



# Sanford City Council

City Council Meeting Minutes – March 17, 2020

The Sanford City Council met at 6:00 p.m. in the Chambers of the Sanford City Hall Annex on Tuesday, March 10, 2020. **MAYOR:** Thomas P. Cote. **COUNCILORS:** Councilor Ayn M. Hanselmann; Councilor Robert G. Stackpole; Councilor John L. Tuttle, Jr.; Councilor Lucas L. Lanigan; Councilor Maura A. Herlihy; Deputy Mayor Joseph R. Hanslip; **CITY STAFF:** City Manager Steven Buck; Executive Assistant Lorisa Ricketts; Emergency Management Director Alex Hammerle.

## Purpose of Meeting

This is an emergency meeting of the Sanford City Council to address issues of governance, public safety and communication with the public in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Due to the nature of this emergency and in keeping with guidance from public health officials, those Council Members considered to be in a high risk category may be joining this meeting via teleconference.

## Pledge of Allegiance

The regular City Council session began with the Pledge of Allegiance and a moment of silence.

## Moment of Silence

## Roll Call:

Mayor Cote performed the Council roll call: Councilor Hanselmann, present via teleconference; Councilor Stackpole, present; Councilor Tuttle, present; Councilor Lanigan, present; Councilor Herlihy, present; Deputy Mayor Hanslip, present.

## New Business

19-813-01 Presentation of COVID-19 Updates on Municipal Operations and Services Councilor Tuttle moved to approve to presentation for distribution to the public. Councilor Lanigan seconded.

City Manager Buck presented an update on City response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The information will be posted on Channel 26 and updated regularly.

Councilor Tuttle asked if we have enough masks for staff who are most frequently in contact with public: first responders, City clerks, etc. City Manager

Paul Auger asked if there is a contingency plan if a large number of officers go off-line. After a 25% reduction in staff, shifts will change.

Emergency Management Director Alex Hammerle presented an update: there are 23 confirmed, 9 presumptive. 1303 people tested negative for the virus. There is currently 1 confirmed case in York County. Director Hammerle gets daily updates from the CDC as well as multiple others. The way the virus is spreading, there is now community transmission in Cumberland County. Guidance is updated very rapidly; passes to the City Manager for dissemination as quickly as possible.

Regarding health care system: what is his assessment re the hospital system's readiness. At this time, the system's readiness is very good. Does Goodall have a triage tent? Director Hammerle doesn't know the answer to that but will find out.

Maine CDC is equipped to do up to 200 tests per day; no shortage of kits to do that number. Tests can be performed quickly; they then go to the CDC for confirmation.

CDC put some parameters out re restrictions on gatherings at restaurants, bars, etc. What is the guidance Director Hammerle would give? Conditions here in Maine are different from in many states. MA has had an order from State government that restaurants and bars must close – they have more cases and more risk of exposure. Continue to follow guidance from Maine CDC because it is more locally derived. This pandemic seems to be following the path of many past events where what looks like overkill at the beginning looks like too little too late.

Mayor Cote thinks that in a number of days, the Council will have to address this. Councilor Tuttle says we have to err on the side of health. Councilor Lanigan sees a lot of businesses doing this voluntarily; he hopes people will do this voluntarily on their own. Councilor Tuttle spoke to the Governor's office last week and will call them tomorrow to urge them to be proactive.

Motion passed 6-0. (Councilor Hanselmann does not have voting authority being absent from the room.)

19-818-01 Ordered, to approve the City of Sanford Epidemic and Pandemic Policy to address risks and spread of viral infections thereby preserving the health and well-being of Municipal Staff and Residents and assuring the continuance of Municipal Operations.

Councilor Hanslip moved to approve. Councilor Lanigan seconded.

Manager Buck presented a proposed policy for the City of Sanford to address pandemic or epidemic situations.

The Council discussed the possibility of putting in place a policy regarding closing of certain businesses where people congregate. This item will be discussed separately.

Councilor Hanselmann: what is the chain of command for the City Manager position if the City Manager should be incapacitated? Manager Buck said he would recommend in that instance shifting operational oversight to Ronni Champlin, Finance Director.

