

HAYWOOD COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
EMERGENCY MEETING – MARCH 26, 2020

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Ensley explained that per N.C.G.S.153A-40, this emergency meeting was properly noticed and requires a call to order of the Board of Commissioners.

Chairman L. Kevin Ensley convened the emergency meeting of the Haywood County Board of Commissioners at 10:10 a.m. in the Historic Courtroom at the Haywood County Historic Courthouse, Waynesville, North Carolina, with Chairman L. Kevin Ensley, Vice Chairman Brandon C. Rogers, Commissioners J.W. "Kirk" Kirkpatrick, III, Tommy Long, and Mark Pless present. Staff members present were County Manager Bryant Morehead, County Attorney Frank Queen, Finance Director Julie Davis, Operations Director Kris Boyd and Clerk to the Board Tracy Wells.

NEW BUSINESS

Consider amendment to the Haywood County Proclamation of a State of Emergency

Chairman Ensley recognized County Manager Bryant Morehead who stated County Attorney Frank Queen prepared a power point to explain the proposed Revised Joint Proclamation by Haywood County and All Municipalities.

Chairman Ensley recognized County Attorney Frank Queen. Mr. Queen stated earlier this week the Governor of North Carolina announced that he was probably not going to issue a state at home amendment to the North Carolina State Emergency Declaration. Therefore, the Governor's statement triggered off a series of county decisions which needed to be made. Mr. Queen stated the essence of the amended proclamation order is for public health concerns. It is to help reduce the speed of the spread of the virus and help lessen the strain on our healthcare system. The basic structure of the proclamation is that everyone needs to stay home. Non-essential businesses as defined in the proclamation will close and non-essential travel will end. Essential businesses as defined in the proclamation will be able to stay open but must maintain social distancing. Mr. Queen explained the types of travel which are permitted: leaving home for essential activities/work, health and safety, necessary supplies and services, outdoor activities, and to care for others. Travel which is prohibited is casual travel and casual visitations. There are special rules for those returning to the county from outside county travel. Returning residents are required to self-quarantine for 14 days to prevent them from being a silent carrier of the virus. The self-quarantine guidance of the CDC will be adhered to by the returning resident. Mr. Queen further explained there are special rules for hotels and short-term lodging. All lodging facilities including campgrounds, with rentals or leases for less than 15 days in duration shall be closed except for work-related accommodations. Visitors and property owners who are non-residents of Haywood County who are staying overnight as of the effective date of this proclamation, shall notify the Haywood County COVID-19 Hotline to list with the county their most recent place of travel, length of stay and purpose for travel.

County Manager Bryant Morehead recognized TDA Executive Director Lynn Collins. Ms. Collins stated a survey regarding overnight stays in the county was sent out to 72 companies. There were 22 responses from various hotels/motels, B&B resorts, vacation home rentals, etc. Of those surveyed, 55% felt it would be beneficial to close accommodations in the county while 60% felt it would be detrimental for the county to mandate the closing of accommodations. The visitor's center is closed and information has been placed outside for any arriving visitors.

County Attorney Frank Queen informed the Board there is not an effective date or an expiration date for the validity of the proclamation. The purpose of this emergency meeting is to publicize the importance of this document. He then asked the Board if there were any changes or questions.

After much discussion, the Board decided to change the number of days regarding outside non-essential travel. If someone has been outside Haywood County for more than three (3) days, they are required to self-quarantine for 14 days following the CDC guidelines.

Commissioner Kirkpatrick questioned AirBnb's not being referenced under "Rules for hotels and short term lodging". County Attorney Frank Queen stated he would add the verbiage "direct-reservation facilities (such as AirBnb and VRBO)" to the amended proclamation.

Commissioner Pless expressed his concern regarding parks and various areas where citizens are playing outdoor sports. The Board decided to add "team and contact sports, whether held indoors or outdoors, are prohibited" to the amended proclamation.

Chairman Ensley recognized Carla Woods to address the Board. Ms. Woods stated she is a resident of Haywood County and believes the Board should not enact on this amended proclamation. She expressed her concern that the amended proclamation will have neighbors turning against each other and feels this is extremely invasive of our constitutional rights. She further stated the virus needs to spread and does not see the need for the Board to place any further restrictions on Haywood County citizens.

The Board discussed the effective date and expiration date of the proclamation and decided to make the amended proclamation effective March 26, 2020 at 5:00 p.m. with an expiration date of April 16, 2020.

Chairman Ensley recognized Emergency Services Director Greg Shuping. Mr. Shuping requested the Board to consider sending a letter to federal elected officials regarding citizens congregating on federal regulated lands such as the Great Smoky Mountain National Park and the Blue Ridge Parkway. He stated the public safety responders are going to be stretched thin while also being required to answer rescue calls for people located on the trails, etc. The Board discussed this matter further and decided to let the federal government make this decision.

County Attorney Frank Queen clarified to the Board state law prohibits the restriction of access to legal guns and ammunition. Therefore, the county has no legal authority to limit access to legal guns and ammunition.

Commissioner Pless made a motion to approve the amendment to the Haywood County Proclamation of a State of Emergency titled "Revised Joint Proclamation by Haywood County and All Municipalities" with requested changes as discussed. Vice Chairman Rogers seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

With no further business, Chairman Ensley thanked county staff for all of their hard work during this difficult time. He also thanked the local media for helping keep Haywood County citizens informed.

ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Kirkpatrick made a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Long seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

The time of adjournment was 11:52 a.m.



CLERK



CHAIRMAN