



**MINUTES
MONROE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS'
MARCH 18, 2020
NAT U HILL III MEETING ROOM
COURTHOUSE
BLOOMINGTON, IN**

The Monroe County Commissioners met in a regular meeting on March 18, 2020 at 10:00 a.m. with the following members present: Julie Thomas, President and Lee Jones, Vice President. Also present: Jeff Cockerill, Attorney; Angie Purdie, Commissioners' Administrator; and Chris Muench, Chief Deputy Auditor. Not present: Penny Githens, Commissioner; Jordan Miller, Payroll Administrator; and Lisa Ridge, Highway Director.

I. CALL TO ORDER

Meeting called to order by Thomas

II. COMMISSIONERS' PUBLIC STATEMENT

Statement read by Jones

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- NONE

IV. APPROVAL OF CLAIMS DOCKET

- ACCOUNTS PAYABLE – MARCH 18, 2020

V. REPORTS

Good morning. **Penny Caudill**, Monroe County Health Department. Wanted to share a few things with you today. In light of this week and all the various things that have happened including that the Governor has signed executive orders. We're trying to post all of the State Health Department and Indiana Government and our local county press releases on our website so that those are available for people to view. The governors orders did include obviously restaurants and bars to stop dine in only, they can do carry-out. So far in Indiana, and I checked this morning, it had not been updated so I don't know that there's anything new but, 30 positive cases in Indiana, 159 tests have been done at the State Health Department and

sadly, we've had two deaths. I do want to take this moment to kind of address a few things, questions that we're getting. I know EMA may address one or two of these things as well, so not stepping on your toes Allison you can go into more detail if you want. PPE monitoring, Personal Protective Monitoring, I know that is in the news a lot there's concerns about that and we are monitoring that and there is orders the state is expecting additional PPE for our health care workers and EMA certainly is more involved in that side of it and with our first responders. We appreciate that very much.

This is a pandemic the WHO (World Health Organization) has officially earlier this month confirmed that we are in a pandemic and I just wanted to go over a few small things that that really means because we talk about pandemic's and while H1N1 was a pandemic it's different. They are rare we don't experience them very often. People in pandemic's have little to no immunity to whatever the infection is. Hospitals and providers maybe overwhelmed and that is a huge concern, may have a major impact on the public and we're certainly seeing that. It may call for various restrictions, closings, schools, business, travel restrictions we're seeing that in other places as well as some of those things here and it may impact domestic and global economies and we are certainly seeing all of those things on various levels. As the responses to mitigate these the impact of them those responses seem drastic because they are. They are drastic compared to how we normally operate. But it is what we need to do in order to slow this infection, to keep our hospitals capacity for those who are most vulnerable and need hospital care and to prevent deaths. That is our ultimate goal. For most people we will get over this, we may be sick probably mild symptoms and we'll get over it. But we risk if we are out and about we risk sharing that infection and passing it on to somebody who cannot fight it off like we can. That's why we're talking about social distancing and why some of these things seem drastic. It's really to protect our vulnerable populations.

I want to talk about the main way this is spread is through droplets within that 6 ft. distance. So if I am sick and I cough on you or sneeze on you and we're very close then you have the potential if I cough in your face to get infected. While we hear people talk about touching things the reason we want to wash our hands and clean surfaces so often is that I might cough in my hands and then you touch it or I cough in my hand I touch my phone I give you my phone and now then you touch your face. Those are some other preventative things we want to do. We may be able to pass it that way but that's not the primary way that it's transmitted. Of course it's new and we're still learning and we will continue to learn more about it.

A couple of other things that we're getting questions about is getting tested. I know that's a concern for everyone. Testing has been and is continuing in this county. The specimens are taken by the provider and they go to the lab for testing. The state has set criteria in order test the people who are most at risk, most at risk for spreading it, say a health care worker or for complications. They have criteria that they use but we are testing people in our community, testing does seem to be increasing some and we hope that that continues. There is private labs available so that may become more available in our community as well. The other thing is about is what a positive test means. Because the term presumptive positive is being used a lot and I think ideally we would just remove that from our vocabulary. But at the state they are calling a positive a 'presumptive positive' not because they don't think it's positive. It is a positive test that is now going to the CDC (Center for Disease Control) for confirmation and a second round of testing. That is why they're calling that presumptive. When we have a