Councilor Hanselmann: at some point, we will want to replace wording related specifically to COVID-19. Manager Buck said that although there are many specific elements relating to this pandemic, many of the elements would pertain to any infectious outbreak.

Councilor Lanigan asked if there is verbage pertaining to unemployment benefits. Manager Buck said that if the City lays someone off or they are unemployed from the City, the City pays directly. However, legislation being drafted by the State addresses unemployment due to COVID-19.

Motion passed 6-0.

19-812-01 Ordered, to amend the date for delinquent interest accrual on the second installment of the 2019 tax payment from March 16, 2020 to April 17th, 2020 with the delinquent interest rate set at 9% as determined by the State Treasurer, pursuant to Title 36 Section 505. Recognition granted to extend the delinquent interest period due to delays caused by the COVID-19 virus.

Deputy Mayor Hanslip moved to approve. Councilor Stackpole seconded.

Manager Buck presented on this item. He recommends extending the delinquent date by 30 days.

Councilor Lanigan asked if the City will have sufficient cash-flow for this. Manager Buck said that there will be sufficient cash-flow. Many of the late-payers are seniors who pay in cash by hand.

The means by which information is being disseminated to the public was discussed.

The Trafton Center has the ability to get information to a certain segment of the population. If information is given to Robin Bibber, it can be

distributed as an information tree. Also encourages seniors to stay connected with each other.

City Council encouraged members of the public to reach out to them with questions.

Deputy Mayor Hanslip asked if there is some capacity to put robo-calls out, as the schools do. Manager Buck said that no, we do not.

Motion passed 6-0.

- 19-815-01 Ordered, notwithstanding Charter Section 611.1 Public Hearing on Municipal and School Budgets, to move the Public Hearing date for the School and Municipal Budgets from March 19th, 2020 to April 7th, 2020.

Councilor Tuttle moved to approve. Councilor Stackpole seconded.

Councilor Herlihy asked to have the date discussed. Manager Buck said that looking at the Budget Committee process, the committee is largely settling in on recommendations – the committee can make those decisions and provide that information. The Public Hearing that was scheduled for March 19 and that has been cancelled due to the virus. The state law that is being passed allows to change those dates going forward. So at the April 7 meeting, have the recommendations come forward from the Budget Committee; hold the public hearing at that meeting, and then have the Council take that item up at that same meeting.

Mayor Cote said his understanding is that the Budget Committee's role is to make a recommendation to the City Council. Councilor Stackpole, the Budget Committee Chair, said that at last week's meeting, the committee asked the school department work to make reductions of either 4% or 4.6%. The committee has not yet seen what those reductions are. The Council would have to look at that. The 4.6% would align with the Municipal budget. That information and recommendations should be heard from the School department. He wonders if the April 7<sup>th</sup> date can be done and, as a procedural question, does he poll via email the Budget Committee to allow them to share deliberation via email, and then bring to the City Council? If the Council can't meet on April 7<sup>th</sup>, what would happen? If legislation happens today, the Council could meet electronically to have that discussion.

Manager Buck said there was an agenda laid out for this Thursday – had discussed combining the City and Municipal budgets together and make the comparisons to the projections made for last year.

Councilor Stackpole said that if we are going to try to host this meeting on-line, that could be quite a conference call.

Councilor Hanselmann's biggest concern is the public participation part of the process. We discussed today having email capability with someone present at the meeting who could present questions.

Motion passed 5-0.

19-814-01 Review of pending State Legislation 129LR3296 as it relates to Municipal Operations and Public Meetings.

Manager Buck reviewed the pending legislation which allows for a number of items: amending school days required; continuing to provide nutritional services to students; delayed budget process; continued operations under current budget until budget is approved; delay of school budget approval; vehicle and trailer registration (if you can't get into the office, registration periods are extended to 30 days beyond the end of the public health emergency); liquor license renewals; dog licenses extended; motor vehicle re-registration can be done on-line. Electronic meetings can be done if notice is given as usual, if the method of the meeting is stated. Manager Buck explained the way that such an electronic meeting could be conducted, and the public could submit comments/questions via email). Loan guarantees are also included in the legislation.

### **Council Member Comments**

Councilor Hanselmann: There are resources available for people. She will share with the Manager's office for distribution. Trafton Center is working on communication with elderly. Phone number is 457-0080. There are folks mobilizing in the community despite various closures, etc.

