

York County and COVID-19:

A report to the community



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Part I: York County's COVID-19 Experience

Introduction

For many years, York County and our regional partners prepared for and responded to community-wide emergencies caused by hurricanes and other significant weather incidents. Additionally, biennial exercises conducted to determine the County's efficacy in responding to a nuclear incident returned high marks from state and federal authorities. While these incidents and exercises provided a basis from which to respond to unexpected emergency situations, the entire region was caught off guard when the Peninsula became the regional epicenter for COVID-19. A Pandemic Influenza Plan, included in York County's Emergency Operations documents, described in general terms the impacts a highly contagious disease may have to our community along with mitigation efforts that could be utilized to manage the incident. However, as the pandemic occurred, this plan did not include – nor would anyone have expected it to include – details on managing an epidemic of the type experienced in 2020/2021 – COVID-19.

To maintain a history of the event, and potentially aid future County authorities involved in an evolving pandemic situation, the County assembled this report to assist in understanding the a) administrative actions that were necessary to address the ongoing health crisis, b) steps taken by the County Administrator, departments, and agencies to continue providing services to the citizens while protecting the health of employees, and c) staff's recommendations for managing a future pandemic based on the COVID-19 pandemic and the resources available in 2020.

When COVID-19 appeared on the Virginia Peninsula, local governments immediately took action by activating emergency operation centers and shutting down schools and offices to protect the health of employees and citizens. All York County departments quickly began developing strategies to provide services to our citizens while following Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Virginia Department of Health (VDH) guidelines.

The three broad categories of the County's response involved Health, Governance, and Finance. All County departments and agencies demonstrated resiliency and ingenuity as they adapted services and programs to meet the needs of our citizens. Within a matter of days, and for some just a few hours, all agencies transitioned into various modes of service in order to maintain the essential functions of local government. The watchwords throughout this experience continued to be flexibility, innovation, safety, and service in the face of this deadly global crisis.

This story is one of strong leadership from the administration and Board of Supervisors devoted to the common good. The health and welfare of employees and citizens was paramount and every executive decision was based not on personal opinion but on facts from the Virginia Department of Health, regional cooperatives, and task forces.

COVID Awareness and Actions

To best comprehend the actions taken by the County, a timeline has been included indicating how the situation evolved in its early stages, including the steps taken by other organizations, specifically the CDC and the VDH. From the early days of the pandemic, the York County Administration followed the direction of the Virginia Department of Health-Peninsula District.

- The CDC activated its Emergency Operations Center on January 21, 2020, to coordinate activities and provide assistance to states, public health partners, and clinicians
- VDH activated its epidemiological response plan on January 22, 2020, and initiated coordination of its response with the CDC and the Virginia Division of Consolidated Laboratory Services.
- On January 26, 2020, the Virginia Department of Health (VDH) first announced preparations and activities related to the outbreak of novel coronavirus 2019-NCOV (later referred to simply COVID-19).
- On January 27, 2020, the CDC issued a Level 3 travel advisory for China, urging travelers to avoid non-essential travel. The CDC had also issued a special advisory for the Hubei Province, urging the public to avoid all travel to this region.
- VDH initiated situation reporting on January 30, 2020, in an effort to enhance coordination and information sharing between local health districts and state and federal agencies. Also on this date, the U.S. Department of State issued a Level 4 advisory restricting all travel to China. The World Health Organization declared that the outbreak constituted a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC).
- In its January 30, 2020, issue, the *Daily Press* newspaper reported that this was “no time for panic” and that the small, if deadly, virus outbreak was no cause for alarm and certainly not in our locality, a small county half a world away from the disease epicenter.
- The U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services declared a public health emergency for the United States on January 31, 2020.

- On February 2, 2020, the following temporary measures were instituted by the federal government:
 - U.S. citizens who had been in Hubei province in the 14 days prior to arrival to the United States would undergo up to 14 days of mandatory quarantine
 - U.S. citizens who were in other areas of China in the 14 days prior to arrival would undergo proactive entry health screening at a select number of entry points and up to 14 days of monitored, self-quarantine
 - Foreign nationals, other than the immediate family of U.S. citizens and permanent residents, who traveled in China in the prior 14 days, would be denied entry into the United States
 - Arriving flights would be funneled to 11 select airports, including Dulles International Airport in northern Virginia.

- On February 5, 2020, the VDH issued a situation report in which the agency reported that it was monitoring this novel coronavirus from Hubei Province, China termed 2019-nCoV. Chinese officials were reporting sustained person-to-person spread. Imported cases of 2019-nCoV infection in travelers had been detected in the U.S., particularly in the Pacific Northwest. It was anticipated that there would be more cases in the U.S. in the coming days or weeks. It was also likely that person-to-person spread would continue to occur.

- Two weeks later, County Administrator Neil Morgan formed a task force to report on the virus and make recommendations regarding required actions on the part of York County officials. On February 28, 2020, the first meeting of the York County Coronavirus Task Force was held and included a briefing from a representative of the Virginia Department of Health-Peninsula District.

- On March 11, 2020, the *Daily Press* newspaper headline read, “It’s Here—Coronavirus in Hampton Roads.” A Virginia Beach couple tested positive for COVID-19 and were the first known cases in Hampton Roads. Three days later the local news services were reporting that James City County was the epicenter of Virginia’s coronavirus infections and that the Historic Triangle was essentially shutting down to clean facilities. That week James City County had more confirmed virus cases than any other Virginia locality and, according to the Virginia Department of Health, it accounted for seven of the state’s thirty reported cases.

- The Peninsula Health District (PHD) confirmed two positive cases of coronavirus on March 12, 2020. These cases marked the first two cases in the PHD and were believed to be related to international travel and, therefore, not acquired through local community spread. The very next day, five additional cases were reported in the PHD. At the time, all of the cases were residents of James City County. Four of the new cases were contacts of the original two diagnosed. The fifth new case

had an unknown exposure and an investigation was initiated to identify where the individual may have acquired the virus. “These five new cases make this a community outbreak of COVID-19,” said Peninsula Health District Director Dr. Thomas Franck. “The fact that one of these cases has an unknown exposure is concerning and is suspicious for community spread.” This was an evolving situation and the PHD continued to keep people informed.

