

MARCH 30, 2020

A [Special Meeting](#) of the [Board of Lee County Commissioners](#) was held on this date with the following Commissioners present:

Brian Hamman, Chairman
 Franklin B. Mann, Vice-Chairman
 Cecil Pendergrass
 John E. Manning
 Ray Sandelli

The Chairman called the meeting to order at 9:32 a.m., welcomed all in attendance, and led the Invocation, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Today's discussion will be about the COVID-19 Virus:

Commissioner Hamman UPDATE:

Commissioner Brian Hamman started off the meeting by saying that the take-away from today's meeting will be . . . STAY HOME!! Commissioner Hamman narrated a [PowerPoint Presentation](#) with up-to-date statistics on the COVID-19 outbreak. Commissioner Hamman addressed the Amber Alert that went out on Sunday morning advising Lee County residents to stay at home. Commissioner Hamman stated that he has received mixed reviews about the alert. Commissioner Hamman shared pictures from around his district showing the empty streets and stated that this is even during season. The pictures reflect that the stay at home message is being followed for the most part. The Commissioner went on to read some statistics from Lee Health. He went on to say that we need to continue doing what we have been doing. People need to continue practicing social distancing and only interact with people that you live in the same house with in order to keep yourself and others safe.

County Manager Roger Desjarlais UPDATE:

Mr. Desjarlais reviewed the Sheriff's Executive Order and stated that Deputies have been patrolling the parks, beaches, and boat ramps. The Marine Patrol has been on the water monitoring the waterways in partnership with Fish and Wildlife as well as the State Marine Patrol Units. In addition to the waterway, the Sheriff's office was also patrolling the sky by helicopter. Mr. Desjarlais stated that there was a lot of waterway traffic as well as some gatherings of people. However, most everyone was following the recommended social distancing. For those that were not, the Sheriff's office educated the crowd and they disbursed willingly. On the waterway, anyone not observing the fifty (50) feet distancing rule was also educated by Sheriff's Deputies or other joint Law Enforcement Agency.

County Manager Roger Desjarlais narrated a [PowerPoint Presentation](#) on the *Stay at Home Communication Campaign* which included:

Lee County:

- Website
- Social Media
- Press
- Billboards

Lee County VCB:

- Video
- Social
- Digital

Lee County Sheriff:

- Press
- Social Media
- Video
- Patrol

Mr. Desjarlais reminded everyone that the county also stopped taking cash at all Lee County tolls about ten (10) days ago, which has greatly assisted with stopping the spread of the virus.

The Chairman called for public comment and fourteen [\(14\) speakers](#) came forward:

State Representative Heather Fitzhagen

City of Fort Myers Mayor Randy Henderson
 City of Cape Coral Mayor Joe Coviello
 City of Sanibel Council Woman Holly Smith
 Lee Health Chief Executive Officer Dr. Larry Antonucci
 Bob Valenta
 Chris Riching Representative of Bill Smith, Inc.
 Delyn Latrie
 Keith Campbell Representative for Veterans and Homeless
 Eric Solomon Owner and Operator of First Pawn Jewelry and Loan of Naples & Lehigh
 Sean Biggs Resident of Lee County and General Manager of a Local Golf Course
 David Paci General Manager of a local restaurant on Fort Myers Beach
 Andrew Dailidonis General Manager of the Plantation Golf and Country Club
 City of Cape Coral Council Woman Jennifer Nelson

Chairman Hamman read an email from: Town of Fort Myers Beach Mayor Anita Cereceda

