



CITY OF  
**ELIZABETH CITY**  
HARBOR OF HOSPITALITY *North Carolina*

**TO:** Mayor and Members of the City Council  
**FROM:** Rich Olson, City Manager  
**REF:** City Manager's Weekly FYI ~ June 26, 2020  
**COPY:** Email Distribution

1. On Wednesday, I met with City staff to discuss our cash flow problems within our various utilities, primarily our electric utility. This issue is the basis for the City's request for a waiver of Executive Orders 124/142 that have been sent to the Attorney General's Office. As you're aware, EO 124/142 only applies to the City's residential accounts; commercial accounts are not included. During the March 23, 2020 City Council meeting, the Council voted to cease the application of late fees and cut-off orders due to non-payment for both commercial and residential accounts for a period of 60 days; this directive expired on May 23, 2020. A review of our billing records shows that we have 133 delinquent commercial accounts, all of which are at least 30 days past due, and which total \$205,059.71 in uncollected revenue. As the Governor's Executive Order does not apply to commercial accounts, I have instructed staff to enter into the first stages of the disconnection process. Three of these accounts alone amount to \$65,000; these businesses are active and should not have a problem paying their balance. In an effort to receive payments on these accounts, Electric personnel delivered notices on June 25, 2020. These notifications will give customers until July 6<sup>th</sup> to make arrangements for payments on past due balances. If arrangements are not made, we will begin the process of service interruption on July 7<sup>th</sup>. Several of these accounts were already under a payment plan prior to the Council's directive taking effect, which they did not pay on during this time. These accounts will be required to pay at least one month of their existing payment agreement before we will rework the terms and conditions of that agreement for inclusion of the COVID payment (extension) arrangement. For those commercial customers who did not have an outstanding payment arrangement, they will be offered a period of 90-days to bring their account current. As always, the City will continue to work with all of our customers, both residential and commercial.


2. After the Budget was approved during Monday night's Council meeting, several members of the City Council made a request not to receive the \$250.00 pay increase that was included in the City Budget; instead, they requested to have it donated to an organization of their choice. Since this is a unique situation, we contacted the School of Government (SOG) and sought their guidance. Kara Millonzi has provided us their instruction, which states: *"Once the Board adopts the budget ordinance, the council members' compensation is set for the year. An individual council member may not forgo his / her compensation. Of course, he / she may donate it as you describe but he / she must continue to be paid the salary / other compensation."* Based on this information, the City Council will receive the pay increase in their next check on July 10, 2020. If they would like to donate the money to the United Way, the City can do a payroll deduction. If they wish to donate to another organization such as ECSU or the homeless shelter coalition, they will be required to send their donations on their own. John Leidy has also provided City staff with a legal opinion, which is consistent with the School of Government.
  
3. This week's electric smart meter project update has experienced both pluses and a few minuses. During Monday's thunderstorm, three of our antennas were struck by lightning and completely disabled. I am pleased to report that the Nexgrid advanced metering system responded exactly as designed; metering devices continued to communicate with each other, transmitting their data back to City Hall servers every 15 minutes. The team realized a test of the network system would come – but not so soon after the first week of installation! The damaged antennas will be replaced from among the inventory we have in stock. As of this afternoon, 295 additional meters have been installed since last Friday, for a total of 500 swapped meters. During these past two weeks, installers completed all of Routes 1 and 2, and a portion of Routes 3 and 4 within Cycle 1. Of these routes, 59 customers were skipped for meter replacement for various reasons – locked gate, loose animal, obstruction blocking meter access and customer refusal. These properties will be revisited. All utility customers are reminded that the meter upgrade is not optional and access must be granted to the City in order to access our equipment. Another shipment of meters will be received Tuesday, and installers will begin exchanging meters in Cycle 2 starting Monday. There continue to be corrections and advancements made within our back-office operations, and the team of City professionals received their first training on the Nexgrid ecoOne Data Management software and intelaHome customer portal on Tuesday.
  
4. Yesterday, an assessment was held for the position of Assistant Fire Chief. Three internal candidates applied for the position. Each applicant participated in an panel discussion, an interview with Chief Carver and a

written exercise. All three candidates did very well. After a discussion with the panel members and reviewing the exercises, Chief Carver has selected Battalion Chief Darren Saunders to be the next Assistant Fire Chief. Darren has been an asset to the department throughout his career and I know will continue to do well in his new position. As you are aware, Chief Carver has been filling both roles since July 15<sup>th</sup> of last year. Assistant Chief Saunders will begin his new position on July 7<sup>th</sup>. Congratulations!

5. On Tuesday, Assistant City Manager Judge and I attended a virtual meeting with Sentara Albemarle Medical Center (SAMC) executives, Albemarle Regional Health Services administrators, and two local pastors about initiating the Sentara Community COVID Testing for High-Risk Individuals. The initiative is intended to expand testing of persons who are identified by the Center for Disease Control (CDC) as having a higher risk of contracting the COVID-19 virus. This higher risk is defined by race, gender and medical history of having certain chronic diseases. Our local medical center proposes to replicate the program success realized by Virginia-located Sentara branches. Details of the testing clinic are still being negotiated. Support from local area leaders, ministers, the Albemarle Area United Way, and the health department will make this effort a success. The next planning meeting is Tuesday.

6. Walking in Elizabeth City should always be safe, easy, and enjoyable for all. We want your input to help make that possible. You can offer your comments on future sidewalks and other pedestrian projects, but time is running out! To help set the priorities for

**TAKE THE SURVEY  
BY JUNE 30<sup>TH</sup>!**

  
**WALKEC**  
ELIZABETH CITY PEDESTRIAN MASTER PLAN

Visit <https://tinyurl.com/WalkEC>  
to learn more and take the survey!

WalkEC, the City's new Pedestrian Master Plan, take our short survey before it closes on June 30<sup>th</sup>. It takes just a few minutes and can be found at <https://tinyurl.com/WalkEC>. Please make sure your voice is heard!

7. Elizabeth City's Historic Preservation Commission will hold its regularly scheduled meeting on Wednesday, July 8<sup>th</sup> at 4:30 p.m. in Council Chambers. Due to the concerns with COVID-19 and with keeping in the standards of the North Carolina Open Meetings Act, the Council Chambers will be limited to 10 people at one time. Staff will provide an overflow room where public attendees and witnesses can view the meeting remotely. Any party with legal standing will have the opportunity to address the commission and the applicant. All board members, staff, applicants, and public attendees will be required to wear face masks and will be placed six feet apart. Comments can be submitted electronically for the public that may not want to attend. These comments can be sent to [planneroftheday@cityofec.com](mailto:planneroftheday@cityofec.com) or through fax (252)331-1291.
  
8. The Pasquotank Board of County Commissioners recently allocated \$250,000 of their CARES funds for a small business grant project. The Pasquotank County COVID-19 Small Business Grant Program is open and accepting applications. The program provides \$250,000 in grant funds for qualifying small businesses located in Pasquotank County who have been adversely impacted by COVID-19. Small businesses within the County can apply for grants of up to \$2,500. Small business owners who might need assistance in completing their application are encouraged to come anytime during one of two information sessions that have been scheduled. The sessions are designed to provide either one-on-one or small group assistance. Business owners may ask questions or bring their application documents to receive help in putting together their application packets. A private meeting area will be available to maintain confidentiality. The next session will be on Tuesday, June 30<sup>th</sup> from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. at the Flour Girls Café & Bakery located at 102 N. Water Street, Downtown Elizabeth City

**UPCOMING EVENTS:**

All City offices will be closed next Friday, July 3<sup>rd</sup> in observance of Independence Day.