

The Edgewater City Council held an emergency meeting on Monday March 16th to discuss actions required for Covid-19. The meeting was chaired by Vice-Mayor Gary Conroy filling in for Mayor Thomas who was out due to health issues not related to Covid-19.

Staff members gave the council a summary of planned actions, including:

1. Where possible, staff will work from home or work from their cars.
2. Police and Fire personnel will avoid non-essential contact with public and where possible will conduct business in open-air environments. When responding to resident homes, a minimum number of first responders will be entering homes and residents will be asked to come outside if possible.
3. Emergency dispatchers will question callers to determine if responders might be exposed to Covid-19.
4. City Hall and other city buildings will be in "lockdown". In most cases residents will not be permitted to enter city buildings to protect staff. The utility department will have lock boxes outside City Hall during business hours for people to drop off payments. All utility customers will be urged to use other payment options.
5. Building Department will increase the use of online permit applications. It may be necessary to limit inspections to limit contact with homeowners and contractors.
6. City parks will be officially closed although residents will have access to parks "at their own risk". Bathrooms in the parks will be locked to avoid ongoing theft of soap dispensers.

After staff reports, council members and City Manager Glenn Irby discussed their concerns. It was noted that the city may be entitled to reimbursement from FEMA for Covid-19 expenses. Mr. Irby proposed expanding sick leave policy for the next 60 days so that any employee who had to stay home to care for themselves or a family member, would get paid. The sick leave policy would also include travel restrictions warning employees who travel to "at risk" areas that they may forfeit sick leave benefits.

Based on attorney advise, the council decided to continue monthly meetings as scheduled, including citizen comments. The city will supply hand sanitizers for people as they enter and will encourage citizens to review meetings from online. Council members also approved cutting down to one refuse pickup a week if advisable.

To conclude the meeting, the City Council approved resolution 2020-R-10:

"Confirming a Declaration of a State of Emergency - Coronavirus (COVID-19) and the Proclamation authorizing the Emergency whereby the City Council determines that there is in fact an emergency and approves the City Manager to take necessary actions to protect the citizens and employees."

The resolution also allows the Edgewater Police Department to enforce a curfew in the city if the Volusia Sheriff's Department decides one is advisable.