

Adams County Commissioners Update – May 1, 2020

- Adams County has been conducting its bi-weekly Board of Commissioner's meetings by teleconference in order to protect the health and safety of the public and staff. The Adams County Commissioners continue to encourage public participation and are providing a call-in option for the public. If you are interested in participating via phone, please call 1-415-655-0003, enter meeting number 476-936-077 #. The next meeting is scheduled for May 6, 2020 at 9 AM. The bi-weekly teleconference meetings will continue until further notice.
- As of Monday April 27, ninety-four Court & County staff began a temporary furlough for an unknown period. The recall of staff will be based on Court and County operational needs, as well as state orders and directives. After a thorough review, including consultation with all department heads, one hundred twenty-six staff were originally slated to be furloughed. The Court's need to resume hearings on May 4 in order to reduce a growing backlog of cases, necessitated some staff that directly supports the Court being removed from the temporary furlough list.
- Both the County and the Court understand the extraordinary value of our staff and understand the multi-level dynamics of Furlough. We held off on initiating the furlough option until it was obvious that we would not be fully operational by May 3. We appreciate everyone's understanding as we balance the needs of staff, service to resident's and fiscal responsibility to our taxpayers. It is the desire of both the County and the Court to recall all staff from furlough and return to normal operations as soon as practicable.
- Due to the COVID-19 Closure, the Court now has a backlog of over 400 cases. On Monday, May 4, the Court will begin to hear up to 70 cases per day in the Courthouse and at the Human Services Building. Protocols and guidelines will be in place to ensure that best practices are utilized for the health & safety of staff and participants. Masks, temperature checks and social distancing are several of the required safety measures. Supplemental hearings will take place between May 4 – June 4. With a reduction in backlog, the Court anticipates that it will be able to resume normal hearing dates sometime in early June.
- The gradual re-opening of Pennsylvania business and industry begins today with PennDot highway and bridge projects resuming, state parks opening, private campgrounds, golf courses, marinas and construction projects being given a limited yellow light. Please note that these re-openings have limitations and guidelines that must be followed. It is anticipated that Pennsylvania counties in the northern tier will go from red to yellow within the next week. We are hopeful that within the next 10-15 days, the Mercy House construction project can resume by following Amended Workplace Safety Plans to be submitted by the contractors. The Board is currently working with the General Contractor, the Prime Contractors, the Project Manager and the Architect to facilitate the re-opening.
- Mail-in ballot applications continue to pour into the Elections Office for the June 2nd primary election. While the elections staff was already energetically preparing for Pennsylvania's first "need no excuse" absentee ballot opportunity, the COVID-19 pandemic sky-rocketed the number of mail-in applications. The large volume of mail-in votes will reduce virus exposure and shorten lines at the polls, which are certainly beneficial to the health and safety of the public and our poll workers and staff. The flip side is that the Elections Office is experiencing an unprecedented volume of administrative processing of the applications in order to record and

return ballots. The most absentee mail-ins that were previously processed was 2800. Given the current volume, it is predicted there could be 10,000+ applications for absentee ballots. Thank you to all the Elections staff and the supplemental staff that are pitching in to make sure all voters can exercise their most fundamental right.

- Although we have many staff that have been recognized or need to be recognized given the events of the of the past six weeks, an unusual burden with 14-hour days, and constantly reaching out to staff with sometimes challenging messaging, has fallen on several administrators. Court Administrator Don Fenimore, County Manager Steve Nevada, Solicitor Molly Mudd, HR Director Michelle Miller and Department of Emergency Services Director Warren Bladen have certainly been up to the task. Our Row Officers and Department Directors should also be complimented for their dedication and willingness to adapt. When you get a chance, please give all of them a pat on the back for their leadership and regard for all of their colleagues!
- Farmers markets and roadside fruit and produce stands will soon be fully open in Adams County featuring all the fresh bounty that our beautiful agricultural county has to offer. Greenhouses are currently open and bursting with flowers - after their Easter business was diminished. We also have several local meat markets and Farm to Table producers in Adams County that especially need your support now. Please consider Buying Local and support Adams County Agriculture so they can Support You!
- It is always appropriate to conclude by expressing our gratitude to all the folks on the front lines providing us with the essential services and care that we need. Be Safe and use recommended protocols + common sense to reduce exposure to yourself and others. Let's get to the Yellow Level and back to business as soon as safely possible!

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