

POSEY COUNTY COMMISSIONERS TUESDAY, MARCH 17, 2020.

The Board of Commissioners reconvened the scheduled meeting at the Hovey House, 330 Walnut Street, in Mt. Vernon on Tuesday, March 17, 2020.

Commissioners Carl Schmitz, Jay Price and Randy Thornburg; Auditor Maegen Greenwell and County Attorney Joe Harrison were in attendance.

C. Schmitz asked Judge Goedde, with the Circuit Court, to update the Commissioners on how the Courts are dealing with COVID-19.

Judge Goedde informed the Commissioners both he and Judge Clowers have enacted a order that goes into effect today for the Posey County Courts. Judge Goedde stated they have sent this order to the Indiana Supreme Court to be approved.

Judge Goedde stated in the meantime, the Indiana Supreme Court sent a memo out to all Courts stating the following guideline:

Every trial court in the state must come up with an independent plan and that plan must be filed with the Court.

Judge Goedde informed the Commissioners he and Judge Clowers conducted a telephone conference with the elected Judges of Vanderburgh County to come up with the order that Posey County will enact. Judge Clowers stated with the number of attorneys that practice in both Posey and Vanderburgh and taking into consideration the number of inmates that are housed in Posey County for Vanderburgh County, it only made sense to include Vanderburgh in these talks.

Judge Goedde stated the two Counties have similar orders, the only difference being the following:

If Posey County has an inmate who is ready to plea and be sentenced so they might be released from custody, the courts will be making special arrangements with the necessary parties to get those individuals transported to the court, limiting the parties to only the defendant and council. Judge Goedde informed the Commissioners that all other proceedings will go on via live chat with the current capabilities with the Sheriff's office.

Judge Goedde stated the order would be posted on both the Coliseum doors and the Courthouse doors. Judge Goedde stated if the Commissioners decided to close the buildings down to the public, the orders posted would have contact information for both courts to allow daily business to still be conducted. Judge Goedde stated the time frame for this will be initially until April 19th, 2020.

Judge Travis Clowers, informed the Commissioners both courts are rescheduling all non-essential hearings past April 19th, 2020; including small claims and family court matters; anything that can be handled by phone or video will be; any matter that must be done in person, due to Constitutional rights, will be done in person, will be done safely, and only allowing necessary parties to be involved.

County Attorney Joe Harrison reminded the Commissioner that the Courts will still be able to receive e-filings for all court issues.

Judge Clowers asked for some guidance from the Commissioners regarding employees who will not be needed as frequently once these court hearings begin to be moved, as far as compensation goes.

Commissioner Carl Schmitz, stated that any employee with an abundance of comp time, should be using it during this time.

Poseyville Town Council President, Bruce Baker, informed the Commissioners, that the Poseyville town buildings are now closed to the public. Mr. Baker stated the drive through will be utilized for utility payments. Mr. Baker stated this also includes the fire station, allowing only personnel in, and the Community Center. Mr. Baker stated they would be screening all employees for fever and monitoring other symptoms. Mr. Baker stated the town is coming up with a plan to help feed the children who might need assistance while school is out and also delivering needed goods to the seniors in the town of Poseyville.

Mt. Vernon Mayor, Bill Curtis, addressed the Commissioners regarding the town of Mt. Vernon. Mayor Curtis stated all city buildings are closed to the public, including City Hall, fire station, police station, and utility offices. Mayor Curtis stated all these buildings will have notice posted with appropriate contact information, as all city employees will continue to be working. Mayor Curtis stated the fire department has implemented several new protocols to ensure the safety of the personnel. Mayor Curtis stated the majority of the fire departments calls consist of medical runs.

Mayor Curtis stated he has been in contact and will continue to be in contact with the County Health Department for guidance.

Posey County EMS Director, Chris Neaveill, informed the Commissioners he is working closely with Jason Knowles, Dispatch Director, on implementing guidelines for both departments. Mr. Neaveill stated this will include questioning all dispatch calls as to what their current situation and current symptoms might be. Mr. Neaveill stated this will help ensure the correct medical attention is given and will also help protect his crew when responding to a call.

Mr. Neaveill stated the department has been given information from Homeland Security that in the event of a localized threat to the local community, the department will have to change protocols that would include dispatchers and paramedics informing callers with flu-like symptoms to contact the Health Department for further instruction. Mr. Neaveill stated this would be a recommendation to call the Health Department but ultimately, they cannot refuse to transport someone.

Mr. Neaveill stated all stations are equipped with washers and dryers and he has urged his employees to wash their belongings before going home, to help slow the spread.