- As a result of this community outbreak on the Peninsula, County Administrator Neil Morgan, along with other local Chief Administrative Officers, declared a local state of emergency on March 13, 2020, setting in motion the County’s emergency response. The virus continued to spread throughout the community over the next several months, which required responses from the organization that needed to remain flexible and able to adapt to the ever-changing situation.
- As the severity of the situation became more apparent, the County closed certain facilities to the public, with an emphasis on the Senior Center due to most of its patrons falling into the age-related high-risk category. County operations changed with the times, varying from complete closure of buildings and the Yorktown Beach to the cancellation of events. Over time and with guidance from state officials, certain events and facilities were able to be held or reopened, including the Yorktown Beach. Many of these programs are included later in this report as part of activities by individual departments/agencies.

Testing

For several months, testing facilities were extremely limited since test kits were in short supply across the nation. On the Peninsula, Sentara hospitals in Williamsburg and Hampton were the only places where residents could get tested for COVID-19. At that time, only those who were symptomatic were able to be tested. Eventually, as production of needed materials increased, testing became readily available at additional hospitals and out-patient clinics. Rapid tests were soon available at retail drug stores, but proved to be somewhat unreliable, sometimes resulting in false negative diagnoses.

COVID-19 Resurgence

By the summer of 2020, the County and region had moved into another phase of operations. However, in July, Hampton Roads was once again a hotspot of virus cases. Beginning with the Fourth of July holiday, infection rates in the Eastern Region skyrocketed and remained high throughout the month. On July 4, 2020, local news sources reported that more than 700 new coronavirus cases were reported overnight in Virginia.

Virginia Beach continued to have the highest number of cases in the region with 1,300 total cases and 30 deaths. That was the largest reported daily increase the city had seen.

Norfolk also saw its largest reported daily increase. By July 14, 2020, Virginia reported 972 new virus case and Newport News, Hampton, Chesapeake, and Virginia Beach had the most significant increases. New coronavirus cases brought the state's total to 71,642. These numbers were the fourth straight day of more than 800 positive tests, as Virginia's numbers started to trend upward. That week Virginia Beach saw its biggest increase in new cases, reporting 157 positive tests, with Newport News reporting 96, Chesapeake reporting 73, Hampton reporting 56, and James City County reporting 20. The following day, July 15, the state's infection count had increased another 801 positive tests, bringing the total to 72,443, with Portsmouth and Suffolk setting record highs. This was the fifth straight day of more than 800 positive tests, continuing Virginia's upward trend.

Health data available on July 27, 2020, showed test positivity rates in Virginia Beach, Chesapeake, Norfolk, Suffolk, Portsmouth, and Hampton ranged from 9.9% to 18.6%, while Williamsburg, Newport News, Poquoson, York and James City County experienced increased test positivity of 8.7%, compared to approximately 3.4% the previous month.

The resurgence in the Eastern Region prompted Virginia Governor Ralph Northam to respond with continued restrictions on local businesses. It was undetermined if the increase in cases was due to the virus spreading or an increase in testing.

In August and September, cases across the Commonwealth appeared to be receding; but by mid-October, the infection numbers were again showing an upward trajectory. An analysis by University of Virginia Biocomplexity Institute dated October 16, 2020, stated that if the trend continued, a peak in cases could occur the week before Thanksgiving. At the time, Virginia Beach had the most new cases for Hampton Roads. As the holiday season continued and families gathered together, the nation saw an increase, Virginia included. Experts anticipated an increase in positives, hospitalizations, and deaths. At the same time, the nation received positive reports of vaccine development.

County Employee Infections

Employees contracting the virus was inevitable and it was only a matter of time before infections were reported, especially once testing became readily available. The County's Department of Fire and Life Safety (FLS) had the most cases reported, although this could be attributed to the mandatory testing in that department.

As a natural and expected consequence, Fire and EMS personnel had a high potential of being exposed, through both their professional and personal lives. This was being seen in other EMS agencies as well as health care facilities. As a result, on June 10, 2020, 11 FLS personnel tested positive for COVID-19. This was not unexpected since cases had become prevalent in the community. As a matter of normal practice and with direct consultation from the VDH, the necessary precautions continued including the use of personal protective equipment and quarantine/isolation efforts. VDH was notified of each

COVID-19 positive individual in the community and conducted contact tracing as appropriate.

FLS continued following all appropriate recommended procedures when responding to emergencies, interacting with the public, and working in the fire stations. The department took proactive steps to conduct extra testing of department members. In addition, routine sanitization of all vehicles and equipment continued to be performed as it had since the beginning of the health emergency. Although the situation had affected some members of department, service to the community was not impacted. The Department's number one priority was to ensure the health and safety of the public and the personnel that served the community.

As time passed, more County employees tested positive for the virus. With social distancing and health measures in place and increased sanitization from the custodial contractor, the County government infection rate never required complete departmental shutdowns. The ability of many County employees to telework was potentially a contributing factor in reducing the spread of the virus among staff.

Vaccination Planning

On September 1, 2020, the County Administrator received Planning Guidance for COVID-19 Vaccination from the Virginia Department of Health.

Localities were instructed to prepare for three scenarios as vaccines became available. The scenarios were to be used by state and local jurisdictions to develop operational plans for early COVID-19 vaccine distribution and described potential COVID-19 vaccine requirements, early supply estimates after vaccine product approvals, and populations that may be recommended for vaccination during this early period. These scenarios were designed to support jurisdictional, federal, and partner planning, but were still considered hypothetical. The COVID-19 vaccine landscape was evolving and uncertain, and these scenarios changed as more information became available. Planners had to assume that by January 2021, significantly more COVID-19 vaccines would be available for distribution and plans would need to evolve to address additional vaccine availability.

