

THE CITY OF EASTLAND
CITY COMMISSION EMERGENCY MEETING

March 18, 2020

EASTLAND, TEXAS §

EASTLAND, COUNTY §

The City Commission of the City of Eastland, Texas, met in Open Session at Eastland City Hall as scheduled, and notice was posted 1 hour prior to the meeting.

CITY COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:

Chairman	Larry Vernon
Commissioner	Cecil Funderburgh
Commissioner	Ben McNabb
Commissioner	Zac Darr

CITY COMMISSIONERS ABSENT:

Commissioner	Richard Rossander
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PERSONNEL PRESENT:

City Manager	Ron Duncan
City Secretary	Roma Holley
Chief of Police	David Hullum
Chief of Fire	David Branch

Guests: Kevin Burrow, Karen Plowman, Paul Gray, Phillip Arther, Crystal Darr, Logan Darr, Jaci Darr, Tom Bailey, Mandy Scott, Jerry Maston, Darrel Phillips, Cameron Jones, Chris Ferguson, Richard Krantz, E. T. Bradley, Angie Turner, Burt Shield, Chad Roberts, Gene Bilby, Cole Ogle, Laura Hobbs, Rhyne Hobbs, Cam Gulley, Kim Gentry, Jay Gentry, Brandon Moore, Shana Hogue, Nancy Stewart, Ron Allman, Gay Allman, Josh Liles, Rhonda Howie, Rachel Brackett, Jason Cochran, Rex Fields, Robin Hayes, Steve Hayes, Danny Foster, Sam Williams, Carol Gordon, John Miears, Terry Slavens, Ruth York, Francisco Ramos,

I. MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

Chairman Larry Vernon called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

II. INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mayor Larry Vernon offered the invocation and Commissioner Cecil Funderburgh led the Pledge of Allegiance.

III. PUBLIC COMMENT ON ANY SUBJECT NOT LISTED ON THIS AGENDA (Limited to Five Minutes Per Speaker)

There were no comments from the public at this time. Mayor Vernon stated that everyone would have an opportunity to speak in an orderly fashion in a few minutes.

IV. Discussion and Consideration of the City of Eastland Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic and the Possibility of Implementing our Emergency Management Plan until the next regular Commission Meeting on April 20, 2020

Mayor Vernon stated that he and the city manager have been in meetings and receiving information from several sources including the Eastland Memorial Hospital and the Superintendent of EISD, regarding the COVID-19 Pandemic. The purpose of this meeting is to Implement our Emergency Management Plan and to make recommendations to

minimize the impact of the COVID-19 virus to the citizens of Eastland. Mayor Vernon then read the following Declaration:

**DECLARATION OF LOCAL DISASTER
DUE TO PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY**

WHEREAS the World Health Organization has declared the coronavirus, now designated COVID-19, as a global pandemic on March 11, 2020; and

WHEREAS, symptoms of COVID-19 can range from mild to severe illness and cause further complications including death; and the COVID-19 virus mainly spreads between people who are in close contact with one another through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes; and

WHEREAS, on March 13, 2020, the governor of Texas issued a proclamation certifying that COVID-19 poses an imminent threat of disaster in the state and declaring a state of disaster for all counties of Texas; and

WHEREAS, the continued worldwide spread of COVID-19 presents an imminent threat of widespread illness, which requires emergency action for the protection of the people of the City of Eastland; and

WHEREAS, the implementation of mitigation strategies can slow the transmission of the disease, this Declaration activates the City Emergency Management Plan; and

WHEREAS, the City Commission of the City of Eastland has determined that extraordinary measures must be taken to mitigate the effects of this public health emergency and to facilitate the efficient, rapid, and cooperative response to the emergency;

THEREFORE, Be It Proclaimed by the City Commission of the City of Eastland that:

1. A local state of disaster is hereby proclaimed for the City of Eastland, pursuant to 418.108(a) of the Texas Government Code.
2. This declaration of a local state of disaster shall be given prompt and general publicity, shall be filed promptly with the City Secretary, and activates the City of Eastland Emergency Plan, pursuant to 418.108(b) of the Texas Government Code.
3. Pursuant to the Texas Health and Safety Code, Section 122.006, any individual adult or child having traveled and visited any level 3 country as established by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), or traveled via a cruise ship, within the ten (10) days prior to this declaration and returning to Eastland, Texas, must be quarantined at home for 14 days.
4. This Declaration shall take effect immediately from and after its issuance.

