



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Crow Wing County Board Chairman Issues Local Emergency Declaration

Crow Wing County Board Chairman, Paul Koering, issued a declaration of a Local Emergency effective March 21, 2020 in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. By law, County Board Chairs can declare a local emergency for up to three days, at which time a majority of the full County Board must agree to extend such local emergency or allow it to expire. Extending the emergency declaration is on the County Board's agenda at their meeting on Tuesday March 24, 2020.

A declaration of a local emergency invokes necessary parts of the county's emergency response and recovery plan to authorize aid and assistance under those plans. This allows the County to act quickly without compliance with time-consuming procedures and formalities prescribed by law pertaining to: the performance of public work, entering into contracts, incurring of obligations, employment of temporary workers, rental of equipment, purchase of supplies and materials, and the appropriation and expenditure of public funds to protect the health, safety, and welfare of the citizens of Crow Wing County.

According to County Board Chairman, Paul Koering, "I do not take making such a declaration lightly and I look forward to the full County Board being able to take up the issue of extending it at the meeting of the County Board next Tuesday, March 24. I believe this declaration is necessary at this time to ensure that County government can cut through the red tape faster than some of the normal, more cumbersome

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Our Mission: Serve well. Deliver value. Drive results.

Our Values: Be responsible. Treat people right. Build a better future.

requirements in order to better protect the citizens of Crow Wing County and limit the impacts of the COVID-19 virus in our local community. The economic impacts of this emergency are already being felt by a lot of people in our community and we need to be able to do what we can do to try to minimize it despite knowing we could never do enough.”

Koering continued, “One of the things this will allow us to do is to purchase as much as we can locally to help support our local business community as much as we can. We work with your money and, now more than ever, we need that money circulating and recirculating through our own community to keep our own people employed as much as we can. These are our neighbors, our friends, and our family. We simply must stick together.”

The declaration also provides authority for the County Board to limit the size of public gatherings at County Board meetings in order to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 in such circumstances. This same limitation is also being extended to the County’s Planning Commission/Board of Adjustment (PC/BOA) as well as the County Housing and Redevelopment Authority (HRA). It also allows for meetings of these two bodies to happen via video-conferencing or telephone conferencing should that become necessary.

In order to continue to provide maximum public transparency, the declaration also includes a requirement to live-stream County Board and PC/BOA meetings on the county’s website. The County already routinely stores videos of every County Board and PC/BOA meeting on its website. The web address to view County Board meetings live-streamed is <http://crowwingcountymn.igm2.com/citizens/default.aspx>. This is also the same web address to view past video recordings County Board and PC/BOA

meetings. Full access to County Board meetings for media outlets within Crow Wing County will also continue to be allowed at their discretion. Members of the public wishing to comment can write in to coadmin@crowwing.us.

Koering also said, "This is an unprecedented time for all of us. It is OK to be worried, but it is not OK to panic. I am already impressed by the many efforts going on in our community, our schools, and our hospitals to help support those in need and those in crisis. Pulling together, even from a safe social distance, will make this community come out the other end of this crisis, and there will be an end, even stronger than we were before. Let's support each other more in this time of need. Buy locally whenever you can to keep our money circulating in our community. Buy take-out more often than you need to so those workers can keep getting a paycheck. Supply meals or gasoline to your neighbors who you know may have been laid off. This is a time for compassion and for taking care of each other. This is Minnesota's favorite place. When this is over, let's make sure it stays that way."

The full Crow Wing County Declaration of Local Emergency is below:

Crow Wing County Declaration of Local Emergency

Novel Coronavirus Disease, commonly known as COVID-19, a respiratory disease-that can result in serious illness or death, is caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus, which is a new strain of coronavirus that had not been previously identified in humans and can easily spread from person to person.

The United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has identified the public health threat posed by COVID-19, and has advised that person-to-person spread of COVID-19 will continue to occur.

On January 31st, 2020, the United States Department of Health and Human Services declared a public health emergency for COVID-19, beginning on January 27, 2020.

On March 11th, 2020, the World Health Organization declared COVID-19 a global pandemic, after its widespread impact reached 112 countries and its effect was felt in nearly every region.,

On March 13th, 2020, President Donald Trump declared that the COVID-19 outbreak in the United States constitutes a National Emergency.

On March 13th, 2020, Governor Tim Walz signed Executive Order 20-01 declaring a Peacetime State of Emergency to authorize any and all necessary resources to be used in support of the COVID-19 response.

On March 15th, 2020, Governor Tim Walz signed Executive Order 20-02, ordering the temporary closure of all public and private schools, following similar but voluntary actions by the University of Minnesota system, the Minnesota State Colleges and University system and many private higher colleges and universities to temporarily close its campuses, to allow for new safety measures related to controlling the further spread of COVID-19.

On March 16th, 2020, Governor Tim Walz signed Executive Order 20-04, ordering the temporary closure of Bars, Restaurants, and Other Places of Accommodation so as to take additional proactive measures, including enhanced community mitigation, to slow the spread of this pandemic.

The CDC and the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) recommend that any individual with confirmed COVID-19 should remain under home isolation precautions until the risk of secondary transmission to others is thought to be low.

During this pandemic, individuals who are not yet diagnosed with COVID-19 but may have been exposed to COVID-19 are being asked place themselves in quarantine to control or prevent further spread of COVID-19.

The White House, the CDC and the MDH now recommend restrictions on gatherings of more than 10 persons and further recommends practice of social distancing of at least 6-feet in all settings.

The significant community, organizational, institutional and business responses to the COVID-19 pandemic have the potential to compromise the provision of essential public services, including a reduction in the size of the workforce due to school closures, isolation, or quarantine.

