

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:

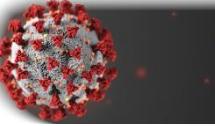
District 2: Rochelle Hatcher (D)

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

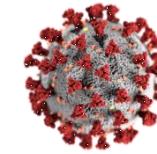
- **Governor's Executive Orders limited County operations**
 - Public Safety—Law Enforcement, Jail, Juvenile Home remained 24/7
 - Public Health—COVID-19 JOC participation, Health Department personnel
 - Necessary Business Functions—Administration, Maintenance, IT, Finance, HR
 - Some services in other 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**

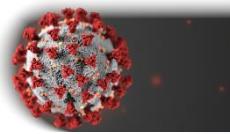
✓ **COVID-19 Preparedness and Response Plan**

- ✓ 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** 4

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 accom. 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

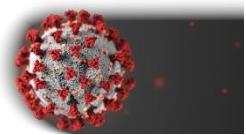
COVID-19 Impact on County's Road Department Budget

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

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





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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