positive case we will do an investigation to determine who those closest contacts are so that we can make sure they have the information they need. Do they need into isolation, monitoring, whatever is appropriate that guidance is. What may be happening in some instances is that people go to a provider they can't be tested and they're saying well we can rule it out so act as though you have it or we're going to presume you have it, there comes that presumptive word again, and all it really means in those instances is we don't know but we want you to self-isolate until you're better. In terms of self-isolation when people are ill it is three days or 72 hours past the time you've had a fever with no fever reducing medicine and your symptoms are resolving and at least seven days since your symptoms began. That's important to keep in mind and I wanted to share that.

The other thing that I would say in these uncertain times people can feel nervous because they have a loss of control. I wanted to point out a few things I think we can do that we can control. We can control our prevention measures what we do individually, are we covering our coughs are we doing all those things that we talk about, washing our hands not touching our face, social distancing, are we cleaning and disinfecting and doing those kinds of things. But some other things that we can consider is check in on your neighbors, your family, see what they need. Make sure if they are vulnerable, do they have food, do they have the things they need? Social distancing doesn't mean we have to socially disconnect from people. We can still have those communications and check in on one another. Also, buy what you need, but leave some for others. Visit the CDC, the State Health Department for the most current up to date information and guidance. Our website and Facebook page also has those links on them if you need that and we would just encourage the way that we'll get through and curb it is for all of us to do our part.

(Thomas) I really appreciate that.

(Jones) It is so important and people really do need to understand why slowing it down is so important. It's not that fewer people will necessarily get or anything it's just to spread it out so the medical system isn't just totally overwhelmed.

(Caudill) Exactly. And from a health department side obviously we have been coming to you discussing the various things that we've been doing and we have connected through phone calls and emails with daycare centers, with various businesses, with our churches and faith communities, they're doing a lot. We are connecting with our businesses and using Chamber and Economic Development for that and a whole host of others. We will be maintaining those communications but we will also be moving and are moving to looking at our points of distribution. If and when we have the ability to do mass testing then we'll use our POD (Point of Distribution) to do that but we'll also be ready when vaccination arrive that we can do those clinics as well so that will be our next phase of focus.

(Thomas) And I would just say that it's so important for people, and this goes even beyond health, it's so important for people to rely on accurate information and they should visit the Monroe County Health Department webpage where all the links are, everything is in one place, and you know that the information there has been vetted and it's accurate. And I know there's

a lack of information out there, there's a lot we don't know, we can't help that. We can't fill that void with just anything and I get so many calls with the rumor mill and social media, please don't pass anything on social media unless you have verified that information and if you really want to help your friends and neighbors in this community and elsewhere just send them the link to the county health website because that's going to be accurate and you're not going to be spreading misinformation. Because people then panic and they get more anxious. People want information because they are anxious, but if you start a panic on rumors it makes it worse.

(Caudill) And in this day and age of social media that is very quick. We want to be as early as we can but we want to be first with facts and so we will take more time in order to get the facts and provide accurate information. Businesses can decide for themselves what is in their best interests and what they want to do. Certainly businesses are doing that and individuals can too. If you don't want anybody in your home then you certainly have that right, do what's right for you.

(Thomas) We appreciate you and the hard work of you and your staff. You've been amazing, you've been a rock and we cannot thank you enough our community is grateful.

(Caudill) Thanks. I guess along that line I will say that we're continuing to work on some levels and our staff will be processing things like birth/death certificates but through the mail. We have processes and staff rotating to come in and take care of those kinds of things. They can visit our website and we'll be including those kinds of thing. Staff will be checking their emails and phone calls response times may be slowed but we will handle any emergencies. We have other public health things that come up that we have to handle and we will be doing those things as well.

(Thomas) Absolutely. Thank you so much. Ms. Moore did you want to offer an update?

