

THE MORGAN COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS MET IN A REGULAR SESSION ON THURSDAY, MARCH 19, 2020 AT 8:30 A.M.

MEMBERS PRESENT WERE RYAN GOODWIN, KENNY HALE AND NORMAN VOYLES. DEB VERLEY, EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT; DAN BASTIN, AUDITOR; JOSH MESSMER, COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR; AND JIM WISCO, COUNTY ATTORNEY, WERE ALSO PRESENT.

PLEDGE.

PRAYER (*Ryan Goodwin*).

ORDINANCE REGARDING PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY– *Second Reading*

Ryan Goodwin stated that the first reading of this ordinance was March 16, 2020. The primary purpose of the Ordinance in Response to the Public Health Emergency Caused by Coronavirus Disease Outbreak is to grant peace of mind to the employees that the Commissioners will grant them additional paid sick time in numerous cases related to the complications that the county is facing. If an employee does not meet any of the conditions, they are requesting that department heads open up other leave, such as vacation or comp time and be as generous as possible in scheduling that. They do not want employees choosing between their health and a paycheck. The ordinance also gives direction that employees will be paid should the situation escalate so that the county is operating on essential personnel only and offices are closed. The ordinance also encourages department heads to explore telecommuting where possible. Serendipitous to the Governor's Executive Order issued Wednesday, the ordinance makes changes to public meetings by allowing tele-conference call-in for those who have business before the Board. It will not be required to call in, but encouraged in order to limit the size of the crowds. After the ordinance is in effect, they will begin to stream meetings so the public still has transparency while limiting the crowd size. The ordinance will remain in effect until the earlier of one or two events; the national and state executive bodies rescind the public health emergency or by recension of the Board of Commissioners, whichever comes first. Kenny Hale made a motion to approve the ordinance on second reading. Motion seconded by Ryan Goodwin. Motion carried 2-1. Norman Voyles stated that it should be a policy instead of an ordinance and was opposed.

HR LEAVE FORM

Ryan Goodwin stated that Daree Fry, HR Director, drafted a form that would be used in conjunction with the additional leave time that was granted via the ordinance that was just adopted. It follows the conditions in the ordinance. Kenny Hale made a motion to approve the COVID-19 Leave Affidavit. Motion seconded by Ryan Goodwin. Motion carried 3-0.

UMR UPDATE

Ryan Goodwin stated that UMR is the third party administrator for the health insurance program and they sent clients a letter stating that unless the county would opt out, health procedures related to the outbreak would be covered. Kenny Hale made a motion to provide coverage and not opt out. Motion seconded by Ryan Goodwin. Motion carried 3-0.

EXECUTIVE ORDER

Ryan Goodwin stated that the Commissioners have drafted an Executive Order regarding public access to county facilities. As the Board responds to the coronavirus public health emergency as declared by the Governor, the Board is exercising its power by limiting public access to county buildings. Should the Order pass, it will take effect today and until further notice, the Morgan County Administration Building will be closed to public access. The lobby area of the Sheriff's Office will remain open as they have a means of interacting with the public that does not expose them directly to the public. There is also a public entrance because the jail is a "Safe Place". The Courthouse and Courthouse Annex are exempt from this Order as they are under order of the Supreme Court and have been ordered to limit access and reduce caseload to emergencies only. Any facilities not mentioned would fall under the order. The Board of Commissioners wants to protect employees from exposure, but also want to continue government operation. They are encouraging members of the public to call, email, and do as much business as possible by those means. They have consulted with every department head and under certain circumstances an appointment may be granted. Those with appointments would be subject to a basic screenings for COVID-19 symptoms. The county has a duty to execute an election and that election is not far off. They will work to make necessary exceptions to the Election Office for the execution of a fair and open election. This Order would sunset at the end of the emergency declaration or at a time when the Board of Commissioners would rescind the Order. Kenny Hale stated that the biggest asset is the employees and they want to make it safer for them.

Norman Voyles asked what was involved in the screening process. Ryan Goodwin stated that it is a non-discriminatory screening. Daree Fry stated that it is similar to the screening the jail is using.

They ask if they have traveled out of the country in a certain time period, if they or anyone in their household are exhibiting symptoms such as a cough, and takes a temperature reading.

Steve Sonnega, Morgan County Prosecutor, asked about operations for his office; they are not under the Supreme Court guidelines and they sometimes prepare emergency orders not related to a court hearing. Dave Rogers stated that the Courthouse, being a different branch of government, is unique and they will have to work with the judges for guidance. Dr. Paul Broderick stated that the public will need to call first. Is the public traffic interacting with the employees for the good of someone or is it putting the employees in jeopardy? Dr. Broderick stated that there are people out there that do not need to be out; restricting access is an excellent move. Mr. Goodwin stated that they excluded the Courthouse to avoid duplication of the administrative order that the judges have already issued. Jim Wisco stated that the order from the Supreme Court includes a provision not to enter the building. Laura Parker, Morgan County Plan Commission Director, asked how this would relate to public meetings for the Plan Commission and Board of Zoning Appeals. Josh Messmer stated that the public can attend public meetings; however they discourage that and there is a limit on the number of people that can attend. Board members are able to participate via phone and telecommuting and participants are able to call in as well. Ryan Goodwin noted that the latest Executive Order from the Governor contained the provision that public meetings not necessary for conducting business during the emergency are discouraged. Ms. Parker suggested using the same screening form that HR mentioned. Mr. Goodwin stated that there are legitimate reasons that people would come into the building, but in order to do that, it needs to be safe for everyone. Kenny Hale made a motion to approve the Executive Order of the Morgan County Board of Commissioners Regarding the Public Access to County Facilities in Response to the Public Health Emergency Caused by the Coronavirus Disease Outbreak. Motion seconded by Ryan Goodwin. Motion carried 3-0. Mr. Goodwin stated that this is a situation where there is no perfect action. There is no conceivable way they can address every possible issue that may come at them during this time. They are making a good faith effort to protect employees. They will be as flexible as they can to allow departments to carry on business.

ADDITIONAL APPROPRIATION LETTER

Ryan Goodwin stated that the Board would like to submit a letter to the Council requesting \$100,000 from a variety of funds into a newly established COVID-19 Fund in order to purchase items, supplies, equipment and other services that are needed to deal with the emergency situation. This will also assist with accounting as some, if not all, expenses are subject to reimbursement. Kenny Hale made a motion to approve the letter. Motion seconded by Ryan Goodwin. Motion carried 3-0.

TRANSFER LETTER

Ryan Goodwin stated that unrelated to COVID-19, the Board has a letter to submit to the Council requesting the transfer of \$500 from program supplies to gasoline. Kenny Hale made a motion to approve the transfer letter. Motion seconded by Ryan Goodwin. Motion carried 3-0.

ADMINISTRATOR UPDATE

Josh Messmer stated that they want to encourage department heads to meet by phone and telecommunication software. The county has purchased a number of licenses and they may contact him if they need anything. Mr. Messmer asked that they encourage people to do business by phone, email, fax and not to come into the facility. They also want to encourage residents to vote by mail. The county has a Facebook page and a YouTube channel to stream meetings to the public. The IT Department has two employees and there are a lot of needs. Mr. Messmer asked that departments be patient. Daree Fry had compiled a list of phone numbers and emails; this will be posted on the front door and website as contact information.

ADJOURNMENT

Norman Voyles made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Motion seconded by Kenny Hale. Motion carried 3-0.

Morgan County Board of Commissioners

Ryan Goodwin

Kenny Hale

Attest:

Dan Bastin, Morgan Co. Auditor

Norman Voyles