



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 5, 2020
COPY: Email Distribution

1. The City of Elizabeth City has been awarded nearly \$1 million from the Golden LEAF Foundation's Disaster Recovery Grant Program for improvements to the sanitary sewer system, specifically for pump stations. The Disaster Recovery Grant Program is funded through appropriations by the State of North Carolina to the Golden LEAF Foundation to make grants to eligible entities to repair or replace infrastructure and equipment damaged or destroyed by Hurricanes Matthew, Florence, Michael, and Dorian. On Thursday, Golden LEAF's Board of Directors awarded the City



This image shows the basement of the Dawson Street pump station, which was originally built in the 1950s.

\$996,300 for improvements and mitigation measures to pump stations. The pump stations eligible for repairs may include those located at Dawson Street, Grice Street, Holiday Inn, Spalding Park, Providence Road, Russell Lane, Northeastern High School, Summerfield, and Charles Street. Some of these pump stations are upwards of 70 years old, do not meet current design standards, and suffered damages during Hurricanes Dorian and Matthew. The money will remedy these damages and increase our City's resiliency against future heavy rain events. Grant-funded improvements will include bypass connections, elevating bypass pumps,

raising control panels, sealing and venting manholes, and more. The City will also continue to invest our own dollars towards repairing the severely outdated sewer system. Golden LEAF's support is a key step forward for improving our infrastructure to better serve the community. Thanks to their funding, our community will experience financial, environmental, and public health benefits. Specifically, the repairs will save the City money through a better conveyance of sewage, a more efficient wastewater treatment plant, and a lower likelihood of sanitary sewer overflows. Let me express our sincere thanks to Golden LEAF for supporting this project; the City will build on this investment by continuing its own major investments in the sanitary sewer system. The successful grant application was the result of a team effort by Public Utilities Director Amanda Boone, Grants Administrator Jon Hawley, Utilities System Superintendent Julius Williams, Lead for North Carolina Fellow Shom Tiwari, and other key City staff.

2. The City received official notification that the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS Office), a division of the Department of Justice awarded a COPS hiring grant to Elizabeth City Police Department. The award is in the amount of \$250,000 in federal funds over a three-year award period under the 2020 COPS Hiring Program or CHP. The local cash match required for this award is \$66,486 over the three-year period of time. CHP award funding can be used to (1) hire new officers, (2) rehire officers who have been laid off, or (3) are scheduled to be laid off on a specific future date, as a result of local budget reductions, on or after the official award start date. The start date of the 2020 COPS grant is 1-9-2020, with an end date of 12-31-2023. Allowable and approved expenditures made on or after this date will be reimbursed. One stipulation of the grant award is the City must be committed to retaining the additional positions awarded under the CHP award with state and/or local funds for a minimum of 12 months following the conclusion of 36 months of federal funding, over and above the number of locally-funded sworn officer positions that would have existed in the absence of the award. Chief Buffaloe and I are pleased that we are able to increase the sworn police work force with the allotted funding from the COPS Office in service to our citizens.
3. This week, April Onley, City Clerk of the City of Elizabeth City, was awarded the prestigious designation of "North Carolina Certified Municipal Clerk" (NCCMC) from the North Carolina Association of Municipal Clerks, along with the School of Government of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, for achieving its high educational, experience, and service requirement. April attained her designation as a NC State Certified Municipal Clerk through the completion of the NC Association of Municipal Clerks Program conducted in cooperation with the School of Government of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. As an established

member of the North Carolina Association of Municipal Clerks (NCAMC), April joins the 2020 class of municipal clerks from North Carolina who are receiving this State designation – “North Carolina Certified Municipal Clerk.” The NCAMC is a professional organization of city, town, and village clerks from across the state, dedicated to the continued growth and development of clerks and their municipalities. The Association, among other things, promotes educational and professional development opportunities for municipal clerks to enhance their knowledge and effectiveness. This is no small task, considering the wide array of duties performed by municipal clerks, which vary from municipality to municipality. The Association partners with the North Carolina League of Municipalities, the School of Government of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and the International Institute of Municipal Clerks (IIMC) to meet the needs of each individual municipal clerk. The North Carolina certified Municipal Clerk Program is a five-year designation with requirements for continuing education to sustain and develop the ever changing knowledge of the profession of municipal clerks. Congratulations to our City Clerk on a job well done!