Governance

COVID-19 Task Force

After the first reports of the virus appeared in the United States, the County Administrator established a COVID-19 Task Force, a non-emergency “think tank” with the mission of informing and advising the County Administrator and Extended Leadership Team. This task force included representatives from Fire & Life Safety,

Community Services, Public Affairs, County Attorney, Human Resources, Emergency Communications, Public Works, the School Division, and was chaired by the Library Director. The task force was charged with monitoring the spread of the disease and developing contingencies to address the impact of the virus on our community. The team continued to meet via teleconference and made recommendations to the County Administrator for several weeks during the early phase of the crisis.

The COVID-19 Task Force first met on February 28, 2020, where members received a presentation from the VDH Emergency Coordinator for Hampton & Peninsula Health Districts, which included the status of COVID-19 at the time and guidance on how to best prepare for the pandemic. Additional discussions that day involved the assessment of a possible epidemic in York County, potential impact on County operations, and the County's response.

One of first assignments for the COVID-19 Task Force was to draft questions and considerations that County Administration should consider while planning for the arrival of the impending virus. On March 6, 2020, the County's Extended Leadership Team was presented with the following key considerations: Personnel Policy, Public Information, Operations and Essential Services, Public Events and Interaction, Mitigation, and Financial Impacts.

With the virus passing easily among individuals, it was necessary to address employee travel as well as meetings and events. Two days before the emergency declaration, the Task Force drafted a memo to the County Administrator with recommendations for these activities that were arranged into four groups: Group A - Professional Conferences and Meetings Outside of Virginia, Group B - Conferences and Meetings within Virginia, Group C - County Organizational and Departmental Meetings, and Group D - County Sponsored Programs and Events.

State of Emergency Declaration

On Friday, March 13, 2020, the County Administrator convened the first Virtual Emergency Operations Center (VEOC) via the Zoom electronic meeting platform, a cloud-based video conferencing program. The VEOC consisted of Fire and Life Safety, Finance, the COVID-19 Task Force, Community Services, Public Works, and Human Resources. These virtual meetings would continue for several months and were held twice a week. During these briefings, participants were updated on the current local health situation, governance, and finances.

That same day, the local state of emergency was declared due to the public health threat associated with COVID-19 in response to the five confirmed virus cases in the Peninsula Health District. The declaration enabled the County to respond quickly and effectively

and was an accounting mechanism that allowed for reimbursement of virus-related expenditures.

To put the rapidly changing nature of the pandemic into perspective, in less than 48 hours, County Administration went from receiving a memo on recommendations for meetings and public gatherings to declaring a local state of emergency.

Additional changes to County operations immediately became effective:

- The Yorktown and Tabb Libraries were closed Saturday, March 14, 2020, through Tuesday, March 17, 2020.
- County Buildings were closed to the Public Monday, March 16, 2020, and Tuesday, March 17, 2020. All public spaces were thoroughly cleaned and staff planned for operational changes to allow for effective but limited public interaction upon reopening.
- Beginning Monday, March 16, 2020, the Senior Center of York closed for 30 days.
- York Hall opened for the March 17, 2020, Board of Supervisors Meeting with attendance limited to critical staff and members of the public with business before the Board.
- All County-funded overnight travel was suspended until April 30, 2020. Any County travel for the remainder of the fiscal year did not include non-refundable commitments.
- “Social distancing” was recommended for internal meetings and all non-urgent meetings, and gatherings were cancelled until the end of April. Retirement events were cancelled with the hope of inviting retirees back at a later date to recognize their service to the County.
- Human Resources training events scheduled for March and April were cancelled.
- Attendance at regional meetings or other external gatherings became optional.
- Human Resources began work on defining any specialized leave policies related to COVID-19.
- County offices were supplied with disinfectants and staff regularly sanitized desk surfaces, conference tables, countertops, and interior door handles.
- The use of public meeting spaces in County facilities was suspended through the end of April. In addition, tours of the 911 Center and Fire Stations ceased.
- Meetings of County boards and commissions were postponed, unless they were required by state code.

The following actions were also taken:

- Department Directors identified those employees who could work from home (telework). The Department of Information Technology assisted with the connectivity aspect of this effort. Telework would be instituted if it was evident that the virus had spread throughout the region and on the Peninsula.
- Public Affairs shared with citizens that they utilize the County website for the transaction of public business as much as possible.
- Staff were asked to consider the budget implications of the pandemic. The potential for a reduction of County revenue was significant; therefore, changes to departmental spending were necessary. The Finance team monitored the impact to revenue streams and made recommendations to County departments, as necessary.
- Personal travel was discouraged. Employees who chose to travel were asked to self-quarantine upon return, depending on the destination and mode of travel. Employees who elected to travel and were asked to self-quarantine were placed on leave without pay if their leave balances were depleted. However, health benefits were still available to these staff members while on leave without pay status.
- Employees were encouraged to wash hands frequently throughout the day and offices were provided with hand sanitizer to support personal hygiene.
- Employees were instructed to observe social distancing guidelines remaining at least six feet apart from others. Shaking hands and other forms of personal contact were discouraged.

On March 14, 2020, the Peninsula County Administrators and City Managers issued a joint press release urging residents to avoid gatherings of more than 50 people, including church services, civic/social organization meetings, and public events and festivities. Critical needs such as grocery shopping, fueling vehicles, and other essential tasks were permitted.

York County Administration closed buildings to the general public on March 16, 2020. Closures were in place through Friday, March 27, 2020, with employees reporting to work as usual. What was thought to be a temporary measure lasted until June, with many County offices offering services to citizens online and by scheduled appointments. Some County offices remained closed to the public until September, operating on an appointments-only basis until June 1, 2021.

Zoom Meetings

York County and the entire world was introduced to Zoom, a video communications application providing video conferencing through a cloud-based peer-to-peer software

platform. The County utilized Zoom for Board of Supervisors meetings and others.