There was discussion about the City of Cape Coral not declaring a local state of emergency. City of Cape Coral Mayor Joe Coviello and City of Cape Coral Council Woman Jennifer Nelson both expressed their concern about the amount of money that would be paid out to employees for double time pay each week if the city declared a local state of emergency. Council Woman Jennifer Nelson said that they were hoping that since Lee County is a much bigger entity, if they endorsed a Shelter in Place Order then it would encompass Cape Coral and they would not have to pay out over 1.5 million per week to employees. Commissioner Hamman stated that we are all hurting right now. This is a disaster and we will be reimbursed for the cost so now is not the time to worry about money. Now is the time to worry about our residents. Commissioner Hamman stated that it is his understanding that this is not just a stay at home for two weeks and then this will be all over. Flattening the curve means it will take longer in order to get past this and it allows hospitals to deal with patients. Commissioner Hamman asked Lee Health Chief Executive Officer Dr. Larry Antonucci to come to the podium and address questions on "flattening the curve". Dr. Antonucci stated that Commissioner Hamman's comments were exactly correct. The purpose of flattening the curve is to specifically not overwhelm the health care system. By flattening the curve it extends out the time that a pandemic will last in your community.

Commissioner Hamman stated that he has been getting a lot of questions about the airport traffic at South West Florida International Airport (RSW) since the Board does serve as the Board Port Authority. Commissioner Hamman stated that it was a welcome site when the National Guard showed up to start screening passengers coming in from the New York area. The Commissioner has reached out to US Department of Transportation Secretary Elaine Chao and asked her as the Chairman of the Port Authority to please cut off all flights from that area to RSW. Under Federal rules we are not allowed to shut down our own airport.

Commissioner Hamman asked County Attorney Richard Wm Wesch to clarify whether the Local State of Emergency (SOLE) applies to the City of Cape Coral and if they would be obligated to pay their employees double time pay. Attorney Wesch stated that the SOLE is effective within the entire area of Lee County, Incorporated as well as Unincorporated. A municipality could opt out of the SOLE if they chose to.

Commissioner Hamman expressed his concern for the community's sense of wellbeing and mental state. He stated that he feels that a lot of these private communities and clubs have a sense of being safe because it's in their own communities. Commissioner Hamman stated that just because you are within your own community does not mean you are safe. You still need to be practicing social distancing. Commissioner Hamman said that something else he had heard was that there are some churches that are still meeting in person and that needs to stop. The Government has given guidelines to not have meetings of over ten (10) people right now. These churches have a moral obligation to protect their congregation and to not hold services in person. He stated that if any of the pastors wanted to talk about this to please call his office so they could talk about this further.

County Manager Roger Desjarlais discussed the options on how to proceed. Mr. Desjarlais expressed that we all want the best thing for the community. He stated that there is no easy answer. Mr. Desjarlais stated that the county has already stopped taking cash at all the tolls from around the county around ten (10) days ago and that has helped cut down on tens of thousands of person to person contact. County Attorney Richard Wm Wesch wanted to further clarify the memo that his office sent out. He stated that there has been some confusion with regard to the media coverage. Mr. Wesch stated that this resolution is NOT a stay at home resolution. Mr. Wesch gave further clarification of the proposed resolution which was per the direction of the Board. Commissioner Mann shared his conversation with the Sheriff's office earlier that morning. Stating that it was going to be very difficult to enforce a stay at home order. Commissioner Hamman read into the record the proposed resolution from the State Surgeon General,

with the additional language to include: “and anyone with cold and flu like symptoms should remain in their residence”.

Vote: Commissioner Mann moved approval to adopt the resolution as suggested language by the Surgeon General’s Public Health Advisory for Vulnerable Populations, as well as the additional language, seconded by Commissioner Sandelli called and carried.

[RESOLUTION No. 20-03-21](#)

Commissioner Hamman asked that County Attorney Richard Wm Wesch please make sure a copy of the resolution passed today be sent to the Collier County Chairman as they were waiting to see the outcome of today’s meeting. Per the County Attorney Richard Wm Wesch, [notice of today’s meeting](#) was posted on the Courthouse doors, the Administration buildings doors, published in the newspaper, posted on the County web page, as well as covered on all news channels.

The Chairman adjourned the meeting at 11:33 a.m.

ATTEST:
LINDA DOGGETT, CLERK

By: _____
Deputy Clerk

Chairman, Lee County Commission