



**BUSINESS OF THE CITY COUNCIL
BONDURANT, IOWA
AGENDA STATEMENT**

Item No. 14a
For Meeting of 04/20/2020

ITEM TITLE: Discussion of measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19 and protect essential services upon reopening City facilities and Mitigate the impact for the City and Residents

CONTACT PERSON: Marketa Oliver, City Administrator

SUMMARY EXPLANATION:

As part of efforts to prevent/slow the spread of COVID-19 and to protect essential services, staff is continually considering different actions, particularly as the discussion focuses on re-opening City facilities. Staff is also evaluating a number of options to mitigate the financial impact of COVID-19.

Greater Des Moines Partnership Small Business Grant Program

To mitigate the impact on small businesses, the Greater Des Moines Partnership (GDMP) is developing a small business grant program and has asked if the City of Bondurant is interested in participating. Following are some of the tenants of the program:

1. The program would be available to businesses with 25 or fewer employees.
2. Grants would be up to \$15,000.
3. The program is a week or two out from being rolled out.
4. GDMP reaching out to companies for contributions as well.
5. The need for the program is exemplified by the idea that only 21 businesses in Polk County received IEDA funds. Grant would be focused on businesses that did not receive IEDA funds.
6. Center for Economic Success would administer the grant.
7. GDMP would pay administrative costs to administer the grant.
8. Money contributed by Bondurant would be given only to Bondurant businesses.
9. Suggested contribution is \$15,420 - \$30,480.

On a conference call this past week with other City Administrators/Managers, the City of Des Moines is participating and the City of Johnston is planning to participate, but has not decided on an exact amount yet. Other cities are discussing the matter this week.

Financial Impact of COVID-19 on City Revenue Streams

We are anticipating a reduction in Road Use Tax and Sales Tax collections, as well as more minor revenue decreases in the utility funds (from not charging late fees/non-payment fees). We are fortunate to have built healthy reserves over the past few years, which will help offset those losses and we had budgeted the Sales Tax expenditures very conservatively, so that will also help carry us through. Additionally, we will evaluate the timing for projects as needed. There are some other impacts as well, particularly in Parks and Recreation. A full spreadsheet will be available Monday evening for discussion.


Utility Billing

Please see attached memo from the City’s Finance Director related to recommendations for utility billing during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Reopening Facilities

As we begin to re-open facilities, we have some ideas/recommendations to consider.

1. Require people to wear masks when in building.
2. Make physical changes to buildings (sneeze guard type structures).
3. Lines on the floor – please stay behind this line.
4. Make appointments to come to facilities initially.
5. Identify additional sanitizing practices for playground equipment.
6. Ensure PPE available to all employees who access houses.
7. Continue to promote electronic/remote access to services.
8. Continue use of Zoom for public meetings and staff meetings to limit in-person contact.
9. Discuss hours of operations.

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Resolution _____ Ordinance ___ Contract ___ Other (Specify) _____
Funding Source _____ Grants/Utilities _____
APPROVED FOR SUBMITTAL _____  City Administrator

RECOMMENDATION: Approve resolution on a roll call vote.

April 17, 2020

From: Jené Jess, Finance Director

To: Mayor and Council

Request: Recommendations for Utility Billing during the COVID-19 quarantine period.

Brief History:

The city of Bondurant provides services of water, sewer, storm sewer, garbage, and recycling to its citizens. Customers were billed on 04/01/2020 via email or mail for the period of 02/19/2020-03/20/2020. Payments for were due 04/15/2020 to avoid penalties. Penalties of 10% of the outstanding balance were suspended by Council 03/23/2020. April 23, 2020 is the scheduled shut off date set for all customers with an outstanding balance over \$20.

The Governor declared a public health disaster 03/17/2020, restricting operations for restaurants, bars, recreational facilities, and fitness centers until 03/31/2020. These restrictions have been extended through 05/01/2020 and schools will not reopen this school year. The result of that order is that some of the citizens of Bondurant may be laid off and experiencing loss of income. Additionally, since schools have been closed and many employers are converting to work from home, more people are at home, creating a higher usage of the utility services.

Analysis:

To prevent the spread of the virus residence must wash hands regularly.

Access to water and sewer services is essential to carry out the action of washing hands.

- **Des Moines Water Works and surrounding communities have suspended cut offs for services dues 04/15/2020.**

The lack of income for many residents may prevent them from being able to pay their utility bills:

Adding penalties to bills may create a hardship cycle.

- **Some communities have suspended penalties for services dues 05/15/2020.**

More residence at home may result in higher than normal consumption:

Residence on budgets with thin margins may not be able to pay all of the balance of their bills.

- **The City has a payment plan policy.**

Staff Conclusions/Recommendations:

Staff recommends that the council approve the following;

- **Suspend cut offs for services due 04/15/2020**
- **Suspend penalties for services due 05/15/2020 (for services billed on or after May 1st)**
- **Modify the payment plan policy to remove the requirement to contact the City prior to the 15th month, be the homeowner, and 1 per year maximum. (Three month maximum length of term)**