Good morning. **Allison Moore**, Monroe County Emergency Management Director. I'll start with speaking about Personal Protective Equipment that Ms. Caudill spoke about. We have our emergency operation center open partially. That being said it's two support functions at this time, emergency management and health section. All the requests we are getting at this time is in regards to health and medical supplies and mainly that personnel protective equipment. As we see fit if this evolves and additional resources are being requested then we will bring in additional support functions in our emergency operation center to meet the needs of our county. We have a form that has gone out to all of our public safety providers and how they can request that protective equipment and then there is a software hub that we have to send that request to the State Department of Health, so that's our process. We've gotten a couple different requests from some of our public safety, rest assured all of our public safety providers have protective equipment at this time but we are always thinking for the next few days ahead and making sure those requests are coming. We have heard from the State Department of Health that they have received a national stock pile of equipment and hopefully since they've received our request then hopefully we'll get some of that first stock pile that they have received. We have not heard back from the State Department of Health in regards to that but that has been made.

Locally we declared a disaster yesterday morning and in regards to that the FEMA public assistance program announced yesterday EM 3456 that has allowed emergency management offices to request

public assistance. We have to submit an application by April 12th that we would be interested in applying for reimbursement for our expenses. We have already started making lists of the different things that we have and it's very clear on what we can request funding for back to our county and what would not qualify in that documentation of the EM 3456.

(Jones) I'm just happy to hear that you've got things moving and it's good to hear equipment is becoming available.

(Thomas) So can you provide a little bit more clarity on who applies for the emergency funding?

(Moore) Right now it is regards to government expenses. Depending on how this evolves there could be additional FEMA public assistance funds in different categories. This is specific for what they call category B and that is government expenses at this time.

(Thomas) It's good to have that clarified so people don't start thinking oh I have to apply for something. There may be other aspects but right now its government expenditures. I also wanted to note that you all did a great job you got new protocols out there for EMS and first responders, fire fighters who maybe encountering people to ensure their safety and then their family's safety and then the rest of the stations safety. I thought that was excellent so people can know that they're in great hands. Again thank you and your staff and the EMAC Board, everybody has worked so hard and we can't thank you enough. You are so much behind the scenes much like the health department but what you're doing is critical for our continuity of operations here but for our community at large.

(Moore) One other comment just for the rumor mill I've gotten several phone calls about are we on a travel restriction or a travel ordinance? So just for the public that is listening there are no travel ordinances or advisories that we have out at this time.

(Thomas) If something happens with the roads or anything like that there may be one. But to be in a car is not a bad thing it's just what you're doing, are you bringing other people in your car and where you're going. Just be thoughtful about it. You're absolutely right, that was a big one going around yesterday. I must have fielded about a half dozen calls on that one. Thank you for pointing that out.

(Moore) Thank you.

[illegible]

Mike Carmin. Most of what we're talking about are dealing with health protocols and how to do that. But we're not yet under, we may become under a complete shutdown. We're closing offices, you know yesterday Assessor, Auditor, Recorder offices are closed but we absolutely have to figure out how we can continue to conduct business within these health protocol issues. And other places are doing it and we have to because, I'm sorry to report or predict that we will lose, I'm saying 15, 20 small businesses over the next few weeks. You cannot shut restaurants down and say you have no income and leave 'em, what are they going to do? There are things that there are efforts under way but it's going to be difficult. And there's more people complain in the city about IU students and traffic and things. But they're going to see the impact of those students not being here now for the next weeks if not months and it's going to be a real struggle. We're going to lose a lot of small businesses. There are some ongoing business things that we can't just grind to a halt. Brown County for example, they closed their government offices as well, we can't get to the Records office so being involved in a lot of real estate transactions we can't do property searches in Brown County except electronically. Not all the records are available electronically through those services. They have announced that they will post and make

