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## ***A MESSAGE FROM MAYOR SCHAVE***

**April 8, 2020**

Hello everybody. I hope you're all staying safe and at home. I've had a lot of calls asking me to "make a statement" because you haven't heard from me, and are wondering what I'm doing as the Mayor.

First of all, I want to thank you for reaching out. I have sent out a few media releases, and FAQs, and been on the radio. Obviously, you want a more personal message regarding this public health crisis, and I want to respond to that.



As the mayor, you probably know that I've made two emergency proclamations in support of the statewide orders from the Governor's office. The safety of all of the residents and employees of Aberdeen is my number one goal. I say that both as the mayor and as a person who has lived here my whole life.

In order to protect the safety of everyone, we (me personally, and the City) are following the local, state, and federal public health professionals' advice: practice social distancing, wash your hands, don't leave your home unless you have to, and pay attention to your health. While you are home, call your friends and family to check in so that nobody feels so alone they think they have to be around large groups of people. Call your friends and family so that if they need something you can help – it's the Harbor way, and we won't forget it in this situation. The City's website has a link to learn more about COVID-19 public health information. Washington State Department of Health has information on COVID-19 at <https://www.doh.wa.gov/Emergencies/Coronavirus>.

We have been very lucky here in Grays Harbor County. As of today, we only have six confirmed cases of COVID-19 in the whole county. We need to remember, though, that people who don't seem to be sick can be carriers of this COVID-19 so we shouldn't get lazy and think we can't get it. The governor has extended the "stay home, stay safe" order until May 4. The City will continue to follow that order.

I know that the "stay home" order is causing a lot of headaches for people trying to make a living here on the Harbor – and the City keeps looking for ways to help individuals, families and businesses. It is a very tough time.

I have extended the time to pay first quarter B&O taxes to July 15. Local businesses can go to the City's website to link to the federal Small Business Administration site for information about more assistance. <https://covid19relief.sba.gov/#/>

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For City operations, City Hall and most other City buildings have been closed to public access. The Police Department lobby is open though. This way we can continue to protect the health and safety of employees and the whole community.

I know that there are people who pay their bills in cash, and closing down City Hall is not convenient for them. While we are figuring out the best way to work through this – so that people can pay their bills on time, and everyone has an accurate receipt – I have extended the billing cycle until April 17<sup>th</sup> so that people who pay in cash won't get a late charge for not being able to get into the Finance Department.

If you can, I encourage people who pay in cash to get a cashier's check or money order so that you can drop your payments in the dropbox behind City Hall. And everyone else should remember that they can still make payments by check or money order at the dropbox, or by credit card online through the City's website.

To keep serving us all, the departments have identified "essential personnel". Every single department is working to keep serving Aberdeen. A lot of people are working from home, and even people at home know they could be called in if they are needed.

Right now, the City is also looking at its own budget to see what can be cut down and still provide important services like police, fire, water, sewer, streets, building inspection, and the court.

One final thing I would like to share is the City's next steps for the TASL and our homeless population. At the March 11 City Council meeting, the City Council agreed to close the TASL on May 15 if there wasn't outside money to help the City with expenses. We have asked the County – through the Public Health department – for assistance, and according to their lawyer, they do not believe that operations at TASL are "an appropriate use" of their recent \$390,000 Department of Commerce grant to address the COVID-19 public health crisis. The Department of Commerce does not have any other funds, and the next round of money from the state legislature wouldn't be available until at least July 1. There haven't been any private or other organizations step up to help the City.

I hope this has been helpful to you. Please check out the City website where we will continue to update information as it is available – the City website is the official source of City information. We will also update City related Facebook pages from time to time. I will also provide statements about once a week to stay in touch better.

I hope you all stay safe! Wash your hands often, and be kind to each other in these tough times.

Sincerely,  
*Mayor Schave*

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