Peninsula COVID-19 Operations Center

In early March, the Peninsula Health District and area localities established the Peninsula COVID-19 Operations Center (PECOC), a nerve center to efficiently respond to the rapidly spreading virus. The PECOC was an emergency response and coordination effort with staff from all Peninsula localities and VDH.

The PECOC was housed in the Newport News Emergency Operations Center and staffed by 30 representatives from Hampton, Newport News, James City County, Williamsburg, York, Poquoson, and VDH.



This regional COVID-19 response command center monitored the outbreak and smoothed the flow of information to regional public information officers who shared updates with the public for a more effective response. In particular, that meant reaching out to the hospital systems and creating a channel of communication to receive regular operations reports. The information was then put into context from the Peninsula Health District staff.

A key function of every emergency operations center, regardless of emergency event, is Public Inquiry, sometimes referred to as Rumor Control. In any emergency situation, controlling or correcting misinformation is a difficult challenge. During the pandemic, rumors regarding individuals contracting the virus ran headlong into the legal responsibility of keeping patient information private. That information vacuum led to members of the public to rely on hearsay. Correcting that misinformation was the task of the regional Public Information Officers and was greatly aided by the Peninsula Health District’s regional call center being located adjacent to the PECOC. The rapid sharing of repeated rumors or trends, ultimately reached the community through these communications measures.

Logistics and Supplies

COVID Logistics Team

York County Administration assembled a logistics team that continued to procure supplies, equipment and materials needed by employees to better navigate the work changing landscape due to the pandemic. The team included representatives from Fire & Life Safety, Public Works, and Finance – Purchasing. Some of the key items offered that

proved instrumental in the healthy continuation of services were sanitation stations, disposable masks, disinfecting solutions, and hand sanitizer. Requests were tracked using an asset management system, needed items were researched and purchased through one office, and supplies were inventoried and delivered to the County facilities. This team also ensured that contracted custodial services were able to continue operations.

Sanitizer Stations/Dispensers

Sanitizer dispensers were in high demand. Once supplies became available, dispensers were placed in each building. Early on, a joint effort between the Department of Public Works and the Division of Tourism Development allowed for the placement of three hand sanitizing stations in the Riverwalk Landing area. These stations offered four hand sanitizer dispensers on each station and were placed near the Freight Shed, restaurants, and parking garage and were appreciated by waterfront visitors.



Masks

As guidance from the CDC and VDH was received regarding the use of face coverings to combat the spread of the virus, these items were highly sought after. The logistics team located a vendor that could provide neoprene facemasks featuring the County logo. Unfortunately, the neoprene was not a comfortable material and many employees chose to wear a covering they either made or purchased from a local supplier. (Anyone who could sew a simple facemask became extremely popular and these entrepreneurs developed an inventory that could be found online and at area markets.) Shortly thereafter, the County's Purchasing Division identified a potential mask vendor called Ledbury, a men's clothing store in Richmond, which filled two orders of high quality cloth masks that were distributed to staff.

Planning and Development Customer Service Request Portal

In early May, contractors and citizens had access to a newly enhanced Customer Service Request Portal for use in scheduling building inspections and other service requests. The new system allowed builders and contractors to easily request an inspection, make online payments, and track the status of requests in real time. The portal also worked on mobile devices for use by individuals at building sites. The Customer Service Request Portal had been planned prior to the pandemic and was launched at the opportune time to address citizen needs without the need for direct in-person interaction.

Administrative Directives & Guidance from Human Resources

[Administrative Directive 20-76 Public Health Emergency Leave – Attachment 1](#)

On March 15, the Administration issued AD20-76 that described various types of leave available to employees during public health emergencies as defined by H.R. 6201, Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA), including, among others, public health emergency leave (also known as emergency paid sick leave) and paid emergency family leave. Additionally, the document described telework leave options during a public health emergency. The administrative directive addressed Public Health Emergency Paid Sick Leave, Emergency Family and Medical Leave Expansion, COVID-19 Leave, Leave Carryover for Alpha-designated (essential) employees, and Leave Payout for Alpha employees.

Guidance for Responding to Positive COVID-19 Test

In April, the Human Resources Director advised department directors and constitutional officers on the appropriate response to COVID-19 positive staff. In accordance with CDC guidelines, management informed employees of their possible exposure to the virus, but maintained confidentiality as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act. The COVID-19 positive employee was asked to identify the coworkers with whom they were in “close contact” during the prior two weeks to assist in determining potential exposure. (The CDC defined close contact as a person who had been within six feet of the infected employee for a prolonged period of time.) Those in close contact with the employee would be alerted as soon as possible and directed to see a physician. Third parties, such as contractors and vendors, would also be informed, if appropriate. Other staff were then notified of the positive result in the workplace.

Per the Virginia Department of Health, factors considered when defining close contact included proximity, the duration of exposure based on VDH recommendations, whether the individual was symptomatic, and whether the individual was wearing a face mask.

HR Guidance on Face Coverings

In response to the Governor’s Executive Order 63, Human Resources issued interim guidance to employees about face coverings - anyone who entered, exited, traveled through, and spent time inside County-owned buildings were instructed to cover their mouth and nose with a face covering; employees who worked alone in their offices were encouraged, but not required, to wear face coverings; once they left their personal office or work space, entered any space shared with another occupant, or visited a public areas, they were instructed to wear a face covering.

[Administrative Directive AD20-77 Telework and Alternate Worksites – Attachment 2](#)

In July, Human Resources drafted Administrative Directive AD20-77 Telework and Alternate Worksites. Since many employees teleworked on a regular basis as part of the “new normal,” the administrative directive guided the telework structure, providing

consistent application of telework practices across County departments ensuring the security of County information and systems; supported the County's Strategic Plan; reduced the environmental impact of commuting; and sustained the hiring and retention of a highly qualified workforce by enhancing work/life balance.