(Thomas) Thank you. We're going to address a lot of this but Ms. Purdie-

gratitude to the amazing health department, to emergency preparedness service, the county staff, you're doing a phenomenal job and as Penny said in uncertain times. I value that. I just want to take a moment if you would to talk about some issues I think are issues of the moment but also more systemic issues as well. A year ago in my capacity as chair of the Affordable Housing Commission, we provided you guys with an ordinance that would declare housing a human right in Monroe County. That ordinance would have created a full time staff position that was dedicated to dealing with housing strategies for the community especially housing first and making sure that we have housing retention policies to stop folks for being evicted and making sure that folks without homes are housed. The gravity of that situation now comes back to sort of haunt us because you all are having to struggle to house a great many folks who don't have permanent shelter in times where to be healthy is necessary to have a home and have sanitation. One of the things that I'd like you to do is, you have great sway as elected public officials, and thousands of people have put their confidence behind you. I think it would be as some merit to issue a public call for lending agencies and landlords, apartment complexes to be willing to work our residents and be able to understand that yes, you may be suffering but there are people suffering directly and that suffering will increase if they are out on the streets. Thomas Paine said 'No man is an island' and we all have to realize that we're inter connected in this time that we have to work together. I'd ask that the county's judiciary move to put a moratorium on non-essential trials and cases. I was pleased to see that Monday they acted to file a petition with the State Supreme Court and ask for that. Another thing that has been talked about but is once again is a necessity, is that we ask the Sheriff to suspend cooperation on ICE even if we have to, I understand he is an elected official and he has his own autonomy, but the County Council controls the power of the purse. If we have to say hey we're going to flex the budget to put pressure on you on this now more than any time that is needed. I need us to install sanitation facilities on the square. I was disappointed that we put in protocol that we moved homeless folks from the square after 10(pm) I understand the circumstances that you folks did that in. But that doesn't actually alleviate the problem it just displaces it. For a few thousand dollars we could put in pretty substantial, astatically pleasing sanitation facility, even with water somewhere on the Courthouse square and it would make a world of difference. I found myself the other evening with the bars closed I was downtown I had to use the restroom and it dawned on me that hey I have to make it home to use the bathroom. I can't imagine how that would impact if I didn't have a home to go back too. Another thing that has been said and I think you all have referenced the importance is we need a director of communication that needs to be a full time position. As a commission member there are things that I would like to put out to the public that would be helpful in moments of emergency like this. One of the failings of government in society that we've seen is that we've created instantaneous communication but we haven't moved government to that same pace so having a communications director would stream line things like Facebook pages, would make sure that when Penny needs to get directives out to the citizens and to residents that it's an easy process. I'm not going to take up much of your time today, once again I would like to thank you all and my continued wishes for your health and wellbeing. I appreciate it.

(Thomas) Thank you. So we have a loose agenda, I want to make sure we cover everything we have to some of what you brought to us is going to be discussed so we appreciate that. I'm going to go ahead and make a motion on a claims docket, I move that we approve the claims docket accounts payable for March 18, 2020 in the total amount of \$5,213,670.84

(Jones) Second.

(Thomas) We have a motion and a second. Any public comment on this? Seeing none, all in favor of approving Claims docket and accounts payable for March 18, 2020 signify by saying Aye.

(Jones) Aye.

(Thomas) Aye. **Motion carried.**

VI. NEW BUSINESS

**A. MOVE TO APPROVE: ORDINANCE 2020-16; MONROE COUNTY APPROPRIATION
ORDINANCE SUPPORTING COVID-19 RELATED ASSISTANCE AND EMERGENCY RELIEF.**

FUND NAME: N/A FUND NUMBER: N/A AMOUNT: N/A

Jones made motion to approve. Thomas seconded.

Executive Summary: This ordinance (1) ratifies the declaration and finding that emergency relief is necessary. (2) It authorizes the appropriation of \$25,000 to be used for covid-19 relief through the Rainy Day Fund or through the infrastructure of the Sophia Travis Community Service Grant Funding; funds will be provided to United Way of Monroe County; (3) Relaxes procedures and formalities; authority delegated by the Council and Commissioners to their presidents. The Commissioners may release additional funding as may be deemed appropriate and necessary. (4) Relaxes enforcement of zoning ordinances to waive building code requirements.

(Cockerill) What this does is not only ratifies the declaration that was announced yesterday morning but it also extends it to April 1st. The code indicates that the president can declare an emergency for up to seven days, but the whole board can go further than that. So this is extending it through that April 1st date. It also includes a \$25,000 to the Hoosier Hills Food Bank so that they can continue to provide their services. It does relax some of the formalities and I think this goes a lot with what the Governor issued yesterday in his executive order #4 which essentially says that if there is a statutory required deadline for a board to meet that during this crisis that has been waived at this point and it'll be extended pursuant to this emergency. When we talk about relaxed zoning and building it is only for times when people are issuing humanitarian aid or things of that nature that's not I need to extend my house that's for a worthy 501 (c) (3) we need additional space to due to this emergency to help more people. We're going to waive those requirements for this period of time and we'll have to deal with the ramifications once this emergency ends. That's what the relaxing of those enforcements are for. Other than that I think this is declaring what we've already heard from our health department and our emergency management people already today and over the past few weeks.

