

CITY OF CRAIG MEMORANDUM

To: Craig City Council
From: Jon Bolling, City Administrator
Date: March 19, 2020
RE: COVID-19 Response

The COVID-19 response has recently absorbed much staff time. There are a number of policy calls the council should consider making as to the city's further COVID-19 actions.

Health Mandates & Alerts. The State of Alaska Governor's Office, and the Alaska Department of Health and Social Services regularly issue Health Alerts and Health Mandates as to public responses intended to slow the rate of transmission of the virus statewide. Health Alerts are recommendations for the public to follow as a best practice. Health Mandates are required responses that the public and private sector must take based on the governor's statutory authority to issue orders in the event of a disaster emergency declaration. The governor issued a disaster declaration on March 11. My approach to date has been to comply with the mandates, and consider the alerts. In practice I have tended to follow the alerts as well.

City facilities. To date I have announced closures of the Craig Aquatic Center, City Gym, and the Recreation Center building. I made these announcements after reading mandates and advisories from the Alaska Department of Health and Social Services, and the Office of the Governor. If the state orders additional closures, staff will make a determination as to how those orders apply to city facilities.

Staff preparedness. The city's department managers met on March 18 to discuss how we might modify staffing and delivery of services if additional facilities are ordered closed, or if a "shelter in place" order is issued. Some city services must be delivered regardless of what orders are received, and our meeting today focused on those. City staff should continue to provide public services so long as we can do so while complying with state and federal health mandates.

Yesterday's department manager meeting included a discussion of assigning staff from one department to another if there is suitable work that can be performed by employees subject to facility closures.

Staff Timesheets. Section 507 of the city's Employee Handbook states that in the event of a city closure, where city operations are closed due to emergency conditions, staff may take unpaid leave, or draw from their leave banks.

My goal is to keep city operations as normal as possible, making adjustments in response to state directives and alerts. Maintaining our usual operations as much as possible allows staff to meet ongoing service needs, and keep disruptions to our staff and the public to a minimum. I will stay in touch with council members by e-mail/text in response to significant changes.