COVID-19 Job Safety Assessment and Infectious Disease Plan

By the end of July, Virginia Occupational Safety and Health (VOSH) Program Emergency Standards were implemented as part of the drafting of the County's Infectious Disease plan. As required by the VOSH, the County's Risk Manager sent all department directors information and COVID-19 Job Safety Assessment (JSA). The JSA evaluated each employee position in the following risk categories: Very High, High, Medium, or Lower. The evaluation was based on each employee's risk of exposure to a COVID-19 positive individual, not just exposure to the general public. The job safety assessment was done in preparation for the drafting of the Infectious Disease Plan.

[Administrative Directive 20-78 Infectious Disease Plan – Attachment 3](#)

In compliance with the Department of Labor and the Virginia Occupational Safety and Health's emergency standard, York County established Infectious Disease Plan AD20-78 in late September. Online training for employees was a required part of the plan. The Virginia Department of Labor and Industry (DOLI), at the direction of Virginia Governor Ralph Northam, developed and implemented the policies set forth in Virginia Code 16 VAC 25-220. This Emergency Temporary Standard for preventing COVID-19 was designed to prevent the spread of the virus and protect Virginia's workers. It also required localities to develop their own plans per state guidelines.

York County Administration was dedicated to ensuring that all of the County's employees remained fully protected and able to return to their homes and families at the conclusion of their shifts. This policy set forth the measures, assessments, and enforcement methods that the County would utilize to ensure the best possible outcome.

Board of Supervisors

Throughout the pandemic, County government continued to work and, like all branches of the organization, the Board of Supervisors adapted to new ways of conducting business.

On March 7, 2020, the Board of Supervisors convened its first of many meetings held during the pandemic. Walter Zaremba, District 1 Board member, and Thomas Shepperd, District 5 Board member, attended via telephone conference.

Board of Supervisors Emergency Action

On April 21, the Board of Supervisors had its first Zoom meeting and enacted several emergency ordinances that ensured the continuity of government and implemented certain temporary forms of tax relief.

[Continuity of Government Ordinance No. 20-11 – Attachment 4](#)

The Board adopted Emergency Ordinance No. 20-11, a continuity of government ordinance pursuant to the Code of Virginia Section 2.2-3708.2(a)(3)(b). Ordinance No. 20-11 allowed the County Board of Supervisors, the School Board, and other local boards and commissions, to hold meetings through electronic means without a quorum physically present, and suspended deadlines requiring action by the Board or other County boards, commissions or committees during the emergency, and allowed the postponement of non-emergency public hearings. The emergency ordinance was to remain in full force and effect for a period of 60 days, unless amended, rescinded or readopted by the Board following publication as required for ordinances generally. The continuity of government ordinance would not be effective for more than six months.

[Emergency Ordinance-York County Board of Equalization – Attachment 5](#)

The Board adopted Emergency Ordinance No. 20-12 that amended Section 21-18 of the York County Code relative to meetings of the Board of Equalization during times of a declared emergency or disaster. This ordinance allowed the Board of Equalization to extend the dates of its meetings beyond April 30 of each reassessment year in the event of a declaration of emergency.

[Emergency Ordinance – Temporary Forms of Tax Relief – Attachment 6](#)

The Board adopted Emergency Ordinance No. 20-13 implementing certain temporary forms of tax relief, including waivers of County credit card fees, reductions in penalties and interest for delinquent tax and utility bill payments, and a waiver of returned check fees on electronic payments in order to provide a measure of financial relief during the declared emergency and disaster related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

[Emergency Ordinance - Closing and Prohibiting Public Access – Attachment 7](#)

The Board adopted Emergency Ordinance No. 20-14 that ratified actions of the County Administrator in closing and prohibiting public access to certain parks and public areas during the declared emergency and disaster related to the COVID-19 pandemic. The ordinance ratified the administrative directives issued by the County Administrator pursuant to his authority under the County's Public Areas ordinance (Chapter 17 of the County Code) to issue rules and regulations relating to the use of the County's property.

Additional Action Taken by the Board of Supervisors

[Letter to Assistant Secretary of Aviation](#)

In March 2020, the federal government passed an economic stimulus bill known as the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security Act, also known as the CARES Act. Monetary assistance was provided to taxpayers, small businesses, corporations, state and local governments, and others. When the CARES Act money became available, a situation arose that could have potentially had a devastating effect on the Newport News/Williamsburg International Airport and thus transportation for the Peninsula. The U.S. Department of Transportation interpreted the CARES Act provision to mean that airlines serving Hampton Roads needed to fly out of only one of the region's two

commercial airports in order to be in compliance. That airport was Norfolk International Airport, which left Newport News/Williamsburg International Airport without funding assistance.

A letter was sent to the Assistant Secretary of Aviation on April 2, 2020 requesting the inclusion of the airport as a service point for the purposes of the CARES Act, illustrating the importance of the airport to the economy, citizens, and military installations. This outreach, along with others from local officials, may have helped secure \$4.1 million in CARES Act funding for the Newport News/Williamsburg International Airport.

Beaches and Parks

The late winter/early spring of 2020 was exceptionally mild. As a result, the public arrived *en masse* to the Yorktown Beach area in the early months. In response to the large number of people occupying the Yorktown Beach, the County Administrator closed the beach to swimming and sunbathing on March 24, 2020. This closure also included the National Park Service (NPS) Beach Picnic Area located at the end of Water Street as well as the NPS beach west of the Coleman Bridge. The Yorktown Beach and Riverwalk Landing walkway were open for pedestrians, but social distancing of six feet was required, with group sizes limited to no more than 10 people. The parking areas were closed on the Upper Level of the Riverwalk Landing Parking Terrace, NPS Beach Picnic Area, the Archer Cottage Lot, and York Hall. In addition, restroom facilities were closed at Yorktown Beach and the Riverwalk Landing Parking Terrace. The public restroom facilities adjacent to the Freight Shed remained open. These steps were taken to curb the spread of COVID-19 and to protect public health.

