



Declaring an Emergency to
Address Issues with the Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19)

Whereas, a national, state and county emergency has been declared in response to the growing infection rate of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19);

Whereas, a declaration of emergency permits a government to utilize the powers granted to it under national and state law (e.g., RCW Chapters 35.33, RCW 38.52);

Whereas, a declaration of emergency also permits the City to obtain financial and support services from state and federal agencies in meeting the needs of the community, its citizens, and its visitors;

Whereas, as of the writing of this resolution, there has been no confirmed case of the virus within the City of Forks, but testing supplies are limited and prioritized not allowing for a true assessment of the virus' impacts;

Whereas, the City must be able to address issues that arise and utilize the emergency powers within state and federal law to address a dynamic, multi-faceted international emergency;

NOW, THEREFORE, the City Council, in order to utilize such authorities and flexibilities, DO HEREBY RESOLVE AS FOLLOWS:

1. The City of Forks, Washington, hereby declares an emergency has resulted, or will result, from the spread of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) within the City of Forks;
2. The Mayor of the City and his designees are hereby authorized to undertake any and all actions necessary to respond to the emergency including but not limited to direct actions and/or participating in and responding to the Clallam County emergency command and the greater Forks and West End area command structures as permitted by the situations that present themselves until such time as the nation, state, or county has declared the emergency to be concluded.
3. The Mayor and/or the department heads are authorized to enter into contracts and incur obligations necessary to combat such emergency to protect the health and safety of persons and property, and provide emergency assistance to the victims of such disaster including but not limited to possible water and sewer billing forbearance during this state of emergency. Further, the Mayor and the department heads are empowered to utilize government services, property and employees within reason and in appropriate response to the emergency as it presents itself in the West End, as well as any additional powers found within RCW Chapters 35.33, RCW 38.52.

4. The City staff will, to the best of their collective abilities, ensure that:
 - a. There is continuity of operations of essential functions;
 - b. There is an effort to record and track expenditures associated with addressing the emergency and pursue state or federal reimbursement for those costs if and when possible;
 - c. Take within the purview of federal and state law those actions deemed necessary and responsive to the emergency presented by the virus;
 - d. Report to the Council in a manner that is reasonable and when possible timely, the status of the response and challenges that may be arising.
5. Office hours, work assignments, public access to city facilities and personnel may be limited or suspended by the Mayor.
6. Meetings of the City Council may be suspended by the Mayor when public meetings are ordered cancelled by the Governor or county health officers. However, if remote participation can be arranged and is permitted, the City will attempt to make reasonable efforts to do so.
7. Mayor and staff will take advantage of financial and service assistance as the need arises, as public or private assistance is offered, and as acceptance is warranted.
8. Mayor and staff shall aggressively seek federal and state reimbursement for emergency related expenditures and shall be empowered to take all necessary actions to obtain such reimbursements.

Adopted by the City Council of the City of Forks at its regularly scheduled and advertised meeting of 23 March 2020.



Tim Fletcher, Mayor

ATTEST:

APPROVED AS TO FORM:



Audrey Grafstrom, Clerk/Treasurer



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March 23, 2020

Good evening,

Tonight at the regularly scheduled City Council meeting, the City Council passed a resolution declaring an emergency. The Council did this because the President, Governor, and Clallam County Commissioners have declared an emergency associated with the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. A declaration of emergency allows the City to address issues more quickly, and with less bureaucracy.

We are facing something that hasn't happened in a century. The last major epidemic our nation faced was the Spanish flu that hit Forks, La Push, Beaver, the Hoh, and the rest of the West End after World War I. Our hospital is preparing for the possibility of increased patient numbers in a time of limited equipment, beds, and even staff. We have an amazing hospital with an incredibly dedicated staff. We are here to help them in their efforts, and each and every one of us needs to do our part.

Tonight Governor Inslee issued a Stay Home, Stay Healthy emergency order that for the next two weeks or so closes most businesses, limits activities to essential travel, postponed weddings, funerals, and any gathering. I get the fact that folks don't like being told what to do by people in D.C., Olympia, or even Port Angeles. Here's the thing, though, if we don't keep our distances, if we don't follow those orders, and if we don't go home when we think we are sick, we are going to have a lot of sick people overwhelming our system. If we don't take steps now, many people in our community, including everyone making up its heart and soul, could get sick, really sick, and maybe even die.

So, what can you do? First, follow orders as they are issued. Stay home, stay healthy – only go to the store, pharmacy, get take out, fill up your gas tank as necessary. Postpone or cancel all social gatherings. Businesses not meeting the definition of essential must close, however, those that can have their employees work remotely can still operate. This will be for the next two weeks.

Second, if you are asked to help with emergency response by the Forks-Beaver Area response team, let us know if you are able and willing to help. We appreciate all the help

we can get, but if, for any reason, you are unable or unwilling to help, we thank you for your honesty. There may be other ways you can help as the situation develops.

I have seen complaints to the effect that no one out here is doing anything, not the City and not the County. That is absolutely not true. The hospital has been working frantically to prepare and respond to this crisis. For the past two weeks, city and fire department staff have been meeting almost daily to talk about the continually changing situation. They have been developing the tools needed for us to respond to this crisis. One of which will be an ever growing website that you can access from home with resources and responses to some of your questions.

In addition, we have been intentionally calm in our approach to this emergency. Almost every day we are being asked to look into new ways to help our community respond, and respond well, to the challenges we might face. We have stayed in touch with the County, hospital, school, and neighboring communities. We are focused on ensuring a West End response for our West End community. We are not addressing every rumor circulating on social media. We do not have the resources, time, patience, or in many cases, the authority to do some of the things people so adamantly feel or believe need to be done. While our City Council passed the emergency declaration, we are still a part of the county, state, and national emergency response system, and bound by all laws associated with emergency response and management.

We do not know how long this emergency might last. It could be 20 days or 120 days, or even longer. What we do know is that the way each of us responds to the situation will be what defines us as a community, and as individuals, for years to come. My hope is that in hindsight, our actions for the duration of the emergency will be seen as having been appropriate and correct, and that we will be proud of our response. I ask each of you to approach the situation with the kindness, determination, and enthusiasm that we bring to cheering on our athletes when we send them off to state competitions, bidding on pies at the scholarship auction, or helping with fund raising dinners for neighbors in need. That is what makes Forks great, and will continue to make Forks great in the future.

Thank you for taking the time to read this. I hope you will pass it along to help spread the word. We can do this. We can beat this virus, and in doing so, be the Forks we all know us to be.



Tim Fletcher, Mayor