

COVID-19 and County Operations

For Battle Creek AMBUCS

Kelli Scott, Administrator/Controller

September 2, 2020



Leadership Matters.

Top Row:

District 7: Gary Tompkins (R)

District 6: Tommy Miller (R)

District 5: Derek King (R)

District 3: Jake W. Smith (D)

Bottom Row:

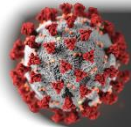
District 2: Rochelle Hatcher (D)

District 4: Steve Frisbie (R) - Chair

District 1: Kathy-Sue Vette (R) – Vice Chair



**How has
COVID-19**



**Impacted
County
Operations?**



March 2020: Initial Response



- **March 5, 2020**
 - County Board of Commissioners granted Emergency Administrative Authority
- **March 10, 2020**
 - First COVID-19 case in Michigan
- **March 17, 2020**
 - County facilities closed to public; work limited to “essential functions”
- **March 18, 2020**
 - Local “State of Emergency” Declaration
- **March 21, 2020**
 - First COVID-19 case in Calhoun County



COVID-19 Joint Operations Center

- **Created March 23, 2020**
 - Purpose: provide coordinated and additional local resources to assist our Health Officer Eric Pessell with this Public Health emergency
- **Combined City of Battle Creek, Calhoun County's Emergency Operations Centers to function as one**
 - Unique and successful partnership
 - Housed within BCPD, staffed by City employees
- **Unified Commanders**
 - Eric Pessell, Calhoun County Public Health Officer
 - Kelli Scott, Calhoun County Administrator/Controller
 - Rebecca Fleury, Battle Creek City Manager

March – May 2020: Essential Functions Only



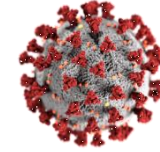
- **Governor's Executive Orders limited County operations**
 - Public Safety—Law Enforcement, Jail, Juvenile Home remained 24/7
 - Public Health—COVID-19 JOC participation, Health Department personnel
 - Necessary Business Functions—Administration, Maintenance, IT, Finance, HR
 - Some services in other offices—deeds, land records, few marriage licenses, CPL renewals
 - County parks remained open throughout the “Stay Home” orders!
- **Supreme Court Administrative Office limited Court operations**
 - Essential and emergency orders—arraignments, mental health petitions, PPOs, child welfare matters; increased docket over time with virtual proceedings
- **Furloughs/Work Share Program**
 - Approx. 25% of county/court employees were partially or fully furloughed near the end of May through July

Communications :

- **Joint Operations Center (JOC) Briefings**
 - Zoom briefings for invited participants—100+ volunteers, nonprofit representatives, workgroup liaisons, funding organizations, state reps
- **Joint Information Center (JIC)**
 - Zoom briefings for media and local elected officials; Press Releases
- **Working Group Meetings**
 - Businesses, Education, Healthcare Providers, Vulnerable Populations, etc.
- **Websites**
 - City of Battle Creek, Calhoun County maintain dedicated COVID-19 pages; County GIS also created Coronavirus Dashboard with map
- **Local Organizations and Media**
 - BCCF, BC Vision, Access Vision, Second Wave Media, others featured our local response efforts



Supporting Employees



✓ **County Employee Communications**

- ✓ Internal COVID-19 Team—countywide department heads, elected officials, judiciary
- ✓ Summary emails, other updates to employees, Board of Commissioners

✓ **Employee COVID-19 Check-In Survey**

✓ **New Emergency Health Leave Policy**

- ✓ Allows extra leave time, paid leave time for those with COVID-19, caring for family members, quarantined, needing to provide child care

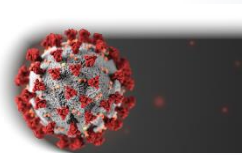
✓ **New Telecommuting Policy**

✓ **COVID-19 Preparedness and Response Plan**

- ✓ Employee training on screening, PPE usage, reporting sickness

✓ **Hazard Pay for First Responders**

- ✓ Awaiting state approval for \$1,000/employee: Law Enforcement and Jail employees



**What are We
Up to These
Days?**



County in MI Safe Start Phase 4 Operations:



- Since July 6...
 - Toeller Building, County Building open ; Justice Center locked
 - Almost all county services available to the public, many remotely
 - Many offices require appointments
 - Visitors required to wear masks; may be screened
 - 6 Foot Social Distancing required



PHASE FOUR: **IMPROVING**

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KEY REMINDERS

- Small gatherings only
- Social distance
- Wear face coverings

WHAT THE **PUBLIC** CAN EXPECT IN GOVERNMENT BUILDINGS

- Limited public access to buildings
- Appointments required for many essential services
- All visitors must wear face coverings
- 6-foot social distancing is required
- Visitor screening form may be required

WHAT **EMPLOYEES** CAN EXPECT IN GOVERNMENT BUILDINGS

- Limit non-essential visitors
- Host virtual meetings when possible
- Do not share offices, tools, equipment
- Remote work arrangements are encouraged where feasible
- Daily employee self-screening is required for in-person reporting
- Employees should wear face coverings in public spaces where they cannot maintain 6-feet of distance from others



MOVING FORWARD SAFELY

- Ubiquitous testing & contact tracing
- Case growth declining sharply
- Healthcare capacity protected



CALHOUN COUNTY, MICHIGAN
JOINT OPERATIONS CENTER



County in MI Safe Start Phase 4 Operations:



- Some Specific Notes:
 - Recycling and Parks are Open, New Parks Millage!
 - Projects were delayed, most notably competitive bids/purchases, committee work, economic development, consultant-based studies and engagements
 - Land Bank is back to maintaining blighted properties, and doing demolitions and beautification projects; still unable to meet with neighborhood and community groups; no neighborhood mowing program this year
- Offices focused on vulnerable populations :
 - Veterans Affairs—food vouchers, emergency relief, normal claims assistance
 - Senior Services—works closely with providers to assess and meet all kinds of older adults' needs; suspended all group events through December; Millage renewed!
 - Health Department—clinics; school nurses are supporting Back to School plans



Some Ways We've Adapted

- New Ways for Public to Do Business with Us
 - Thanks especially to Treasurer Brian Wensauer, new Locked Drop Boxes for payments
 - Clerk/Register Kim Hinkley implemented rotating shifts and made special appointments to serve the public's emergency needs
 - Community Development provided passes for free recycling at the C&C Landfill
- Additional technology and training
 - We can allow more employees to telecommute, including providing public services, with increased efficiency and effectiveness
- Cleaner, Safer Physical Spaces
 - Including Sheriff Hinkley's advanced vehicle sanitizing capabilities
 - IT staff created mobile Employee Screening App, to exclude those with symptoms
- Remote Board and Committee Meetings
 - Public has greater access to participate in County government action

Courts in Phase 2 of SCAO Return to Full Operations Plan



- Thanks to the leadership of Chief Judge Mike Jaconette, Court Administrators Kris Getting and Kate Ambrose...
- Near full capacity through virtual processes-- Zoom and YouTube
- No Jury Trials Yet
- Judges have backlogs, primarily in criminal, landlord tenant cases
- Electronic Filing is Accepted
- In-person visits are permitted on a case by case basis as needed
- Public Defender David Makled and Prosecutor Dave Gilbert continue to operate in support of the justice system
- Juvenile Home population has been low; now back to school



Some Ways We've Adapted

- Additional technology and training
 - Courts created their own electronic filing system, after waiting for years for the State's to arrive
 - Approx. 30% of court employees are able to work remotely with new capabilities
- Cleaner, Safer Physical Spaces
 - Reconfigured courtrooms, jury deliberation rooms for social distancing
 - Face coverings are provided to the public who show up without it
- Improved Public Access
 - The Courts will provide technology and/or allow in-person visits for those without remote capabilities
 - Saves drive time and wait time

COVID-19 Impact on County's General Operations Budgets

2020

- Projecting \$3M in Reduced Revenues, from lower jail bed boarding to court fines to marriage licenses to hotel accomm. tax
- COVID-19 Response costs expected to be fully covered with State and Federal funding
- County paid JOC COVID-19 costs of \$500,000, also expected to be fully covered

2021

- Next year is the bigger concern:
 - \$3.5M net deficit for initial forecast
 - State's GF Budget hole will impact local governments
 - Uncertainties about economy in general –unemployment, interest rates
 - Expecting stable property values
 - County costs are 65% personnel, not easily reduced in the short term

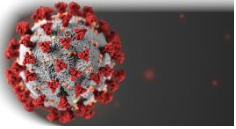
COVID-19 Impact on County's Road Department Budget

2020

- 11% or \$1.6M Reduction in State MTF Revenues due to decreased travel on roads, gas purchases, delay in registration renewals, and less car purchases.
- Fewer than normal number of miles of roads to be improved, mainly in Primary Road Chip Seal, Primary Paving, and Bridge Maintenance. Federal Aid and Township projects continue as planned.
- Some capital purchases deferred

2021

- State MTF Revenues should stabilize
- State General Fund allocation to Road Agencies may be in jeopardy to help balance State's budget
- New Marijuana tax transfer may help
- New voter-approved Burlington Township Road Millage



What to Expect for Future Operations





Future Expectations?

- www.calhouncountymi.gov for Safe Start plans and dept. information
- Decisions based on our Local Public Health Officer, State Reopening Plans, Executive Orders, SCAO Reopening Plans
 - Virtual Courtroom experience will continue; criminal proceedings will shift to more in-person
 - Employee remote work will continue, where it makes sense and benefits all
 - Appointment-based services may be better
 - Remote access to board and committee meetings may continue
 - Facility modifications, face coverings, distancing, limited gatherings expected for some time
 - New mindset to be even more open to new ways of “Building a Better Community Through Responsive Leadership!”



PHASE SIX: POST-PANDEMIC

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KEY REMINDERS

- Return to full capacity
- Hygiene practices continue

WHAT THE **PUBLIC** CAN EXPECT IN GOVERNMENT BUILDINGS

Public can access government buildings
Services resume as necessary
No required social distancing

WHAT **EMPLOYEES** CAN EXPECT IN GOVERNMENT BUILDINGS

All employees return to in-person work
No required social distancing or face coverings
Practice regular hygiene of shared office spaces, tools, and equipment
Normal social gatherings and common areas permitted



MOVING FORWARD SAFELY

Availability of an effective therapy or vaccine
Community spread not expected to return



CALHOUN COUNTY, MICHIGAN
JOINT OPERATIONS CENTER





Our community should be Stronger!

- **New relationships were formed:**
 - Faith-Based Work Group, connecting area pastors by text message
 - Marshall-area focus within vulnerable populations/senior service delivery
 - Sheriff cross-deputized law enforcement agencies to work together if needed
 - Business/Economic Development officials from Battle Creek, Marshall and Albion shared notes and are still discussing ways to streamline
 - Regional/multi-county approach to provide isolation/quarantine hotel for homeless and others
 - United Way's BC Response Consortium brought nonprofits together to strengthen preparedness plans
- **Millions in Local Funding** helped keep individuals safer, first responders able to meet needs, and businesses afloat.



Our community should be Stronger!



- Many of us pulled together to provide leadership to our residents during this pandemic
- If we focus on health and safety, along with our local economy, we will emerge as a stronger community!

Thank You!

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