On April 1, 2020, County parks reopened following social distancing requirements as stated in Governor Northam's Stay at Home Order issued Monday, March 30, 2020. The order required individuals to maintain a distance of six feet at all times, permitted group sizes of no more than 10 people, and limited exercise at the parks to individuals not groups. The following restrictions were put into place for public health and safety: organized group practices were not permitted regardless of the number, all playgrounds and beaches were closed, the fishing pier at Yorktown Waterfront was closed, and all school fields were closed to the public. Throughout the pandemic, York County citizens seemed most frustrated by the closure of the beach and the park restrictions.

VPPSA Compost Facility

On April 3, 2020, to the surprise of citizens and the County government, the Virginia Peninsulas Public Service Authority (VPPSA) Compost Facility located at the Waste Management Center closed to the public. The timing could not have been worse, since the closure of many public areas had many residents choosing to work on improving their homes and yards. As a result of the VPPSA closure, citizens were unable to access the Compost Facility to purchase mulch materials or to drop-off vegetative debris. However,

the County's Public Works staff quickly moved to provide limited service to citizens and local contractors with essential yard waste disposal needs. Residents with yard debris were directed to an alternate location to drop off limbs, branches, and clear bags of yard waste. County staff transported the debris to the VPPSA Compost Facility, where it was composted or mulched. The facility reopened on May 4, 2020, with safety measures in place, including the use of credit cards and commercial account payments for the purchase of mulch or compost materials.

County Events: Impacts and Effects

To the disappointment of thousands of residents and visitors, many of the beloved County-sponsored events were cancelled or postponed.

On April 3, 2020, in accordance with the Governor's March 30, 2020 Temporary Stay at Home Order (EO-55), all County-sponsored special events scheduled at the waterfront in May were cancelled or postponed. The following information about a few of the events and the innovative ideas staff put into place in order to continue them provides insight into event management during the pandemic.

All waterfront **Yorktown Market Days** events were cancelled through May 30, 2020 including the Wellness Market. However, beginning April 25, 2020, Market Days was converted to a drive-thru model and held at the McReynolds Athletic Complex (MAC). The Drive-Thru Market Days operated from 8 to 11 a.m. and was for pick-up of preorders only. The market supported a cashless model, with payments made in advance directly to vendors through their websites, social media channels, and payment apps. All orders were prepackaged and ready for delivery through the driver-side window or were loaded into the back seat or trunk upon request. Market vendors and staff took proper safety precautions including vendor booths being set up 20 feet apart to maintain social distancing, vendors being encouraged to wear gloves and masks, and surfaces sanitized between purchases.



Yorktown Market Days participated in the USDA's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) as well as Virginia's Fresh Match Program, which gave qualifying customers one dollar for every dollar they spent on fruits and vegetables.

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The popular **Art at the River Juried Art Show** was cancelled and planned to return in 2021. Subsequently, in partnership with the Art at the River Committee, Tourism Development launched the Art at the River Virtual Art Show on Facebook, which included images of the artists' work as well as contact information for purchases. Twenty-

five of the thirty-nine artists chosen for the Art at the River Juried Art Show participated in the online event.

The **Fourth of July Parade and Fireworks** were cancelled. The health crisis and the severity of the financial impacts from the pandemic forced the County to continue making operational reductions for the remainder of FY20 and into the next fiscal year. This included the difficult decision to cancel the Fourth of July fireworks and parade. While public restrictions on large gatherings were relaxed before July 4, attendance would have exceeded recommendations and financial commitments needed for these events had to be made far in advance and constituted over \$100,000. Residents could “visit” from the comfort of their own home by tuning in to watch WYCG-TV (Cox 46, Verizon 38) Saturday, July 4, at 7 and 9 p.m. for a special highlight reel of prior Independence Day fireworks celebrations. The traditional Yorktown Bell Ringing Ceremony followed having been recorded for a virtual experience. This one-of-a-kind Independence Day program was produced by the York County Historical Museum and featured a recitation of the Declaration of Independence and Bell Ringing Ceremony with salutes from state and local elected officials, military leaders, and public safety representatives.

In late June, Parks and Recreation announced the **cancellation of summer camps**, including the Summer Fun Camp, Special Recreation Camp, Field Trip Fever, and Safety Town programs. The staff had been hard at work adapting these programs to meet the pandemic limitations and had hoped Virginia’s Phase 3 would accommodate them. Unfortunately, Phase Three guidelines were ordered to begin July 1, 2020, and the associated safety guidelines could not be achieved in these programs nor offer the high quality services to which citizen have grown accustomed and deserve.

The Yorktown Day Association canceled most of the traditional **Yorktown Day events**, ultimately holding invitation-only commemorations.

On July 16, 2020, County Administrator Neil Morgan, Director of Community Services Brian Fuller, and Mayor Wosnitza of Zweibrucken, Germany held a conference call concerning the planned visit from the Zweibrucken Delegation that was scheduled for the **Sister Cities visit**. Due to the uncertainty associated with COVID-19, the visit was cancelled with a new preliminary plan for the delegation to travel to Yorktown in October 2021, and York County’s full delegation visiting Zweibrucken in 2022.

Also in mid-July, the **Blues, Brews & BBQ Festival** was canceled due to several factors, the most important of them being public safety. The initial spring date had been rescheduled for August in hopes the pandemic would be under better control. Unfortunately, infection numbers reported by the VDH illustrated that this was not the case and the event was not held.

Three summer concerts, live-streamed on Facebook and YouTube, were announced on July 24, 2020 by the Tourism Development Office. Though most of the **Sounds of Summer Concert Series** had already been cancelled, these three performances were held Thursday nights on a closed set inside the Freight Shed. Viewers were invited to tune in at 7 p.m. to enjoy 90 minutes of music from some of our area’s most popular bands. The series was a collaborative effort between York County’s Tourism Development, WYCG-TV, and the Department of Information Technology. A local business, James River Audio Visual, was instrumental in making these events possible through their support and services.



During the pandemic, Tourism initiatives were significantly impacted due to the lack of funding through local taxes. On July 24, the Tourism Development Office announced that it was the recipient of a \$10,000 Recovery Grant awarded by the Virginia Tourism Corporation for destination-marketing organizations across the Commonwealth. The funding was used to increase awareness and visitation to our destination through the WanderLOVE campaign, which aimed to stimulate economic activity and travel “road trips” across the state.

