



City of CHARLOTTE

MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor Ridge and City Council Members

FROM: Gregg Guetschow, City Manager

SUBJECT: City Manager Report

DATE: July 10, 2020

Electronic Meeting. I learned after the previous City Council meeting that I had misinterpreted the Governor's executive order regarding public gatherings. We are still subject to a limit of 10 persons in our meetings which will preclude opening Council Chambers to the public. I have been working with Mayor Pro Tem Armitage, who will chair Monday's meetings initially, to develop a means of holding meetings that will better accommodate Council meeting in-person with the public joining electronically. We will be using Zoom webinar technology for the meeting and may also live stream it to Facebook. The technology we have available results in an echo in the Chambers but I do not think it will be too distracting. I am aware the Council member Baker will be attending remotely. To provide the safest possible environment for Council, we are having Plexiglas partitions installed around each Council seat. If you prefer to join the meeting remotely, please let me know so that I can send you the information you will need to do so.

Utility Bills. You will recall that Council waived penalties for late payments on utility bills through June 30. A report of past due accounts as of that date shows a total of \$97,000 in late payments. Of that amount, \$52,000 is for the June billing. That is not uncommon, I am told, for that particular cycle. Based on the amounts owing in other cycles, I expect that amount to still remain in the \$20,000 range. Late notices are being sent every month and landlords are being notified of tenants' unpaid bills. The Whitmer administration has extended the prohibition against late payment shut-offs through the end of December. I will be monitoring this on a monthly basis from this point forward.

CARES funding. This week the Governor signed legislation creating programs to reimburse various entities for costs incurred during the pandemic. One reimburses agencies for hazardous duty bonuses paid to first responders. We are not eligible for this reimbursement because we have not paid those bonuses. The second program reimburses agencies for public safety and public health payroll and benefit costs. The first round of funding covers costs incurred in April and May. If funds are not depleted, an additional round of funding will cover costs through July. The deadline for the first round of funding is July 17 so I will be working on submitting this next week.

Tax Bill Error. In preparing a report for the County, we discovered an error that I made in the general fund millage rate that appears on tax bills. Instead of the legal limit of 14.2798 mills, the budget resolution and tax bills set the rate at 14.2796. This error will result in a loss of revenue of \$50 or less. The only explanation I have for this is that the monitor I was using at home has a much smaller display than I use in the office and at times it is difficult to distinguish some numbers. It is not a large amount but I do not like making mistakes.

City Hall Remains Closed. As I previously reported to you, I decided to not reopen City Hall to the public on July 6 due to the increase in reported COVID-19 cases in Eaton County. Although I have been in the office this week, other administrators continue to work remotely at least part of the time. To this point, this does not appear to be having any significant impact on service delivery. Independent Bank agreed to accept cash-only payments for property taxes at its branch as it has been for utility bill payments. We will continue to evaluate the situation but will take a cautious approach to reopening to protect the health of staff and the public.