mr. Gay stated he had been looking at the options for adding additional restrictions and curfew times to help curtail the spread of COVID-19.

Administrator Gay stated we had received a copy of a sample document another jurisdiction was using and made sure everyone had a copy. Administrator Gay began at section 1 of the copy “Eating Establishments”. He stated he really had no suggestions for changes to that section. He stated this would still require establishments to close the dining area of the facility. He stated the establishment would still be able to provide delivery, drive-through and take out. He stated it would also allow the purchase of unopened bottles of beer or wine for take-out. Chairman Threadgill agreed that if selling unopened bottles of alcohol is part of what the establishment relies on for income, he believes that it needs to be allowed to happen.

According to Administrator Gay section 2 of the proposal changes referred to the closure of certain establishments, gyms, fitness centers, indoor amusement facilities, bowling alleys, theaters, massage parlors, nail salons, hair salons etc., he had no recommended changes as well, as long as they are being closed for the duration of the emergency. Luthersville Mayor Donald Cuttie asked if this could also address barber shops. Administrator Gay stated barbershops could be added.

Administrator Gay stated that for section 3 which addresses personal distance, there could be language to state that if a business remains open such as grocery stores and pharmacies, signage must be posted on entrance doors informing the customers of the 6-foot personal distance between themselves and others. Administrator Gay suggested having the businesses monitor occupancy levels due to all businesses not having the same size facility. Commissioner Neely-Hadley stated the City of Columbus was having their essential businesses allow only x number of people in based on the square footage of the building. Chairman Threadgill suggested the stores monitor the customers to make sure customers are keeping the 6-feet of distance. Administrator Gay suggested stating businesses shall closely monitor occupancy levels to assure that social distancing of 6 feet is maintained at all times. Commissioner Bray asked once all the rules are put in place, how do we enforce the rules? Administrator Gay stated that we

Chairman Threadgill asked Vice Chairman McCoy to convene the meeting as he needed to take another call. Commissioner Neely-Hadley asked that nothing be published by the cities until the official press release comes out from the County. Administrator Gay stated he would get packets available for the public.

IV. EXECUTIVE SESSION

None

V. PUBLIC COMMENT

None

VI. FUTURE MEETINGS & NOTICES

None

VII. ADJOURNMENT

Motion was made by Commissioner Bray and seconded by Commissioner Neely-Hadley to adjourn the teleconference at 3:38 p.m. All were in favor.

Approved by: *majority vote of the Board of Commissioners*
Attest: *Alyson K. Stephens, Deputy Clerk*
Date: *April 8, 2020*

STATE OF GEORGIA
MERIWETHER COUNTY

DECLARATION OF LOCAL EMERGENCY

WHEREAS, Meriwether County, Georgia is expected to experience an event of critical significance as a result of *The Corona Virus 2019 (COVID-19)*

WHEREAS, the Governor *has* declared a State of Public Health Emergency for The State of Georgia in its entirety;

WHEREAS, in the judgment of the Chair of the Meriwether County Board of Commissioners, with advice from the Meriwether County Emergency Management Agency, there exists emergency circumstances located within Meriwether County requiring extraordinary and immediate corrective actions for the protection of the health, safety, and welfare of the citizens of Meriwether County.

WHEREAS, to prevent or minimize the adverse effect of the health and wellbeing to the people of Meriwether County resulting from this event, certain actions are required.

NOW, THEREFORE, pursuant to the authority vested in me by local and state law;

IT IS HEREBY DECLARED that a local state of emergency exists and shall continue until further official action of the Board of Commissioners.

THEREFORE, IT IS ORDERED:

- (1) That the Meriwether County Emergency Management Agency activates the Emergency Operations Plan; and will remain in effect until such time it is deemed necessary to withdraw by the Board of Commissioners.
- (2) Eating Establishments: 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. Patrons, employees and contractors of the establishments must maintain at least six (6) feet of personal distance between themselves as much as possible given the physical constraints of the premises. If a restaurant is licensed to sell beer and wine for on-premises consumption, such restaurant, during the effective dates of this ordinance only, shall be authorized to sell unopened bottles or cans of beer or wine for take-out consumption off-premises.
- (3) Closure of Certain Businesses: Gyms, fitness centers, indoor amusement facilities, bowling alleys, pool halls, theaters, massage parlors, nail salons, hair salons, barber shops, and any other similar facilities must close and remain closed for the duration of this emergency as determined by the Governor of the State of Georgia.
- (4) Personal Distance: Establishments such as grocery stores, pharmacies, and other businesses which remain open during the emergency must post signage on entrance doors informing customers to maintain at least six (6) feet of personal distance between