Governor Northam’s Executive Orders

The executive orders of Governor Ralph Northam directed the closing of schools and imposed limitations to business operations, based on necessary public protective actions to safeguard the populace and stop the spread of the COVID-19 virus. Understandably, the effect on businesses was significant. Restaurants, hotels, and other local businesses lost revenue, and many were forced to close. In addition, the loss of tax revenue from these businesses had a negative impact on the County budget. The closure of public schools altered the performance of traditional learning, drastically impacting families and employers who had to make adjustments for child care and online school.

Effective March 12, 2020 – [Executive Order 51 – Attachment 8](#): Declaration of a State of Emergency due to the novel coronavirus COVID-19.

Effective March 23, 2020 - [Executive Order 53 – Attachment 9](#): Temporary restrictions on restaurants, recreational, entertainment, gatherings, non-essential retail businesses, and closures of K-12 schools.

Effective March 30, 2020 - [Executive Order 55 – Attachment 10](#): Expanded the closure of offices/facilities through June 10, 2020, unless amended or rescinded by a further executive order.

April 15, 2020: Governor extends Order 53 until May 8, 2020.

April 24, 2020: Governor Ralph Northam presented the “Forward Virginia” blueprint which would help guide the Commonwealth in safely easing public health restrictions. The blueprint included a phased approach that was grounded in the CDC guidelines and had specific goals to contain the spread of the virus through increased testing, personal protective equipment and supplies, and medical capacity.

May 4, 2020 - Governor extends Order 53 to May 14, 2020.

Effective May 8, 2020 - [Executive Order 61 – Attachment 11](#): Phase One of easing certain temporary restrictions. Amends Executive Order 55. Easing business restrictions.

May 26, 2020 - Governor amended Executive Order 51 and extended the State of Emergency due to COVID-19.

Effective May 29, 2020 - [Executive Order 63 – Attachment 12](#): Requirement to wear a face covering while inside buildings. The order mandated that all individuals age 10 and older should wear a face covering when inside public buildings. These included state and local government buildings and businesses. This order did cause some consternation with a few residents who visited County buildings, such as the Library and Treasurer’s office.

July 1, 2020 - [Executive Order 67 – Attachment 13](#) and Order of Public Health Emergency 7, which allowed Virginia to enter the third phase of the “Forward Virginia” Plan. Stores, restaurants and bars no longer had capacity limits, but social distancing of at least six feet was still required. In Phase Three, the size of public gatherings increased from 50 people to 250 people.

Effective July 31, 2020 - [Executive Order 68 – Attachment 14](#): Additional restrictions on the Eastern Region. This order was in response to an increase in infections in the Hampton Roads area.

September 10, 2020 - 3rd Amended Executive Order 67: Governor Ralph Northam announced that due to significantly improved health metrics in the Eastern Region, localities in Hampton Roads could now join the rest of the Commonwealth in Phase Three of the Forward Virginia plan to ease public health restrictions while mitigating the spread of COVID-19.

December 2020 – [Executive Order 72 – Attachment 15](#): Restrictions were implemented on restaurants, retail establishments, markets, fitness centers and many other facilities and localities’ events due to the rising number of COVID-19 in the Commonwealth. Caps were placed on capacity for indoor and outdoor establishments and events, as well as limitations on hours of operation and sale of alcoholic beverages. Over the next six months, certain portions of EO72 were modified or lifted based on how Virginia’s data was trending.

May 28, 2021 – [Executive Order 79 – Attachment 16](#): This order lifted most mitigation measures, including the elimination of social distancing and capacity restrictions in most situations, and the wearing of masks required by individuals who had not been vaccinated. At this point, operations were able to return to normal and County offices resumed normal business hours effective June 1, 2021. Although most offices had been open for some time, those that typically received significant visitation had been on a “by appointment only” basis, which ended at the start of June.

Finance

Financial Impact and Response

The fiscal prudence exercised by County Administration and the Board of Supervisors allowed the County to remain financially solvent despite anticipated shortfalls. Nonessential spending was halted and a hiring freeze imposed. By the end of July 2020, the administration was still fiscally cautious, but the hiring freeze was lifted. The immediate fiscal actions such as the hiring freeze, curbed expenditures, and staff retirements during the early parts of the pandemic helped York County weather the storm without tapping into reserve funds.

Because the financial and economic impacts of the Coronavirus were unpredictable and uncertain for governments, businesses and families, in March 2020 York County formed a team comprised of the offices of County Administration, Commissioner of the Revenue, Treasurer, and Finance, to increase tracking and analysis of the revenues and cash flows. The goal of the team was to monitor economic, financial and budgetary trends on a regular basis to reduce uncertainty and to provide enhanced information for decision-making as the County progressed through the stages of the crisis.

During the most unpredictable period of time for County revenues, March through June, a series of four monthly reports were prepared and provided to the Board of Supervisors in the Friday Board correspondence packets. As more financial and economic data points became known, displaying trend information through graphs communicated York’s story of revenue declines and higher unemployment rates more clearly than the written reports. The monthly reports were replaced with two Board presentations, one at the October 2020 meeting and the second at the Joint Board of Supervisors and School Board meeting in December 2020. These new graphs were used to display the negative impacts caused by the pandemic along with the recovery data points. One of the objectives of the graphs was to show the current year data crossing over the prior year data, triggering the end of the pandemic induced recession. As of this report, the County has not experienced full recovery.

Highlights of Monthly Reports

[April Report \(Revenue through March 2020\) – Attachment 17](#)

While the majority of the other governments were waiting for more clarity, York County proactively evaluated the certainty of the major revenue sources and projected the FY2020 anticipated revenue shortfall and re-forecasted the FY2021 budget in the early days of the pandemic. The report highlighted:

- \$4.2 million (3%) projected FY2020 General Fund revenue shortfall;
- \$7.1 million (4.7%) FY2021 General Fund budget reduction; and
- No federal or state relief was expected at this point.

