



Emmet County News Release

For immediate release – March 23, 2020

Contact – Michael Reaves, Acting County Administrator (231-348-1701); Bill Shorter, County Commissioner Chairman;
Toni Drier, County Commissioner Co-Chair

*** UPDATE ***

NOTE – This is an update to a news release that was sent out on March 18 (copied below)

Emmet County Courthouse Closed until April 13

Following Governor Whitmer's signature Monday morning on the "Stay Home, Stay Safe" executive order, Emmet County officials have amended its building closure notice to comply with the governor's instructions.

The new executive order temporarily prohibits public or private gatherings of any number of people, outside of a single household, from non-essential businesses or operations. Therefore, Emmet County building and courthouse in downtown Petoskey will remain closed to the public until Monday, April 13, or until that time when health officials determine it is safe to reopen. County departments located in other buildings are also closed to the public.

Emmet County officials closed the county's public buildings on Wednesday afternoon, March 18, to all visitors. All employees continued to come to work through Friday, March 20, when it was announced that all non-essential employees would be requested to stay home beginning Monday, March 23.

In an earlier news release sent out to media on March 18, county officials had stated there were plans to reopen for three hours on March 25 so county staff could meet with citizens who had time-sensitive business with the county. But that three-hour window for appointment-only meetings at the county building has also been canceled.

Though information is changing by the day, the county is also working to update the webpages of each county department and court so the public has the most current information available. Nearly all county departments have at least one person attending to the day-to-day business while the building is closed down. The public is encouraged to utilize online forms and other information on the county's website during this time of reduced staff. A link to every department's contact person, including phone number and email address, is also available on the county website home page at www.emmetcounty.org.

###



Emmet County News Release

For immediate release – March 18, 2020

Contact – Michael Reaves, Acting County Administrator (231-348-1701); Bill Shorter, County Commissioner Chairman; Toni Drier, County Commissioner Co-Chair

Emmet County Building, Courthouse Closing to the Public

Emmet County Board of Commissioners chairman Bill Shorter, co-chairperson Toni Drier, and Acting County Administrator Michael Reaves announced this morning the closing of the Emmet County Building and Courthouse in downtown Petoskey to the general public, effective at 3 p.m. on Wednesday, March 18, in an ongoing effort to comply with state and federal orders regarding the COVID-19 outbreak and to protect the health of county employees. **This change is effective through Friday, March 27, and will be reevaluated at that time, if not sooner should circumstances require, to determine if the building closure will be extended.**

“We are trying to do what we can to keep as many county services going and available to the public,” said Reaves. “Our staff has been and will continue to work on ways to shift away from in-person service to handling as much county businesses as possible over the phone or via email. We are also working as quickly as we can to get updates made to the county website so our citizens can access online forms and find the contact information they need if they have questions. We appreciate the public’s patience as we work through these changes and determine the most effective way to handle various aspects of county operations.”

The county building will be open for the Board of Commissioners’ regular monthly meeting Thursday, March 19, beginning at 6 p.m. The previously-scheduled public hearing for March 19 on the amended 2020 budget was postponed in a news release sent out Tuesday afternoon, March 17 and the meeting’s agenda for the board meeting has been significantly reduced. That revised agenda can be viewed on the county’s website. As outlined in that earlier news release, seating availability will be reduced for the board meeting according to orders from the governor about public gatherings and chairs will be arranged to observe social distancing recommendations.

Those wishing to still attend the meeting will be required to answer screening questions upon entering the building’s metal detection doors to determine if they, or someone in their household, have traveled outside the local area and whether they are experiencing any of the symptoms associated with COVID-19 or if they may have been exposed to the COVID-19 virus. Any person attending who exhibits symptoms associated with the coronavirus will be requested to leave voluntarily. Visitors to the building are asked to wash their hands as recommended by health officials before attending or apply hand sanitizer upon entering the building.

County officials have tentatively planned that county business which cannot be conducted over the phone or by email will be done so by appointment only on Wednesday, March 25, from 9 a.m. to noon. These appointments will be done on an as-needed basis and must be scheduled ahead of time with the appropriate county department. Parole and probation appointments that require a face-to-face meeting will need to be discussed with the assigned parole or probation agent to arrange for off-site contact. If a required testing process is needed, appointments will need to be scheduled by calling (231) 348-1749 for Michigan Department of Corrections cases or (231) 348-0680 for Emmet County Community Corrections cases.

The Treasurer's Office encourages taxpayers to pay via mail. Postmark dates will be accepted for payments of 2018 and 2019 taxes. The 2017 delinquent tax redemption period will expire on March 31, 2020 and those properties will be lost to foreclosure with no right of redemption. Those still needing to pay 2017 delinquent taxes can schedule a time to come to the Emmet County Treasurer's Office to pay those taxes by calling (231) 348-1715.

As the situation evolves over the coming days, the public is urged to check the county's website at www.emmetcounty.org for updates to county operations. Updates will also be posted on the county's Facebook page @emmetcountymi.

#