

To the Mayor and Members of the City Council

March 27, 2020

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**SUBJECT: WEEKLY UPDATE ON COVID-19 ADVISORY COMMITTEES**

At the City Council's special called meeting on March 19, 2020, Mayor Betsy Price announced her intent to appoint a set of four advisory committees that would advise the City Council and the City Manager about urgent issues associated with the COVID-19 public health emergency. These advisory committees, each to be co-chaired by two Council members, would address issues relating to health, economics/business, education/childcare, and community services. The following is a brief update on the work that these committees are performing.

Health Advisory Committee

- Co-chairs: Brian Byrd and Dennis Shingleton
- Critical issues being addressed:
 1. Medical expertise and guidance on measures related to "Stay at Home" and other provisions for the City of Fort Worth emergency declarations.
 2. Testing for COVID-19 in Tarrant County
 - a. Testing sites for first responders
 - b. Hospital network approach for patients who need to be tested
 - c. Future testing needs: setting up drive-up locations for the public in the coming weeks as needed
 3. Status of hospital equipment, specifically Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)
 4. Coordination of resources among hospital networks
- Status: The Health Advisory Committee met via Webex on Friday, March 20, and Monday, March 23. All committee members were present for the calls. Committee members observed on the 23rd that all of them were already meeting regularly to coordinate pandemic-related activities and that this committee was consequently redundant. The co-chairs have therefore decided to dissolve this committee.

Economics/Business Advisory Committee

- Co-chairs: Cary Moon and Ann Zadeh
- Critical issues being addressed:
 1. Impact assessment: Understanding the current impacts to small businesses due to the COVID-19 pandemic, crafting policy recommendations at the local, state and federal level, and supporting the Economic Development Department's outreach and education efforts to small businesses.
 2. Technical assistance: Coordinating and promoting technical assistance so that small business owners can quickly apply for and access Small Business Administration funds as they become available.
 3. Resources: Developing recommendations and resources to provide business owners with financial/technical assistance, working capital needs, rent relief/abatement, utility assistance, tax relief/abatement and workforce/unemployment.
- Status: The Committee will be holding their first meeting via WebEx on Friday, March 27.

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**SUBJECT: WEEKLY UPDATE ON COVID-19 ADVISORY COMMITTEES**Education/Childcare Advisory Committee

- Co-chairs: Carlos Flores and Kelly Allen Gray
- Critical issues being addressed
 1. Internet access: As school districts transition to online learning for the remainder of this academic year, many Fort Worth families face the inequity of lacking Internet access at home. How many families are disadvantaged in this way? Where do these families reside? What primary language do they speak at home? How can the City and cooperating agencies assist them, directly or indirectly, in gaining access to the Internet?
 2. Childcare services for families of essential workers: As school closures increase the childcare responsibilities of working parents, many of these parents will be challenged to continue performing their jobs. This challenge will affect the health and safety of our community most directly as it pertains to workers in high demand during the COVID-19 emergency. Such workers include first responders, hospital personnel, essential infrastructure workers, persons staffing grocery stores and pharmacies, and other workers deemed to be essential. How many workers in various occupations might be classified as essential? How many of their children in various age groups have unmet childcare needs? Where do these families reside? How can the City and cooperating agencies assist these families, directly or indirectly, in securing childcare services?
- Status: The advisory committee held its first meeting via Webex on Wednesday, March 25. All fourteen committee members were present, including both co-chairs, four educators, five childcare providers, and three at-large civic leaders. Mayor Price presented her charge to the committee, after which committee members discussed the critical issues at length. City staff will conduct further research and analysis in advance of the committee's next meeting, to be held on Monday, March 30. The committee intends to meet twice weekly, each Monday and Wednesday at 2:00 p.m., through the COVID-19 emergency.

Community Services Advisory Committee

- Co-chairs: Gyna Bivens and Jungus Jordan
- Critical issues being addressed: The committee is starting with food security and then moving to housing and utility assistance and mental health services. Target populations include: seniors and people with disabilities, families with children five and under, low income residents, and recent immigrants and residents with limited English skills. How can the City and cooperating agencies promote collaboration and assist with access to federal and state funds/programs, removing regulatory barriers, messaging to residents, and recruitment and use of underutilized employees and volunteers?
- Status: The committee's first meeting via Webex is Friday, March 27, and Mayor Price will present her charge to the committee.



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If you have any questions about this information, please contact the following staff members as appropriate:

- Health: Valerie Washington, Assistant City Manager (817-392-6192),
- Economics/Business: Robert Sturns, Economic Development Director (817-392-2663),
- Education/Childcare: Fernando Costa, Assistant City Manager (817-392-6122), and
- Community Services: Dana Burghdoff, Assistant City Manager (817-392-8018).

David Cooke
City Manager