

WATONWAN COUNTY BOARD
EMERGENCY MEETING
MARCH 19, 2020
3:00 P.M.

The Watonwan County Board of Commissioners met in emergency session on March 19, 2020 at 3:00 P.M. in the Commissioners' Meeting Room of the Courthouse, City of St. James. The following Board members were present: Jim Branstad, Raymond Gustafson, Bill Miller, Bob Rinne and Kathleen Svalland. The meeting was opened with the Pledge of Allegiance. The purpose of the emergency session was to take actions related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Emergency Management Director Julie Peterson was present to request declaration of a State of Emergency related to the COVID-19 pandemic. This would open up the possibility of State and Federal Assistance that may become available, as well as small business loans through DEED. It would start out for 30 days, but could be extended if need be.

Branstad moved, Svalland seconded and the motion passed unanimously, to adopt the following:

RESOLUTION DECLARING A STATE OF EMERGENCY

WHEREAS, Novel Coronavirus Disease 2019, commonly know as COVID-19, a respiratory disease that can result in serious illness or death, is caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus, which is a new strain of coronavirus that had not previously been identified in humans and can spread from person to person; and

WHEREAS, the CDC has identified the potential public health threat posed by COVID-19, and has advised that person-to-person spread of COVID-19 will continue to occur; and

WHEREAS, on March 13th, 2020 President Donald Trump declared the COVID-19 outbreak in the United States constitutes a National Emergency; and

WHEREAS, on March 13th, 2020 Governor Tim Walz declared a Peacetime State of Emergency to authorize any and all necessary resources to be used in support of the COVID-19 response; and

WHEREAS, the National Center for Disease Control and Prevention and the Minnesota Department of Public Health recommend that any individual with confirmed COVID-19 should remain under home isolation precautions until the risk of secondary transmission to others is thought to be low; and

WHEREAS, the necessary resources to respond to and recover from this pandemic will exceed those resources available within the county, and additional resources will be needed from state and federal resources;

WHEREAS, the Watonwan County Department of Emergency Management requests the Watonwan County Board of Commissioners to declare Watonwan County in a STATE OF EMERGENCY for the COVID-19 event of 2020;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Watonwan County Board of Commissioners declare Watonwan County in a State of Emergency for conditions resulting from the COVID-19 event of 2020. This State of Emergency will remain in effect for 30 days, and may be extended if necessary.

County Auditor/Treasurer Kelly Pauling recommended closing County buildings to the public through March 27, at which time it could be reevaluated. Employees would work with the public through phone, email and at the door for exchange of paperwork. There did need to be an access point for the Courts, so the lobby by the Sheriff's Office would be used. License tab renewals would be made through the drop box. It was planned that the Food Shelf would still operate using the back door of the Resource Center conference room. It was noted that TMT buses were still operating.

Miller moved, Branstad seconded and the motion passed unanimously, to approve closing County buildings to the public through March 27 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Svalland moved, Rinne seconded and the motion passed unanimously, to authorize Chairman Ray Gustafson and County Auditor/Treasurer Kelly Pauling to extend the closure to the public if deemed appropriate.

Branstad moved, Gustafson seconded and the motion passed unanimously, to approve updating the Watonwan County COVID-19 Policy to incorporate federal changes.

Rinne moved, Branstad seconded and the motion passed unanimously, to adjourn at 3:20 P.M.

Raymond Gustafson, Chairman
Watonwan County Board

Lisa Schumann, Deputy Clerk
Watonwan County Board

ATTEST: Kelly Pauling
Watonwan County Auditor/Treasurer