(Thomas) Thank you. I have a question for you about, so we could then if we needed to, which I hope we don't, but if we need to we can extend the emergency declaration beginning April 1st if that's needed at that time and we could issue a new one and that would be a seven day?

(Cockerill) I think if the Board of Commissioners as a group acted they could extend it until they feel that it is no longer necessary.

(Thomas) Ok.

(Cockerill) And then they could always rescind it if that is incorrect. I think you as the presiding president of the Board of Commissioners if on March 30th you could extend it seven days. The board would have to act as a board in order to extend it more than seven days.

(Thomas) Right. But with the new executive order from the Governor 2020-04, one of us needs to be here but the remainder can join telephonically in a phone call and we can issue any information on our website once a decision is made.

(Cockerill) I think the Governor issued that executive order part of that is public meetings and it kind of suspends the in person requirement. There needs to be one member of the board of commission at the meeting but the rest could participate telephonically or otherwise electronically and not have to be physically present so that is true and that will be through the State's declared emergency. I did not read that order to see if it extended it but His March 6th order was for a 30 day period of time, yesterday's order may or may not have extended that. But clearly those rules are in effect until the State's declared emergency is over.

(Jones) I just want to reassure people that while we mention specific amounts of funding that will be made available to help with this crisis it will be possible for us to appropriate more if it becomes obvious that it will be necessary.

(Thomas) Just a note that this funding for United Way is for the coalition of a number of a different community organizations we're working together. I'm very hopeful that we can find some way to provide some direct contact avenue for residents who are in need. We know that a lot of people live on the margin, like 1 in 3 in this county, economic margins, and we don't want, this is already producing enough anxiety we're trying reduce the financial anxiety as much as we can. So that is going to that coalition which is aiding a number of agencies in Monroe County. Also, the food bank request came from the director of the food bank, Julio Alonzo, and they had the opportunity to purchase some basic food items for the pantry and they weren't sure that they were going to be able to do that if they waited. We know the need is there now and we know that if the situation becomes direr that we will have that back up. And this is all shelf stable product it will not go to waste it will be used. We appreciate the food bank and Mr. Alonzo and all their hard work, and that's the other aspect of this funding. Jeff just for clarification do we need to do a separate motion later in this meeting to authorize one of us, or me to do the claims and all of that subject to ratification, that's a separate motion that's not included here.

(Cockerill) I think that would be a separate motion.

(Thomas) Great so that's listed after "B" on your agenda. It's not listed as "C" but it should be.
After call for public comment, motion carried by voice vote.

B. MOVE TO APPROVE: RESOLUTION 2020-09; MONROE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS REQUESTING THE USE OF FOOD AND BEVERAGE FUNDS.

FUND NAME: N/A

FUND NUMBER: N/A

AMOUNT: UP TO \$200,000

Jones made motion to approve. Thomas seconded.

(Thomas) This is addressing one of the things that Mr. Carmin pointed out clearly it's something that we've been thinking about. Do you want to go ahead and explain it and we can chime in with other comments.

(Cockerill) Absolutely. What we have here is a request to the Food and Beverage Advisory Tax Commission to allow for the use of up to \$200,000 of the County's Food and Beverage Tax Fund for support of local food and beverage establishments and other businesses that promote tourism which is kind of the requirements under the State code for the use of this fund outside the limits of the City of Bloomington which is where this money was collected from. We intend to figure out the best use of this and one of the things we want people who fall into those categories of businesses to email to the county at fbsupport@co.monroe.in.us what their concerns are, where their struggles or issues are at so that we can formulate a response to that is appropriate. We had talked about different scenarios of what we would look at but at the end of the day we felt we needed more information to make sure that this was useful and that this would help preserve a lot of the businesses that we have concerns about. It encourages the City of Bloomington to do a similar action with their food and beverage tax dollars. In essence it sets up the ability for us to respond to the concerns we hear from the restaurants and other small business owners on what kind of support they need in order to weather this traumatic time for them.

(Jones) I just want to ask will there be a link to that email address on the website?

(Cockerill) We'll make sure it's up.

(Jones) Thank you.