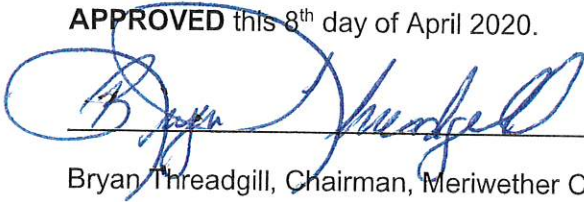
themselves and others as much as possible given the physical constraints of the premises. Business shall closely monitor occupancy levels to assure that social distancing of 6 feet is maintained at all times. Meriwether County further recommends that businesses with an intercom or public announcement system utilize such equipment to help remind patrons of the social distancing requirements.

- (5) Gatherings: All public and private gatherings of more than ten (10) people are prohibited. This provision shall include all churches, places of religious worship, funerals, family reunions, and political gatherings. Nothing in this ordinance, however, prohibits the gathering of individuals for the purposes of carrying on business certified as "essential" by the Georgia Emergency Management Agency pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 38-3-58 or designated by the Governor as "critical infrastructure" or the provision of medical or health services.
- (6) Emergency Interim Successor to County Manager: The governing authority desires to make certain that the chain of authority within Meriwether County management is clear. If the County Manager is unable to perform his duties, the Commission Chairman and one available commissioner shall assume the duties of the County Manager. In the event the Commission Chairman is unable to serve in this capacity, the Vice Chairman and one available commissioner will assume said duties.
- (7) Curfew: A curfew is imposed from 9:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m. effective immediately, and continuing until further notice by the Board of Commissioners. Residents, unless "exempt individuals" as defined herein, shall remain in their homes or on their property during the curfew period. Exempt individuals include those individuals engaged in the provision of designated, essential services, such as (1) fire; (2) law enforcement; (3) medical and hospital services; (4) military services; (5) utility repairs; (6) persons seeking medical services or hospital services; (7) individuals traveling to and from their jobs with appropriate identification; (8) individuals engaged in the delivery of food, medicine, medical supplies, fuel including, but not limited to, the re-stocking of grocery stores, pharmacies, and convenience stores; (9) individuals engage in the retrieval or transport of bodies under the direction of funeral service personnel; (10) news media employees; (11) designated employees or agents of businesses designated by the Georgia Emergency Management Agency as "essential" pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 38-3-58; (12) persons providing necessary care of companion animals in the custody and care of an animal shelter, boarding facility, or kennel; and (13) critical infrastructure businesses and employees as designated by the Governor or identified by U.S. Department of Homeland Security Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency; (14) Volunteers deemed by Meriwether County governing authority as essential in the provision of services.
- (8) An additional curfew is hereby established for all children of K – 12 school age residing in Meriwether County from 8:00 a.m. until 3:30 p.m. Monday through Friday until further notice.
The only exception shall be those school children who are in custody of a parent or authorized adult over age 18.
Parents or guardians of any children found in violation of this curfew shall be subject to citations as referenced in this declaration.
- (9) Anyone found in violation of this declaration shall be subject to citations punishable by fines up to \$1,000 and/or 6 months in jail for each violation, in accordance with Meriwether County code of ordinances.

(10) This Declaration shall have the same force and effect as an ordinance. The Sheriff of Meriwether County is hereby authorized to enforce this Declaration and Meriwether County codes and ordinances during any declaration of local emergency, which is hereby declared.

(11) It is the intent of this Declaration not to conflict with any order of the Governor. To the extent any provision of this Declaration conflicts with any order of the Governor, any such provision shall be suspended until such time as any conflicting order of the Governor expires.

APPROVED this 8th day of April 2020.



Bryan Threadgill, Chairman, Meriwether County Board of Commissioners



County Clerk