The necessary resources to respond to and recover from this pandemic, as well as to mitigate the significant business disruption experienced within the County, will exceed existing resources available within the County, and additional resources will be needed from Crow Wing County, and state and federal sources.

THEREFORE, the Chairman of the Crow Wing County Board of Commissioners, under the authority given in Minn. Stat. § 12.29 Subd. 1, has declared that a local emergency exists within Crow Wing County, effective March 21st, 2020.

The Chairman of the Crow Wing County Board of Commissioners hereby authorizes and directs Crow Wing County administration, public safety, public health and Emergency Management officials to undertake all actions necessary to protect the health, safety and welfare of the citizens of Crow Wing County, including through the judicious exercise of the powers and responsibilities provided in Minn. Stat. § 12.37.

The Chairman of the Crow Wing County Board of Commissioners further directs County departments to immediately review ordinance and regulatory requirements, operations, civil and legal proceedings, events, and resources that can and should be adjusted, modified or suspended, or to enact emergency regulations to support Crow Wing County's response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Chairman of the Crow Wing County Board of Commissioners further directs the Crow Wing County Senior Management Team, consisting of the Sheriff, Administrator, Community Services Director, Land Services Director, Attorney, Highway Engineer, Administrative Services Director, as well as the Crow Wing County Director of Emergency Management, acting collectively as the County's Unified Command Team in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic, to request and coordinate appropriate aid and resources from surrounding jurisdictions, the State of Minnesota and the federal government, as needed.

Further, under Minn. Stat. § 13D.021 and Minn. Stat. 373.052 Subd. 1b., the Chairman of the Crow Wing County Board of Commissioners further directs the County Administrator, in consultation with the same County Unified Command Team, to take all right and prudent steps necessary to amend, suspend or otherwise adjust public access to County facilities, and normal locations, days and hours of County activities, operations and programs, in order to comply with the guidelines set by the White House, CDC and MDH for gatherings and social distancing, as well as based upon available County staffing and resources during this COVID-19 pandemic.

Further, under Minn. Stat. § 13D.021, the Chairman of the Crow Wing County Board of Commissioners declares in-person meetings of the County Board of Commissioners and other public bodies of the County to be impractical or imprudent during the COVID-19 pandemic, under the guidelines set by the White House, CDC and MDH for gatherings and social distancing, thus leading the Chairman to direct that:

- Pursuant to Minn. Stat. § 13D.021, in-person meetings of the Crow Wing County Board of Commissioners, the Planning Commission/Board of Adjustment, the Housing and Redevelopment Authority, and other boards and commissions of Crow Wing County are not practical or prudent due to the COVID-19 health pandemic and the emergency declared by Governor Walz pursuant to Minnesota Statutes, chapter 12.
- Meetings of the County Board, the Planning Commission/Board of Adjustment, the Housing and Redevelopment Authority and other County boards and commissions may be conducted by telephone, video conferencing or other electronic means and live streamed via the County's website.
- In-person public attendance at meetings of the County Board, the Planning Commission/Board of Adjustment, the Housing and Redevelopment Authority and other County boards and commissions is not feasible, except by limiting in-person public attendance to as few people as possible for the necessary conduct of the public's business in the meeting room, with social distancing guidelines enforced, or as otherwise limited by recommendations and guidelines from state and federal authorities.
- County staff shall take such action as may be necessary to allow for such meetings to occur via telephone, video conferencing, or other electronic means as well as live streamed via the County's website pursuant to Minnesota Statutes, § 13D.021, until such time as it is determined that in-person meetings may resume.

- County staff shall take such action as may be necessary to limit in-person public attendance to as few people as possible for the necessary conduct of the public's business in a meeting room and enforce social distancing guidelines, or otherwise limit such attendance as may be directed by the County Administrator based on recommendations and guidelines from state and federal authorities.
- County staff shall take such action as may be necessary to live-stream meetings where in-person public attendance is limited in order to allow members of the public who wish to attend the meeting to hear all discussion and testimony and all votes of the members of the board or commission.

Further, pursuant to Minn. Stat. § 12.29 Subd. 1, the Chairman of the Crow Wing County Board of Commissioners directs that this emergency declaration is in effect from the date of this declaration, as indicated below, and shall continue and remain in effect as long as the State of Minnesota peacetime emergency declaration remains in effect, pending ratification by and official act of the Crow Wing County Board of Commissioners within seventy-two (72) hours of this declaration at their March 24, 2020 County Board meeting.

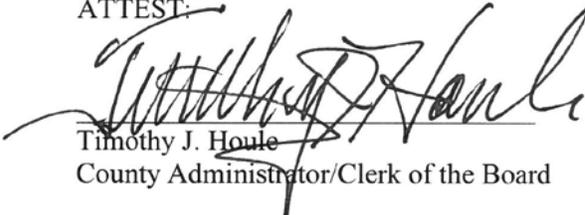
Further, the Chairman of the Crow Wing County Board of Commissioners directs that this Declaration of Local Emergency, additions or changes to this declaration, the eventual termination or expiration of this declaration, and any and all official communications pertaining to the same, shall be given prompt and general publication, including on the County's website and social media sties, and immediately filed by the County Clerk.

Declared this 28 day of MARCH, 2020.

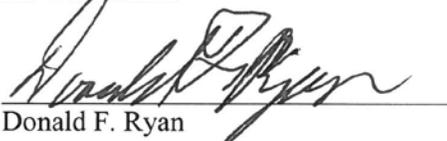
BY:


 Hon. Paul Koering
 Chairman
 County Board of Commissioners
 CROW WING COUNTY, MN

ATTEST:


 Timothy J. Houle
 County Administrator/Clerk of the Board

AS TO FORM:


 Donald F. Ryan
 County Attorney