(Thomas) I would say it this way because we have to do a write up so that people know what we're actually know what we're asking for. We're going to go through the applications momentarily and get through some ideas and get some things out there. People should look for it by Friday morning, but it may be up earlier. I just don't want to promise something we can't deliver.

(Jones) I'd also like to ask that business owners please make sure that other business owners are hearing about this. It can be hard to get this kind information out at a time like this so help spread it around.

(Thomas) Absolutely. We'll get it on our Facebook page too and it will be on our website. But you're absolutely right we have to share this information with one another. Can the Food and Beverage Tax Advisory Commission actually meet telephonically to consider this request?

(Cockerill) I think 1. They can, and 2. I think if read in its strict language I believe that four members of the Food and Beverage Advisory Tax Commission could sign off and move forward especially given the State's directives not to have meetings and given those kinds of directives. I think it just requires four of their signatures on the request.

(Thomas) Ok. And those can be done electronically, they can print out the document and sign it-

(Cockerill) Yes.

(Thomas) and scan a PDF or scan a copy-

(Cockerill) I think they could do that. I think at the end of the day once this is all over we would probably get all the signatures collected on one document but I think each separate one would be adequate.

(Thomas) Perfect. So if we go ahead and approve this lets make sure that we get this in front of them as quickly as possible. We're looking for locally owned small businesses and we're not making promises here because we don't know that a.) The food and beverage group is going to approve it, hopefully they will, but we also don't know how much we're going to get in requests but we're looking at restaurants, bars, small businesses that support economic tourism and we are going to define that very broadly for this initial round. We don't know what the needs are and that's what this initial email is for, what is needed, what kind of help we can offer. This is a good use of this money, I think and we know there are a lot of businesses that are on the brink. Especially with these new rules regarding food and dining establishments, drinking establishments. We have to do what we can to help those wage earners that's going to be impacted first and the business owners that are also going to be impacted. But also for other supportive industries out there and there's a lot out there.

(Jones) At this point I don't think we have very closely defined what locally owned means. So if you think you might be locally owned go ahead and let us know what your ownership situation is and we'll have to make some decisions about that.

(Thomas) This is a limited pool of money, it's a lot of money, but it's a limited pool. We are focusing only because this is where our food and beverage tax comes in at, just to be very clear, these have to be establishments outside of the city limits of Bloomington and inside the boundary of Monroe County. I'm so proud of everybody's hard work, and thank you legal for working on that. Thank you Mr. Cockerill.

(Jones) And the establishments that came up with the idea and got it rolling.

(Thomas) Absolutely. You're right this was a petition that we saw that we responded to immediately.

After call for public comment, motion carried by voice vote.

(Thomas) Let's be sure to get a copy of this to the City of Bloomington as soon as possible and encourage them to do the same as you have mentioned. I would like to take a moment to ask the Monroe County Council to consider suspending the collection of the food and beverage tax and I would also like to take a moment because we're talking about people who are living on the margins to implore the City Council to stop talking about negotiating, discussing a local income tax which would be a 1% tax on everybody's income that lives in the county not just the city but throughout the county. We have very little control based on how the voting is divided. Please let's just make sure people have as much ready, payment, cash, pay checks as they can at this time. So please, please, please if those two things could be done I would personally be very supportive.

(Jones) The one thing I'd like to add is ask landlords this is not a good time to be evicting people, either individuals or businesses so if at all possible hold on, work with people, keep them in their homes and in their businesses.

(Thomas) absolutely thank you for that.

C. MOVE TO APPROVE: RETAINER AND REPRESENTATION AGREEMENT WITH EUBANKS AND ASSOCIATES, LLC FOR DISTRICT COURT LITIGATION CHALLENGING THE US FORSET SERVICE'S HOUSTON SOUTH VEGETATION MANAGEMENT AND RESTORATION PROJECT, PURSUANT TO COUNCIL APPROVAL.

FUND NAME: N/A

FUND NUMBER: N/A

AMOUNT: N/A

Jones made motion to approve. Thomas seconded.

(Cockerill) I'll be brief. I think this on your agenda because there is some urgency to it. I think this approval should be and I would request you amend your motion that it is subject to council appropriation for its approval this is for the continuing reviewing the US Forest Service project at Houston South.