Councilor Stackpole: Technology will play a big role going forward, including cable TV and telephone, as well as US Mail. Technology can be a blessing and a curse: all of us need to make sure that the information we share/forward is accurate and do some fact-checking and be responsible that way. Anxiety is common with this: anxiety is inability to effectively predict the future. The best medicine for anxiety is distraction – try to get out for a walk, go for a drive, get on the phone. Don't sit in front of the TV all day and watch news if it is causing anxiety. Try not to get fixated: we will get through this.

Councilor Tuttle: Happy St. Patrick's Day.

Councilor Herlihy: People have been asking her questions. She asked what is happening with the eviction process. Evictions haven't been suspended but courts are closed. As soon as they reopen, the process will continue.

If you know people who do not have people with them, reach out to them.

Councilor Lanigan: What about the bars/restaurants/gyms? Mayor Cote said that he will examine options with the City Manager and this can be taken up very soon by the Council.

Councilor Lanigan said he would like to revisit this item very soon. Manager Buck asked for a straw poll regarding whether the Council would like him to spend time on this topic. Councilor Lanigan said that churches and many businesses are already voluntarily taking steps. Councilor Herlihy suggested looking at options. Mayor Cote will speak with the City Manager. Councilor Lanigan said that people should try to work with vendors if you have to cancel an event and try to support local businesses. Local chamber has been working with other chambers on a number of items. Any business with notices can post them on the Chamber's website. ServPro is also extending that offer to businesses, and they can answer questions re cleaning. There are also upcoming radio programs which will have useful information.

Deputy Mayor Hanslip: It can be overwhelming to keep on top of all of the information. One of the things that has stuck with him is flattening the curve of infections and he therefore thinks this should be taken up. He said we will get through this together. Be mindful of other people and their needs, and be kind.

Mayor Cote: Thank you to City Manager Buck and his Executive Assistant. The community appreciates their efforts. A week ago, we received an update from the City Manager and moved on. Now, having an emergency meeting about it. Things are happening quickly. We need to start thinking about what things will be like two or three weeks or months from now. Concern is with the number of elderly and people in poverty in the community; this may affect Sanford more than other communities. We need to act now and as community members be doing the right things. We have as strong team at SMHC, but Sanford doesn't have the facility it used to. It is time for social distancing, especially in Sanford. This is for you, for your kids. There is nothing worse than being the group that helps spread the Coronavirus in Sanford so we need to be taking this seriously. He called on bars, social clubs, restaurants, gyms, to look at their operations to make changes.

Mayor Cote said to feel free to reach out to City Councilors. Facebook is great, but if you really want the answers, talk to the Council.

### **Adjournment**

Mayor Cote moved to adjourn regular meeting at 7:43 PM.

Respectfully submitted by Lorisa Ricketts, Executive Assistant.

# City of Sanford COVID-19 Updates

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- Precautions
- Assurances
- Operational Services Changes
- Limiting Exposures
  - Short Term Changes to Operations

# City of Sanford - Precautions

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- The Greatest Measures to be taken at this time are Precautions !

## How can I help to prevent the spread?

There are simple steps you can take to reduce the possible spread of COVID-19 and other illnesses such as influenza and the common cold:

- 1. Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use alcohol-based hand sanitizer
- 2. Avoid close contact with people who are sick
- 3. Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands
- 4. Stay home while you're sick and avoid close contact with others

# City of Sanford - Precautions

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- The Greatest Measures to be taken at this time are Precautions !

## **What are the Symptoms?**

Symptoms of COVID-19 may include:

- Fever
- Cough
- Difficulty breathing
- Sore throat (in some patients)

**Symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure.**

# City of Sanford - Precautions

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- The Greatest Measures to be taken at this time are Precautions !

## **What should I do if I have symptoms?**

**Call ahead to a health care professional** if you develop a fever and symptoms of respiratory illness, such as cough or difficulty breathing. Tell your health care professional about any recent travel or contact with other COVID-19 cases. Your healthcare professional will work with Maine CDC to determine if you need to be tested for COVID-19. More information is available on the U.S. CDC's [What You Should Know](#) page.