Mr. Harrison advised the Commissioners that they could sign an emergency declaration advising that all County buildings are closed to the public. Commissioner Price questioned the need for the County to be united with the towns and city, and seeing as they have closed their buildings to the public, should the Commissioners do the same. Commissioner Price asked the office holders would still be able conduct business as normal via telephone and email?

Commissioner Carl Schmitz, asked what could be done to still allow child support payments to be made. County Clerk, Kay Kilgore, stated she has spoken with the County Treasurer and has decided they would be able to use the drop box that is located at the Coliseum for those payments. Mrs. Kilgore stated they would have a sign posted at the Courthouse directing people to deposit those funds in the drop box.

Posey County Treasurer, Vicki Peerman, stated property tax payments can be made utilizing the drop box outside the Coliseum, by mail or using United Fidelity.

Commissioner Jay Price, suggested for now that County offices stay fully staffed. Mr. Price stated things are changing hourly so this could obviously change at any time.

Posey County Clerk, Kay Kilgore, informed the Commissioners that early voting starts two weeks from today. Mrs. Kilgore stated they will be urging everyone to use absentee ballots but she is waiting from directives from the State as to what will happen.

Mr. Harrison asked if the following would be agreeable:

WHEREAS, the Coronavirus 2019 (“COVID-19”) is a severe respiratory illness that was first detected in the City of Wuhan, China; and

WHEREAS, COVID-19 is a rapidly spreading virus that is transmitted from human to human and results in symptoms ranging from fever, cough, acute respiratory distress, pneumonia and even death; and

WHEREAS, on March 6, 2020, Eric Holcomb, the Governor of the State of Indiana, declared a public health emergency for COVID-19 pursuant to Executive Order 20-02; and

WHEREAS, the public health officer of Posey County, Indiana, has requested that Posey County declare a local emergency as result of COVID-19; and

WHEREAS, Posey County Indiana has been and is being threatened by COVID-19 and

WHEREAS, the Governor of Indiana has issued additional directives in response to COVID-19 which supplements Executive Order 20-02; and

WHEREAS, the Posey County Commissioners desire to do as much as possible to flatten the curve of COVID 19 and in an abundance of caution, desire to support the actions taken by Governor of the State of Indiana and the President of the United States of America to issue additional directives concerning specific governmental operations of Posey County.

NOW, THEREFORE,

The Posey County Board of Commissioners declare that a State of Emergency exist in Posey County and that we hereby invoke and declare those portions of the Indiana Code which are applicable to the conditions that have caused the issuance of this proclamation to be in full force and effect in Posey County for the exercise of all emergency authority for the protection of lives and property of the people of Posey County Indiana and the restoration of local government with minimal interruption.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED AS FOLLOWS:

1. All public offices and employees of Posey County are hereby directed to exercise the upmost diligence and discharge of duties required of them for the duration of the emergency and the execution of emergency laws, regulations and directives both state and local.
2. All citizens of Posey County are called upon and directed to comply with necessary emergency measures to cooperate with public officials and disaster service forces trying to execute emergency operation plans and to obey and comply with the lawful direction of properly identified officers.
3. From and after 4:00 pm on March 17, 2020, there shall be no general public access to any Posey County Government building included but not limited to, the Posey County Courthouse, the Coliseum, the County Jail, the Hovey House, the Emergency Medical building, the Posey County Highway garages, the Posey County Coroner's office.
4. That the Posey County Commissioners grant the President of the County Commissioners, Carl Schmitz, with the authority to act on the behalf of the County Commissioners, and President Schmitz shall keep the other County Commissioners apprised of any ongoing situations involving this proclamation and he shall also keep the County Council updated on all County business.

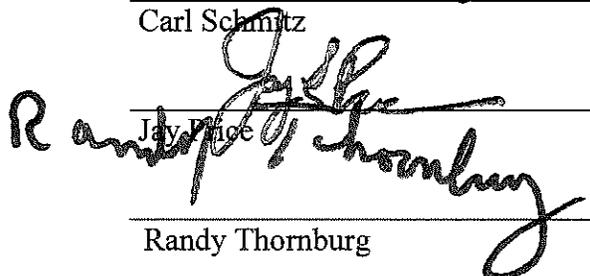
This proclamation shall be in full force and in effect expiring at midnight in seven days, subject to extension by the undersigned Commissioners.

J. Price made a motion to approve the emergency order proclamation; R. Thornburg seconded. The motion carried with a vote of 3-0.

No other business was discussed and the meeting was adjourned.



Carl Schmitz



Randy Thornburg



Attest: Maegen L. Greenwell