Jones amended motion to indicate that this is dependent on an appropriation from the County Council.

Thomas seconded. Motion was amended.

(Jones) This really is something that is imminent and in spite of the overall situation it's quite important that we move forward with it and try to protect our local drinking water.

(Thomas) Yeah. I would hate to think that on top of having to deal with this that we would have yet another health crisis that is truly man made and an avoidable one. We have gotten nowhere with the forest service's folks. They've met, we've tried, I appreciate that they've

met, but they have other options, they have other opportunities and to do this such a thing that will impact our drinking water supply it's just unconscionable. I would encourage the council to utilize whatever legal means they have to meet based on the governors order and to approve this soon so that we can hire this agency. We did have a phone conversation with this legal group and they are impressive and they are so inexpensive based on what other attorney's charge comparatively but also their experience and knowledge about this kind of legal case was just impressive, it was no two ways about it. I'm so grateful that they're available and they really provided a lot of answers for us.

After call for public comment, motion carried by voice vote.

D. MOVE TO APPROVE: THE COUNTY COMMISSIONERS AUTHORIZES OUR PRESIDENT TO APPROVE ALL CALIMS, SUBJECT TO RATIFICATION, AS NECESSARY FOR THE DURATION OF THE DISASTER EMERGENCY.

Jones made motion to approve. Thomas seconded.

(Thomas) This is something that we have to do we will make every effort as allowed as we are able too, to have our meetings, not necessarily with CATS here but per the governors executive order. We will post on our webpage any minutes, they're not going to be verbatim, but they will be minutes that will let the public know if they're interested in what we're doing, what we're acting on and why we're doing it. We will keep the public informed but business is not as usual anymore, hopefully it will get back to usual soon but I don't know. So just to clarify, we will just have one of us in the courthouse to be at that meeting. The others may join telephonically or electronically, correct?

(Cockerill) Correct. And actually what this motion does is in the event those meetings can't occur it would allow the president to approve claims prior too but it would eventually come back through a Board of Commissioner meeting for ratification. We had a conference call with the Association of Indiana Counties which included the Public Access Councilor and State Board of Accounts, this motion is what they recommended that we do. They think that along with the emergency provisions that allow for special notice for meetings and things like that as well as the governors proclamation that says we now only have to post those meetings and notices electronically. This is part of that recommendation package that they gave us this morning.

(Thomas) I didn't mean to conflate the two things and I shouldn't have and I apologize for that. But hopefully that's clear that what this motion involves is in between meetings ensuring we are paying all claims and that includes payroll.

(Cockerill) Correct.

(Thomas) and then other piece is separate. I'm sorry I brought both of those up together.

(Jones) This does put a rather additional burden on you and you're already very, very busy but I just want to ensure you that Commissioner Githens and I will be ready to help out in whatever way we're able to.

(Thomas) I appreciate you both so much and our staff so much. This is necessary though we have to make sure we're taking care of our business.

Motion carried by voice vote.

(Thomas) So that was our official agenda we do have a lot of information to share so bear with us. I've asked Mr. Cockerill and Ms. Purdie to help us fill in any gaps with anything we may have missed. I do want to go over some of the things that was in our press release yesterday regarding the Disaster Emergency Declaration for Monroe County but also it relates to administration and how we're managing things. We've had some discussion about it today but I'd like to go over a few of those things.

We are in phase II of our continuity of government operations plan. Just as a note this was issued, these phases and how we need to fulfill them, had been sent out to all of our department heads and the elected officials at least a week ago. They've had time to prepare and most of them have and so I'm grateful of that. So non-essential personnel are to remain at home. Many of our county buildings are closed including this one. We have done this to ensure the health and safety of our community and our employees, that's our goal. It is not to disrupt business, it's not to make people's lives difficult it's to do our best to keep people healthy. So Courthouse is closed until further notice. Monroe County offices in the North Showers building are closed. The Health building is closed but as you know between this building and the health building and our showers building there are employees who are answering the phones. There may be employees inside the building. We're not inviting the public in. Hopefully the employees that are present are only working on essential projects, paper work, permits etc. and they are skeletal staff. We don't want our county offices to be fully staffed at this time because we don't know who has this. We've also closed the county parks, the trails are open. Any resident who wants to transact business with Monroe County offices and this includes realtors, mortgage and title companies, who I've heard a lot from in the last 24hrs, but anybody who has anything they need to transact with any of our departments should call or email that department. If you run into a problem with that let us know we'll follow up. Just remember that while we do control and manage a large number of departments we do not control or manage elected officials and their departments. We can encourage and cajole but we cannot do more than that. We are doing what we can to keep essential business going. That is our goal but to keep everybody safe in the process.

