



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 ~ May 1, 2020  
**COPY:** Email Distribution

1. Elizabeth City Downtown, Inc. reports that the COVID-19 Small Business Micro Grant Review Committee has completed the review of grant applications and grant fund disbursement began on Thursday, April 30. A total of 61 applications were received. All applicants requested the full \$1500 in funding. Grant requests totaled \$91,500. \$80,000 was available in the fund, contributed by the City of Elizabeth City, the Elizabeth City Area Committee of 100, Workforce Resources, and an anonymous downtown resident and business owner. Fifty-seven grants (57) are being awarded – 45 businesses will receive \$1500 grants, 12 businesses will receive partial funding in amounts ranging between \$700 and \$1200. The full \$80,000 has been awarded. Thirteen (13) grants were awarded to businesses in the food service sector; 15 grants to salons, barber shops, and massage businesses; 12 grants to retail businesses; 7 grants to businesses providing education or youth development services; and 10 grants to businesses in a variety of other service-related categories. The goal of the COVID-19 Small Business Micro Grant Program was to help independent small businesses during the mandated closures, reduced capacity, and other restrictions associated with the COVID-19 pandemic.

2. Annually on July 4, the Elizabeth City | Pasquotank County Department of Parks and Recreation (ECPCDPR) hosts the Independence Day Community Celebration at Waterfront Park. The City's event attracts upwards of 3,000 people from the local area and greater Albemarle region. This family-oriented, kid-friendly event includes music, dancing, activity inflatables, rides, games, and food



vending. The event requires participation from a number of full-time and part-time staff, volunteers, public safety and vendors working together executing the production. Uncertainty associated with Governor Cooper's Executive Orders will greatly hinder this year's event, possibly conflicting with this phased reopening plan. As a result, the City will suspend the 2020 Annual Independence Day Community Celebration event in its traditional format. We will explore other options for bringing the community together. In keeping, the City will be maintaining closure of the public park system at least until June 1, 2020. Staff supports the safety and well-being of our community as the top priority. The City budget savings by not hosting a 2020 event are estimated to be \$25,000.00, including resources and personnel hours.

3. Under Governor Cooper's Executive order #124, all utilities in North Carolina including investor owned COOPS or municipalities have been instructed not to disconnect utility customers beginning April 1<sup>st</sup> through May 30, 2020. In addition, utilities may not charge late fees. The Executive Order was issued a week after the City Council took similar action; however, only for a 30-day period. Weekly, the City is required to report our numbers which fall under Executive order #124 to the North Carolina Utilities Commission (NCUC). In the month of April, the City had 2193 accounts, which were subject to disconnection. However, there were no service interruptions. Collectively, the outstanding balance on these accounts is \$586,749.20, and an additional amount of \$41,661.51 in late fees that cannot be charged. Consequently, I anticipate that by the end of May we will be carrying an additional \$1.2 million in past due account receivables on our books. This was the primary reason I did not include a 1% rate decrease in our electrical rates.
4. The City received notice from Senator Thom Tillis' office that the Elizabeth City Housing Authority has received \$149,223 from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. The money was part of the CARES Act to address the Coronavirus pandemic. The State of North Carolina received \$16,572,122 in grant funds, which was distributed to 122 housing authorities. It is my understanding that the funds will be used for improvements within the housing development.
5. The community development staff is currently working on a lengthy text amendment to the entire Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) to include all necessary revisions as stated in the new chapter 160 D of the North Carolina General Statutes which was officially passed by the North Carolina House of Representatives on June 26, 2019. The principal impact of chapter 160 D does not make any major policy shifts, however, this new legislation does remove certain terminology and clarity existing provisions. In January, two staff members from our Community Development Department attended a workshop hosted by the UNC School

of Government in regards to necessary changes that need to be made to our current UDO in order to conform local ordinances to this new law. This law officially becomes into effect on January 1, 2021. Staff is currently in the final stages of drafting these changes in our local ordinances and plans to have the draft in front of planning commission in the next couple of months.

6. BH Properties will be allowing the City to utilize the former Food Lion building located in the Port Elizabeth shopping center. The City will shortly begin receiving electrical meters associated with our Smart Metering program. The City needed to find a warehouse location to store approximately 100 pallets stacked with meters. BH properties is allowing the City to utilize the space for a period of six months free of charge. However, if BH properties finds a tenant for the space, the City will be given 30-day's notice to vacate the building. The building is ideal for the City's purpose and only a minimal amount had to be spent to upgrade the building's security system. Our contractors should begin installing the new meters within a few weeks. I would like to thank BH Properties for working with the City on securing the space. Not only have they graciously provided a space to the City free of charge, they also provide donations to the Albemarle Food Bank during Christmas time.
7. This is a reminder that our Planning Commission will hold its regularly scheduled meeting on Tuesday, May 5<sup>th</sup> at 4 PM in Council Chambers. Our planning commission will be reviewing and making recommendation to City Council on the Halstead Blvd. Extension Overlay District text amendment. Due to concerns with COVID 19, the meeting will not be open to public, however, Staff has mailed letters to all property owners within this overlay district to notify them of the meeting date with specific instructions on how submit written comments, questions, or concerns to the Commission for their consideration. If you are interested in receiving an electronic copy of the proposed text amendment document, please contact our Community Development Department at (252)337-6672 or [planneroftheday@cityofec.com](mailto:planneroftheday@cityofec.com).
8. Important Water Quality Information for Owners of Temporarily or Partially Shut Down Business, Churches or School Buildings. As a result of the pandemic, many businesses, churches or school buildings have temporarily closed. Water held unused in building pipes while businesses or activities are shut down or have unused floors or sections becomes stagnant. Conditions may develop increasing the risk for the growth and spread of waterborne bacteria, such as Legionella or biofilm, in the building piping. Disinfectant in the water, such as chlorine, will likely dissipate or become undetectable. Actions are necessary to ensure the water in the building is safe as well as taste and odor free before resumption of normal water use. The Center for Disease Control (CDC)

has very detailed information on reactivating plumbing systems after dormant conditions on its website at: <https://www.cdc.gov/.../2019-n.../php/building-water-system.html>.

Feel free to contact the Elizabeth City Water Treatment Plant with any questions or concerns at (252) 335-2196.

9. Have you been waiting for the Downtown Waterfront Market to open for the season? The wait is almost over! There will be a mini version of the market opening up next Saturday, May 9<sup>th</sup> at Mariners' Wharf Park. The market will run from 9am-1pm. Vendors on hand will have fresh produce, pork, breads, sauces, homemade dog treats, fresh local honey, and treats for Mother's Day. Check out the Downtown Market Facebook page for a complete listing of vendors and products to be sold. Hope to see you there!