

Government Affairs Reports-in-Brief on Municipal Activities March 2020

VIRGINIA BEACH

The Virginia Beach City Council had a virtual meeting tonight to address items that are a result of the Covid-19 impact in Virginia Beach. Much of the conversation was in relation to potential tax relief in the city for various taxes including property taxes and restaurant taxes. No motion was made, but staff was directed to provide council with an updated financial projection and recommendations. Staff asked council for more specifics in where they would like to see budget adjustments to support tax relief.

City staff has spent the past few weeks presenting council with the proposed budget for 2020-2021. Public hearings are scheduled for the month of April, but this is subject to change due to the ongoing Stay at Home and Social Distancing Orders. I had planned on sending you budget highlights later this week, but I will need to talk to staff in Va. Beach this week to determine if there will be major changes to the presented budget based on tonight's council meeting.

Council affirmed procedures to continue to have remote participation for Council Meetings, including directions for public comment periods. Sign up prior to the meeting will now be required to ensure technology is ready to support the 3 minute public speaking time.

NORFOLK

Norfolk City Council voted to delay payment on business and personal property taxes.

Late payments of meals tax, admissions tax, occupancy tax and transient occupancy tax due in April, May, and June will not be assessed penalty or interest until 60 days after their due date, but a timely filing is still required.

Late payments of business personal property tax, personal property tax, and real estate tax due between April 1 and August 1 will not be assessed penalty and interest until August 1st.

Convenience fees for online transactions (Electronic payments and credit card payments) with the Norfolk City Treasurers Offices between now and June 30 will be waived.

The city has also furloughed some staff as a part of reduced hours at libraries and public areas that are now closed to the public.

Virginia Beach has not yet furloughed staff, but discussions are underway about how to proceed, according to tonight's meeting.

SUFFOLK

The Suffolk City Council met today and formally declared a local emergency. This will impact public meetings of the council for up to the next 90 days. The city attorney is working to develop a plan for meetings to continue to be held electronically with an option for public input. The work session for April 1 has been cancelled and the next scheduled regular meeting for Suffolk City Council is April 15 at 7 p.m. This will be an electronic meeting and the actual procedures for the meeting will be announced in the upcoming weeks.

Individuals or company's paying fees to the city through any of the online or phone portals (E-Check and charge card fees) will not have to pay the convenience fees through the end of the fiscal year, June 30, 2020. This could be extended if the situation requires an adjustment.