Commissioner Zac Darr stated that he had a prepared statement to read:

With all of the advice and recommendations coming from the state and federal levels and that people are already heeded that advice, this Response Implementation Plan seems in part, too much, and unnecessarily overreaching.

We know that people in our community are already washing hands more, using hand sanitizer more, their limiting their travel more, and their staying home more. Even our school system is getting involved and limiting gatherings.

The current situation is already having an impact on our community, and we should stop and see if these changes are effective and working before we decide, No much more needs to be done.

There are two areas in the Response Implementation Plan that unnecessarily overreaches.

(1) Churches and (2) Restaurants.

1. CHURCHES

Churches should be the last things to close. In a time of war, in a time of sickness, or in a time of distress, this is a time the church needs to be together worshipping and praying to God.

I do not see anywhere in scripture where sickness overtake those that came together to worship God. In fact people were healed and protected from those things affecting others.

We don't have to exchange our faith in God to whatever the media or science dictates.

As far as the Response Implementation Plan, I can not recommend or suggest that churches should not assemble to give Praise and Honor to the Supreme God when I know the power and the hand of protection He provides.

I can not recommend or suggest that churches should not assemble to pray together to the God of this Universe when I know the healing and what his Son, the Great Physician provides.

Proverbs 3:25-26 Have no fear of sudden disaster or of the ruin that overtakes the wicked, for the Lord will be your confidence.

1. Churches need to stay open.

2. RESTAURANTS

Restaurants in Eastland are suffering because people are choosing to stay home. This is the people's right to choose, (do I go out to eat, or do I stay home). This is already affecting our community. In fact, some restaurants and decided to self-close their doors and only offer drive thru service. Good for them.

With zero confirmed cases in Eastland, and with no curve yet to flatten, I see no reason to cause undo burden on our restaurants and force them to close their dining rooms. Let them choose for themselves. The one exemption in the Response Implementation Plan is the groceries stores which will remain open as usual, which no restrictions. Walmart will have 50+ people in their store this hour. And then the next hour, they will have 50+ new people. And then the next hour, they will have again 50+ new people. If somebody is going to catch the common cold, the flu, or the conranvirus, it'll be at a place like Walmart and not a restaurant or church in town. The restaurants are suffering, and employees are worried about their jobs. If there are no cases of coronavirus in town, then there is no reason to shut down restaurants and leave Walmart un-restricted. It's too much and unnecessary overreach.

2. *Restaurants need to stay open.*

FINAL THOUGHTS

Here are the New Recommendations pulled from the Whithouse.gov website posted two days ago.

QUOTE

1. ***If you feel sick, stay home. Do not go to work. Contact your medical provider.***
2. ***If your children are sick, keep them at home. Contact your medical provider.***
3. ***If someone in your household has tested positive for the Coronavirus, keep the entire household at home.***
4. ***If you are an older American, stay home and away from other people.***
5. ***If you are a person with a serious underlying health condition—such as a significant heart or lung problem—stay home and away from other people.***

END QUOTE

I agree with this 100%, especially #4.

As stated before, the current situation is already having an impact on our community, and we should stop and see if these changes are effective and are working before we decide, more government is needed.

I have a problem with any form of government taking away my right to choose.

Mayor Vernon voiced his concern that our hospital and medical personnel could be overwhelmed by an outbreak. If that happens, our community will be in trouble. Our goal today is to raise the awareness of preventive measures that need to be implemented.

Mayor Vernon then asked if there were any comments from the public. The following individuals spoke and offered their thoughts and opinions about the preceding topic: Jerry Maston, Burt Shield, Ron Allman, Robin Hayes, John Miears, Kevin Burrow, E. T. Bradley, Nancy Stewart, Carla Ramsey, Kim Gentry, Brandon Moore, Richard Krantz, Darrel Phillips, Karen Plowman, Cam Gulley, and Phillip Arther.

Commissioner Zac Darr made a motion that we update this response implementation plan by removing #1, “Church Services” and #3, “Restaurant dining rooms be closed”. Also, add that the City of Eastland recommends that we should pray to Our God and Father that the Corona Virus shall be removed from our city and county and beyond.

This motion died for lack of a second.

Mayor Vernon asked for another motion.

Commissioner Cecil Funderburgh made a motion that we approve the Declaration of Local Disaster which does not mention the second page

This motion died for lack of second.