4. The City received our Health Insurance monthly paid claims summary from the North Carolina League of Municipalities. From January through May, the City’s medical loss ratio was 69.8%. The City paid \$1,104,328 in premiums and only had \$770,476.67 in claims. Once again, this demonstrates that our employees are utilizing our health care dollars judiciously. Because of this excellent medical loss ratio, I requested that the League take another look at their rate renewal for next year. The League had proposed no increase in our health insurance for next year. After several negotiation sessions, we were able to have the League lower our rate plan by 6%; this will save the City approximately \$142,000 next year. This good news will be discussed during our budget meeting on Monday.
5. On Saturday, May 30th, Governor Cooper extended his Executive Order 124 with Executive Order 142, which expires July 31st. This Executive Order does several things:
 - extends the order prohibiting utility shut-offs and late fees for non-payment
 - allows customers to set up a repayment plan for charges due between March 31st – July 29th for a period of no less than six months
 - reiterates that customers are ultimately responsible for the cost of the utilities they use
 - prevents residential and commercial landlords from evicting a tenant for non-payment

6. The City of Elizabeth City's Satellite Utility Office on Griffin Street remains closed for the time being. Appointments are being made to set up new services. Please call 252-338-3981 to make an appointment. Payments are accepted online via the City Website at www.cityofec.com using a check or credit card, in the two lanes of the drive through, and in the third lane at the kiosk. You may pay at the kiosk 24 / 7 using cash, check or credit card. We also would like to remind you that we offer pay by draft with no fees. If you sign up for automatic draft, we automatically draft your account on your due date for the amount of your bill each month.
7. Today, State Treasurer, Dale Folwell visited several local governments during his visit to northeast North Carolina; Elizabeth City was one of his stops. The North Carolina League of Municipalities suggested he stop by Elizabeth City to discuss the effect Executive Order 124, and now Executive Order 142, is having on municipal utilities. I provided him with the total number of delinquent accounts the City has at this time, which is 2,220. There are 2,010 residential accounts and 210 commercial accounts that would be subject to disconnection if not for the Executive Order. The City's accounts receivable now exceeds \$3.6 million dollars. The City's cash balances in all of our utility funds are becoming alarming. We have contractual obligations, which we may not be able to meet in July and August. I shared this information State Treasurer, and it is my understanding that he will be sharing this information with Governor Cooper.
8. There will be no official First Friday ArtWalk event downtown tonight due to the Governor's Phase 2 opening restrictions on events. A few businesses will be hosting activities; however, they are not being promoted as an official First Friday event.
9. Tonight is the first night the downtown businesses will be closing the 600 block of Colonial Avenue to vehicular traffic, allowing them to expand their outdoor dining and service footprints. This will allow businesses to serve customers in a safe and healthy outdoor atmosphere while maintaining appropriate social distancing. As stated previously, it is not designed to promote large gatherings, and events such as live music are not allowed. It will be al fresco dining for the enjoyment of all. All restaurants within the downtown Central Business District will be allowed to use this space.

UPCOMING EVENTS

The City Council of the City of Elizabeth City will meet in Regular Session on Monday, June 8, 2020, beginning at 7:00 p.m. Due to the Governor's Executive Order, this meeting will not be open to the public; however, it will be live streamed on the City's website at www.cityofec.com as well as on Channel 11.

Any member of the public who wishes to have their comments heard by the Council may submit them to the City Clerk at aonley@cityofec.com to have them read into the record. The Clerk will accept comments until 6:45 p.m. on Monday, June 8th. Please remember to include your name and address.