



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 22, 2020  
**COPY:** Email Distribution

1. On Wednesday, Governor Cooper issued Executive Order #141, which modified provisions found in Executive Order #121. The order moves North Carolina into a "Safer-at-Home" Phase II. City staff has reviewed the Executive Order and received guidance from the School of Government and will be relaxing a number of restrictions that we have placed on our citizens. We will be opening up all tennis courts, City docks, basketball courts, skate park, and eventually the splash pad. City staff will work on having the splash pad opened by June 1, 2020; however, the 25-person restriction will apply. All City playground equipment and tot-lots will remain closed. The lobby in the Public Safety Building will be opened; however, it will be limited to three people at a time. City Hall and the customer service area will remain closed to utility customers. Customers requiring new service applications and wanting to see administration must continue to make an appointment. The Customer Service Satellite Office located on Griffin Street will remain closed for the near future. Staff continues to educate our public on how to use the payment kiosk and encourages the use of the drive-up window. The Midgett Building, which has been opened on a limited basis, will be fully opened. Masks must be worn by visitors when inside any City building, facility or office. All public restrooms will remain closed but may be opened for special events that do not exceed 25 people. All special events are by City Manager authorization only. Since most organized activities such as baseball, softball, and soccer will exceed the 25-person limit; staff will defer opening up our athletic fields until Phase III. The Senior Center will remain closed. On the May 26, 2020 City Council agenda, we have placed a modified re-opening plan for our restaurants.
2. On Monday May 18, 2020, I received a phone call from Paul Meyer, Executive Director of the North Carolina League of Municipalities. He requested that I represent municipalities on a conference call with

Governor Cooper's staff regarding Executive Order #124. Executive Order #124 was the order which prohibited utilities from disconnecting or charging penalties from March 31, 2020 through May 31, 2020. This Executive Order has had a devastating effect on small utilities and has negatively impacted all utilities within North Carolina. I informed Paul on the impact it has had on Elizabeth City. He requested I relay the following information to the Governor's staff:

- City of Elizabeth City delinquent rate is 27%
- Total eligible for cutoff – 2,389 residential and 255 commercial customers
- Amount of penalties not collected from March 21 through today – \$60,600.65
- Account receivable in Electric – \$1,810,488
- Account receivable in Water and Sewer – \$1,824,351
- On March 24, 2020, the City Council authorized action to cease utility disconnects for 30 days
- As of April 30, 2020, 17% were subject to disconnection
- Anticipated cutoffs as of May 31, 2020 – 24%

The other participating city representatives relayed similar information. Collectively, we communicated the desire to remove municipal-owned utilities out of Executive Order #124, and to continue the order, but allowing the local governing bodies to determine customer eligibility for relief. Lastly, we requested that if additional funding is received from the Federal Government, that funding for the Crisis program offered by the Department of Social Services be increased to cover payment of all utilities and not just the electric portion.

3. The City of Elizabeth City has won a \$19,700 grant in support of the new Elizabeth City/Pasquotank County Senior Center. On Wednesday, the Cannon Foundation, of Concord, NC, informed the City it would offer a grant to help offset the cost of our new fitness equipment and pay for installation of push-button door controls that will make the front and rear entrances more handicapped-friendly. In our application to the Cannon Foundation in December, we explained their support would help the Senior Center more fully realize its potential as an accessible and enriching place for all our community's seniors. Given the impact COVID-19 has had on City revenues, their support is especially important for meeting the new, higher level of service that seniors deserve from our new center. Our project also furthers Cannon's varied and worthy philanthropic goals, including supporting healthy communities. Please let me say again to Cannon: Thank you!
4. On Wednesday, a sewer system repair project on Edgewood Drive began. Specifically, the existing manhole had multiple failures. The work is being completed as an emergency repair by Envirotech. On Wednesday, the existing manhole was removed and approximately 35-feet of 12" pipe was installed and connected. On Thursday, the new manhole was

installed, concrete invert poured, and service laterals reconnected. The project is expected to be completed early next week.

