

City Council

Mayor Patrick Slayter
Vice Mayor Una Glass
Michael Carnacchi
Sarah Glade Gurney
Neysa Hinton

**City Manager**

Larry McLaughlin
lmclaughlin@cityofsebastopol.org
Assistant City Manager/City Clerk, MMC
Mary Gourley
mgourley@cityofsebastopol.org

City of Sebastopol**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

CONTACT: Mary Gourley
Assistant City Manager/City Clerk, MMC
(707) 823-1153
mgourley@cityofsebastopol.org

**IN PRO-ACTIVE MEASURE TO STEM COVID-19 SPREAD, CITY OF SEBASTOPOL
ISSUES PROCLAMATION OF LOCAL EMERGENCY**

Sebastopol, Calif., (March 12, 2020) - The City of Sebastopol, in a pro-active measure to help slow any spread of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) into the community, and to help protect the health of its citizens, workers and staff, has today announced a [proclamation of local emergency](#). Sebastopol Fire Chief Bill Braga, as the city's director of emergency services, has issued the proclamation, which is expected to be ratified at the March 17 City Council meeting. The proclamation follows similar actions by the State of California, County of Sonoma, and other cities in the county.

Says Chief Braga. "The proclamation is being implemented to better assist the City to adequately plan, prepare and pre-position resources to be able to effectively respond to the threat posed by COVID-19, and to warn residents and visitors of the threat posed by COVID-19 and to enable them sufficient time to plan and prepare. We're in daily contact with the Sonoma County Department of Emergency Services and Department of Health Services to stay apprised of this quickly changing situation."

Impacts:

- The City of Sebastopol is following the lead of the State of California by recommending that gatherings of 250 people or more be postponed or cancelled.
- City employees are being urged not to attend any gatherings of more than 250 people.
- Travel by City staff for training purposes has been paused.

- City Council meeting agendas will be limited to essential items only. See the March 17 agenda [here](#), and citizens are urged to watch City meetings [online](#) rather than attending them in person. Should citizens wish to comment on upcoming agenda items, they are asked to submit their comments via email to Assistant City Manager/City Clerk Mary Gourley at mgourley@cityofsebastopol.org or via telephone at (707) 823-1153. Comments should be submitted as far as possible in advance of the meeting in order to ensure that staff members have sufficient time to enter them into Council meeting packets.

While there have currently been no confirmed cases of community-spread COVID-19 in Sonoma County, on March 2 the Sonoma County Department of Health Services (DHS) confirmed that it anticipates additional cases in the county from non-travel, community transmission due to the increase of these cases in the country, combined with the worldwide uncontrolled spread of COVID-19.

Says Mayor Patrick Slayter, “We understand from those who know better than we do about these matters that for people in good health, the virus can be mild, but limiting exposure and practicing what is being called “social distancing” creates less of an opportunity for those who may be carrying the virus unknowingly to pass it along to more vulnerable community members, especially older people and those with underlying medical conditions.”

Says Vice Mayor Una Glass, “We feel that the prudent and responsible course of action is to do everything that we can to limit the spread of the virus. This decision was not made lightly. We realize that there will be negative economic impacts, but if we don’t act decisively now, the human and long-ranging economic impacts could potentially be far worse.”

The local emergency proclamation will remain in effect until its termination is proclaimed by the City Council of the City of Sebastopol.

The Sonoma County Department of Health Services encourages everyone to practice good hygiene to reduce the risk of becoming infected with a respiratory virus, such as influenza or COVID-19, which includes:

- washing hands frequently with soap and water for at least 20 seconds,
- avoid touching your eyes and face,
- coughing or sneezing into your sleeved elbow,
- and staying home when ill.
- If you have not received your flu shot yet, it's not too late; annual flu shots are the best protection from flu, which still sickens and kills thousands of people in the US every year.

For more information, visit the Sonoma County Office of Emergency Services coronavirus website <https://socoemergency.org/coronavirus/> or the Centers for Disease Control website at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>

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