Commissioner Ben McNabb mentioned that he thought it might be a good idea that we require mandatory screenings of people who still want to gather in groups of more than 10 people. They would be screened for symptoms of COVID as well as screened as to whether they have been to a location that has a high number of COVID cases. If they still want to meet in groups more than 10 people, they should provide the proper amount of precautions. A big problem with COVID is that it can go highly undetected in healthy individuals and this puts the people who are more susceptible to COVID at a greater risk.

Commissioner McNabb suggested that one compromise might be at this time to require additional precautions for groups that continue to meet.

Mayor Vernon agreed with Commissioner McNabb and stated that this should be the next step if we do have an outbreak of the virus.

Commissioner Cecil Funderburgh made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Zac Darr, that we adopt “The President’s Coronavirus Guidelines for America 15 Days to Slow the Spread”.

1. *Support President Trump’s Coronavirus Guidelines for America:*
 - a. **IF YOU FEEL SICK**, stay home. Do not go to work. Contact your medical provider.
 - b. **IF YOUR CHILDREN ARE SICK**, keep them at home. Do not send them to school. Contact your medical provider.
 - c. **IF SOMEONE IN YOUR HOUSEHOLD HAS TESTED POSITIVE** for the coronavirus, keep the entire household at home. Do not go to work. Do not go to school. Contact your medical provider.
 - d. **IF YOU ARE AN OLDER PERSON**, stay home and away from other people.
 - e. **IF YOU ARE A PERSON WITH A SERIOUS UNDERLYING CONDITION** that can put you at increased risk (for example, a condition that impairs your lung or heart function or weakens your immune system), stay home and away from other people.
 - f. Work or engage in schooling **FROM HOME** whenever possible.
 - g. **IF YOU WORK IN A CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE INDUSTRY**, as defined by the Department of Homeland Security, such as healthcare services and pharmaceutical and food supply, you have a special responsibility to maintain your normal work schedule. You and your employers should follow CDC guidance to protect your health at work.
 - h. **Avoid social gatherings in groups of more than 10 people.**
 - i. **Avoid eating or drinking at bars, restaurants, and food courts – USE DRIVE-THRU, PICKUP, OR DELIVERY OPTIONS.**
 - j. **AVOID DISCRETIONARY TRAVEL**, shopping trips and social visits.
 - k. **DO NOT VISIT** nursing homes or retirement or long-term care facilities unless to provide critical assistance.
 - l. **PRACTICE GOOD HYGIENE:**
 - **WASH YOUR HANDS**, especially after touching any frequently used item or surface.
 - **AVOID TOUCHING YOUR FACE.**
 - **SNEEZE OR COUGH INTO A TISSUE, OR THE INSIDE OF YOUR ELBOW.**
 - **DISINFECT FREQUENTLY USED ITEMS AND SURFACES** as much as possible.
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2. **The City Manager has ordered the following facilities closures to protect employees as well as the public:**
 - a. **City Park:** Closed for any social gatherings until April 1, 2020.
 - b. **Airport:** Terminal closed to the public until April 1, 2020. No group meetings will be held or scheduled. Flight operations will continue as usual.
 - c. **City Hall:** Front doors will be locked until April 1, 2020. A sign will be posted and the public will be admitted by appointment only. Staff will monitor telephones during business hours. Non-City Hall assigned employees will be able to make appointments with all city hall offices by phone or email.
 - d. **Senior Citizens Center:** Closed to the public until April 1, 2020. All programs and activities are cancelled.
 - e. **Police and Fire Departments:** Front doors will be locked until April 1, 2020. A sign will be posted and the public will be admitted by appointment only. Staff will monitor telephones during business hours.

Motion prevailed by the following vote:

Ayes: Commissioners Darr, Funderburgh, McNabb,
 Nays: None
 Absent: Rossander

Commissioner Cecil Funderburgh made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Ben McNabb to adopt the Declaration of Local Disaster Due to Public Health Emergency in order to activate our Local Emergency Management Plan.

Motion prevailed by the following vote:

Ayes: Commissioners Vernon, Funderburgh, McNabb,
Nays: Darr
Absent: Rossander

X. ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Zac Darr made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Ben McNabb, to adjourn at 10:43 a.m. Motion passed unanimously.

APPROVED

Larry Vernon, Chairman
Board of City Commissioners

ATTEST

Roma Holley, City Secretary