Each department has been encouraged to post specific information on their webpage and to utilize social media accordingly. Elected officials and department heads will be working on site or remotely during the closure. Only essential Monroe County employees are asked to report to work. All Monroe County employees, full time and part time are going to be paid during this public health emergency. This is not using their benefit time. Monroe County Courts are only holding essential and emergency hearings at this time. They've informed attorneys are they are working on informing litigants. If you are unsure if your hearing that's scheduled during this emergency please call Court Services, 812.349.2615.

The Airport remains open with air traffic control and two maintenance and emergency responders. We know the Treasurer's office is closed to the public. Tax bills will be sent out around April 1st and spring tax bills will be due May 11th. There are going to be a number of options to pay your bills and

everybody needs to be prepared to use one of those options. We may be open by then, but we may not and if we're not then you're going to have to be flexible to make sure your tax bill gets paid. The tax bills that are paid through mortgage companies that is assumed to be continuing because that is done through e-banking and ACH.

Please note that the Solid Waste Management District will continue with its normal operations although it has shut down the portion of the rural sites and South Walnut site that relates to reused goods.

I will ask everyone to pay attention to local media, the Herald-Times has waived subscription cost for accessing the newspaper online, we're grateful to them for doing that because they are a good up to date outlet of information.

I will note on a call yesterday we learned that both of our county school districts are providing breakfast and lunch meals for all of Monroe County children. So if you are in need and have a child(ren) they are providing a version of breakfast and lunch served as brown bag style on different schedules visit their websites for information about distribution points.

(Jones) We did also hear in that meeting and nothing has been determined yet, but the school systems are trying to figure out something about child care. They don't yet have a plan so check their website if that is a problem for you.

(Thomas) I will note all of our board and commission meetings are cancelled through the end of March. The County Council will not be meeting, they're going to be following the Governors directive. If you have questions about the County Council meetings go to their website for more information. I will say that I am so proud of our Monroe County residents, I am so proud of our Monroe County Employees they've weathered a really difficult time and continue to do so. They have been so positive and helpful in so many ways and special kudos to Health Department, Penny Caudill and Allison Moore, Emergency Management our Technical Services Department, Eric Evans, he has really done an amazing job. Thank you CATS for being here today, Jonathan thank you for being here today. Special thanks to Angie Purdie our Commissioners' Administrator, you've done a fabulous job, we've all been working a lot of hours and nobody has complained. My colleagues Penny Githens, Lee Jones thank you. Legal department thank you, Jeff Cockerill, Margie Rice. I know Dave Schilling and Lee Baker are working on other things, we are all working very hard. Thanks to our security staff for being here today.

We are going to be making decisions we are reminding everyone we're not going to be perfect but we're always going to keep the health and wellbeing of our county residents and our county employees first and foremost in our plans. Just know our hearts and minds are in the right place and if you know or see something you have a concern let us know our email addresses are available on the county website. We don't know how long this will last, we continue to hope and continue to send positive thoughts out for everyone in our community to remain healthy, but that means we all are responsible for acting in a way to keep everyone else healthy.

There is some work going on for small businesses in the whole community that the EDC and the Chambers, Ellettsville and Bloomington.

(Jones) Yes, both Chambers. On their websites they have a number of different resources for business owners. If you own a small business and are concerned about how things are going I suggest you check in with either the Bloomington or Ellettsville Chamber of Commerce or the Bloomington Economic Development Corporation.

(Thomas) And you don't have to be a member.

VII. Adjournment

The minutes of the March 18, 2020 Board of Commissioners' meeting were approved on March 25, 2020.

Monroe County Commissioners

Ayes:

Nays:



Julie Thomas, President

Julie Thomas, President



Lee Jones, Vice President

Lee Jones, Vice President



Penny Githens

Penny Githens

AP Approved at Public Zoom mtg

Attest:



Catherine Smith, Auditor