# City of Sanford COVID-19 Updates

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**Assurances**

**Municipal Operations Continue**

# City of Sanford - Assurances

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- **The City Council is working with City Administrators to Respond.**
- **The City Council is receiving daily updates.**
- **The City Council is and will continue to respond with any Policy Changes and or Finance Amendments.**
- **The City Council is working closely with the City Manager and coordinating with Departments to ensure critical operations continue.**

# City of Sanford - Assurances

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- The City has met with All Departments to ensure a continuation of Operations.
- All Public Safety Divisions – Police, Fire, Ambulance, and Public Works have taken precautions to ensure the Staff and Services remain in place
- The City has increased the levels of Personnel Protective Equipment
  - Is limiting unnecessary exposures
  - Has additional supplies
  - Has implemented Emergency Action Planning to preserve Municipal Services

# City of Sanford - Assurances

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- **The City Administration meets daily to;**
  - **Assess Staffing levels and availability**
  - **Changes to Operations and Procedures using the latest information**
  - **Emergency Management Director participates daily with County and State Emergency Operations Centers for coordination, assessment, and planning**
  - **Dispatch and First Responders perform assessments prior to responding**
  - **Public Works continues operations but will **NOT** be interacting with the Public**

# City of Sanford – Operational Changes

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- **Some Departments have Amended Operations;**
- **Fire and Ambulance Operations**
  - Have limited public entrance into Stations to limit exposures within
  - Signs have been posted outside of doors to call for services
  - Public may continue to communicate via phone and email
    - If an Emergency Call 911
  - Additional Specific Supplies have been obtained to protect against spread

# City of Sanford – Operational Changes

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- **Some Departments have Amended Operations;**

- **Police**

- Public entrance into the Facility has been closed to prevent exposures
- Business may be transacted by phone, email, or in the Front Lobby
- Additional Specific Supplies have been obtained to protect against spread
- Criminal bookings will occur at the Jail
- Certain calls for service will be triaged via phone prior to response or entry

# City of Sanford – Operational Changes

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- **Some Departments have Amended Operations;**

- **Public Works**

- Public entrance into the Facility has been closed to prevent exposures
- Business may be transacted by phone or email
- Additional Specific Supplies have been obtained to protect against spread
- Crews will limit interactions while working on Streets to limit exposures and preserve staffing levels

# City of Sanford – Limiting Exposure

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- **A focus has been placed on Limiting Exposures to Limit Spread;**
  - Public Meetings and Public Hearing are being postponed for at least the next 2 weeks
  - No Public Meeting Spaces are being booked for the next two weeks
  - Please consider conducting as much business by phone, email, or mail as possible
  - Signs asking any person exhibiting Symptoms of COVID-19 to not enter Offices
  - Staff will as much as possible provide services while maintaining Social Distancing, requesting papers to be deposited in Drop Boxes
  - Providing certain services to be provided Online and processed internally

# City of Sanford – Limiting Exposure

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- **A focus has been placed on Limiting Exposures to Limit Spread;**
  - Limiting Exposures limits spread and shortens the current State of Emergency
  - Limiting Exposures protects City Staff to preserve Services
  - Limiting Exposures prevents transmission in both directions
  - Limiting Exposures and using Best Practices protects ALL People in Sanford

**The City's greatest concerns are for the well being of ALL People, Staff and Public, and to PRESERVE MUNICIPAL SERVICES FOR ALL !**

# City of Sanford – Next Steps

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- **The City will continue to Monitor for and Communicate to the Public.**
  - Operational Responses will be updated Daily
  - Updates will be pushed via Cable TV Channels 25 & 26
  - Facebook Pages
  - Town Hall Streaming
  - Instagram

**The City is in constant contact with State and County Emergency Operations to coordinate our Response for your well being.**

# COVID-19 Resources

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- [U.S. Centers for Disease Control Coronavirus Information](#)
- [Maine Center for Disease Control Coronavirus Information](#)
- [CDC Resources for Home: Plan, prepare, and respond to Coronavirus Disease 2019](#)
- [Maine CDC Novel Coronavirus Fact Sheet](#)
- [City of Sanford Website - Public Notices](#)
- [City of Sanford Facebook - Welcome to Sanford Maine](#)