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City services, policies change to slow COVID-19

Monday, March 16, 2020

By Susan Straub

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Mayor Linda Gorton today announced several changes in city policies and services as the government continues to work to slow the spread of COVID-19.

“Our citizens are doing a wonderful job,” Gorton said. “They’re paying attention to the warnings, neighbors are helping neighbors, and we’re working together to slow the speed of this virus. It will take all of us to get past it, but we will get past it.”

Gorton announced:

- Beginning Monday, March 23, yard waste service will be suspended to ensure City has personnel needed to pick up solid waste and recyclables.
- The City is working with God’s Pantry Food Bank and the United Way to pre-package food boxes at the city’s shuttered Community Centers. Boxes are stocked with provisions designed to meet a family’s needs for one week. City employees from Social Services and Parks will be reassigned to join God’s Pantry volunteers in packaging the food for distribution. Plans call for the distribut

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begin later this week. God’s Pantry estimates 10,000 food boxes will be needed per month. The boxes will be distributed to families based on need that have been referred to God’s Pantry.

- The City is immediately suspending meetings of all city boards and commissions, except Planning Commission, Police and Fire Pension Board, and Civil Service Commission. The Mayor is recommending non-governmental boards consider the same.
- Firefighters responding to calls will make every effort to follow social distancing as the situation dictates. Fire stations will be closed to the public, except for emergency walk-ins. Stations will be disinfected twice a day. Walk-ins and car seat appointments will be handled outside the stations whenever possible.
- Streamlining this week’s meeting of the Urban County Council to limit City personnel required to attend the meeting, and to focus only on time sensitive issues. Updates for the public are available through LexTV -- for Spectrum subscribers on Cable Channel 185; for MetroNet subscribers on Cable Channel 3; and live-streaming at lexingtonky.gov.
- Setting up plans for employees to telecommute to minimize person-to-person contact.
- Education and mental health services continue at shelters and day drop-in centers. Providers have changed their staffing to allow high risk personnel and volunteers to stay home. Food supplies are adequate at all sites, although most shelters and centers have moved to serving “to-go” meals. All providers are limiting visitors. All providers need hand sanitizer, thermometers, to-go food containers, sanitizing supplies and masks.
- Working with Commerce Lexington, businesses and others to plan for the immediate support needed to help our businesses and employers begin preparing for how to weather this for the long term.
- Slowdown in government hiring and limited spending.
- To help reduce the risk of virus spread, reduce the number of people going with you to health care providers and hospitals.
- Gov. Andy Beshear has directed restaurants and bars to close. Drive through, delivery and carry-out remain open.
- Kentucky Utilities is suspending late fees and residential disconnects.

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Contact

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