5. On Wednesday, our Albemarle Rural Planning Organization held a virtual meeting for the Rural Transportation Advisory Committee. Both City Planner, Kellen Long and City Councilman Chris Ruffieux were present for this meeting. The was approval for the Planning Work Program for fiscal year 2020-21. The Planning Work program (PWP) is a funding contract between the Albemarle Rural Planning Organization (ARPO) and the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT). The Plan lists planning priorities anticipated by the ARPO during the next Fiscal year and outlines expenses needs for certain work tasks. After the Advisory Committee concluded their meeting, presentations were provided by NC DOT (Highway Division), the Ferry Division, and the Transportation Planning Division. Majority of the updates provided were in regards to COVID-19 delays and effects on the division as a whole. The Highway Division did announce during their presentation that Division Engineer, Jerry Jennings will be retiring effective June 1<sup>st</sup>. The Deputy Division Engineer, Sterling Baker, has been appointed to take Jennings' position come June. Jennings has been with Division 1 for nearly 30 years, and in his current capacity of Division Engineer for the past 12 years. We look forward to working with the newly appointed division engineer once our major projects come back online for the Hughes Blvd, US 17, and Oak Stump corridors. We would like to thank Jerry Jennings for his continued support of Elizabeth City during his role of Division Engineer.
6. Inspections Staff issued a commercial building permit this week to P.G. Harris, a Chesapeake, VA. based general contractor. Said permit was for a new addition and remodel of the existing Carolina Chrysler Dodge Jeep Ram dealership located at 1001 Halstead Blvd. The new expansion will be approximately 5,620 square feet at an estimated construction valuation of \$1,299,122.
7. On May 22, 2020, the Elizabeth City Police Department received notification from the Bureau of Justice (BJA) that it had been awarded grant funding in the amount of \$33,148.00. The grant monies will be used to purchase 28 Zortrax Z-PLA Pro Filament Dedicated for Zortrax M300 Zortrax M300 Plus, four CreatBot DE Dual/Triple Head High Precision Large 3D Printer, 21 CreatBot ABS 3d Printer Filament 1.75mm 1kg Spools, one Canon XA1L Professional Camcorder, one Ikon Elite Universal Large Tablet Teleprompter, two Abode Software Suite Software, two Alien Ware Aurora Ryzen Computers, two DQE Standard Decon Shower and Decon Pool and two 10 x 10 tents. The equipment acquired from the grant funding will be used to enhance safety measures in critical situations for the protection of life for the department staff; to maintain a pro-active stance against preventing, preparing and responding to the

Coronavirus Pandemic; and to assist in offering the highest level of equipment to our staff. I would like to thank Chief Buffalo for his diligence in seeking funding opportunities for the betterment of the Police Department and greater service for the citizens of Elizabeth City.

8. I would like to welcome a new member to my management team, Mrs. Judge. Mrs. Judge has been appointed as my Assistant City Manager. Mrs. Judge has worked and excelled in all her previous assignments with the City. You may be asking yourself why does a community of Elizabeth City's size need two assistant city managers? We do not. This week, my Assistant City Manager, Angela Cole was married to Captain Sel. Warren Judge of the United States Coast Guard at Saint Stephens Missionary Baptist Church. I was honored to have the opportunity to walk her down the aisle. Since raising two boys, I have never had that privilege. On behalf of myself and all members of the City Council and staff, we wish Angela and Warren the best as they start their life together.



## **Upcoming Events**

All City offices will be closed on Monday, May 25, 2020 in observance of the Memorial Day holiday.

In observance of Memorial Day, the City of Elizabeth City Public Utilities Department will be closed Monday, May 25, 2020. Monday's trash route will be collected on Tuesday, May 26, 2020. Please have your trash and recycling cart at the curb by 8:00 a.m. for pickup.

The City Council will meet in Work and Regular Session on Tuesday, May 26, 2020 beginning at 5:30 p.m. Based on the Governor's Executive Order, Chambers will be closed to the public; however, the meeting will be live streamed on the City's website and Channel 11. Members of the public interested in participating in the public comment period may email the City Clerk at

[aonley@cityofec.com](mailto:aonley@cityofec.com) to have their comment read into the record. The cut-off for receiving comments is 6:45 p.m. on Tuesday, May 26<sup>th</sup>. Please remember to include your name and address!