Responses:

FY2020: Imposed an immediate hiring freeze for non-essential employees; slowed capital spending; and started tracking expenditures related to COVID-19 for potential reimbursement.

Expenditure reductions to offset FY2020 revenue shortfalls: Reversed the CIP transfer by \$3,675,000; salary savings and professional development savings \$215,000; machinery, equipment, furniture and supplies' savings \$110,000. Total = \$4,000,000.

FY2021 Proposed Budget was amended: On March 17, 2020, the County Administrator presented the FY2021 Proposed Budget, which did not include any reductions as a result of the nationally declared emergency on March 13, 2020. From the time the proposed budget was presented and the budget public hearing in April, the County Administrator asked all departments to submit plans for programmatic cuts of 10% to 30% in anticipation of more financial losses in local and state revenue.

All current CIP projects for FY2021-FY2026 were shifted out one year with both the County and Schools having only a \$1,000,000 contingency for essential projects. FY2021 included \$250,000 for grant-funded projects.

[May Report \(Revenue through April 2020\) – Attachment 18](#)

As this month's report was being finalized, the County received the first news that federal relief was on its way. The State Secretary of Finance, Aubrey L. Layne, Jr. provided the localities with allocation amounts for the Federal CARES Coronavirus Relief Funds (CRF). York's initial share of the \$3.1 billion allocation to the state was \$5,957,167.

Based on the state's memorandum, federal guidance indicated that the CRF funds could only be used for direct costs associated with the responses to the COVID-19 pandemic and could not be used to make up for revenue shortfalls. To date, no action has been taken by Congress to provide flexibility to use federal funds for revenue replacement.

May's projection fine-tuned the initial shortfall estimates from the prior month reducing the projected shortfalls by \$800,000 to \$3,400,000 for FY2020 and \$750,000 to \$6,350,000 for FY2021. April was an important month for revenue forecasting, bringing a clear focus to real estate and personal property tax amounts as the land book is completed and personal property values are finalized during the month. The Commissioner of the Revenue's Office completed the land book for real estate which included updated land use and tax relief credits.

Additionally, in April 2020 the Board of Supervisors authorized reducing the interest rate to 2% from 10% and reducing the penalty to 2% through September 30, 2020. The intent of these actions was to provide cash flow relief to the residents and businesses who may be economically impacted by the Coronavirus. At a later meeting, the Board extended the reduction in interest and penalty to the end of FY21.

As was anticipated in the previous month, lodging and meals taxes dropped significantly as people became aware of the dangers of the Coronavirus and the "stay at home" orders went into effect in March. Lodging taxes fell sharply by 64% as less visitors stayed in hotels. Meal taxes dropped by 26% as many restaurants were open initially with limited seating and later closed for seating, but remained open for pickup orders.

[June Report \(Revenue through May 2020\) – Attachment 19](#)

As the haze related to the unprecedented impacts of the Coronavirus on revenues began to clear for FY2020, the news this month was very positive. The County's overall revenue shortfall projections continued to trend downward with the shortfall currently estimated to be \$1,350,000 which is a \$2,050,000 reduction from the prior month. While this was certainly good news, when we consider that prior to the Coronavirus we were projecting a \$2 million gain, the County effectively was projected to lose \$3 million from the Coronavirus this year alone. The state had also been reporting favorable revenue trends and had dropped their initial shortfall estimates by 20% from \$1 billion to \$800 million. Overall, the infusion of federal dollars into the economy had lessened the overall negative impacts, placing funds in the hands of citizens and businesses. At this point, the FY2021 forecast from the prior month had not been recast as uncertainty related to FY2021 had not fundamentally changed over the past month. However, news that Busch Gardens and Water Country may continue to be closed well into the summer did suggest that the portion of our budget dependent on tourism would continue to be under a serious cloud going forward.

A new table was added summarizing with dollars and narrative descriptions the changes since the last month's report. The Coronavirus' impacts on various revenues is extremely dynamic which has required staff to speculate on consumer and business activities to prepare projections. This month's report focused on consumer tax impacts. May was an important month for revenue forecasting, as it provided our first glimpse into the consumer spending that occurred at the beginning of the crisis. Sales tax revenues lag two

months behind collections as the revenue passes through the state before being sent to the localities. In addition, in May we received information on April's meals and lodging taxes which are at high risk for reduced collections.

July Report (Revenue through June 2020) – Attachment 20

With an additional month of revenues posted, the news continued to be positive as compared to our initial estimate at the beginning of the pandemic. The estimated revenue shortfall held steady with last month's estimate at a shortfall of \$1,350,000 which was 68% less than our initial estimate of \$4,200,000. While there was very little information on which to base initial projections, interestingly the state's initial projection of a \$1 billion shortfall followed a similar path as their projected revenues were reported on July 9, 2020 as a \$236.5 million shortfall, which was a 74% reduction from earlier estimates.

The month's FY2020 estimate was preliminary and subject to change as there were two months of sales taxes to be received, one month of lodging and meals taxes to be received, receipt of late real estate and personal property taxes paid in July, and additional state revenues to be posted before the year was closed. We were still in uncharted territory in terms of sales, meals, and lodging taxes so those estimates were especially volatile.

While it was positive news that the Coronavirus impacts were not as bad as initially anticipated in FY2020, which protected our reserves as we entered FY2021, we continued to be cautious. We were still at the beginning of understanding the full impact of the Coronavirus on FY2021 and on our long-term financial and economic forecasts. Now that we have a few months of data, we were starting the process of developing some economic trend information that we believed would continue to inform us of the impacts to the various revenues as we progressed through the crisis into recovery.

One of the areas that we watched closely was the unemployment rate, as this factor was an indicator of the overall financial health of our community. York's unemployment rate decreased in May to 8.5% from the April high of 10.4%. This was a significant increase from our pre-Coronavirus level of 3.1% in March. In addition, our monthly consumer tax trends also provided insights into how our economy was reacting to the effects of the Coronavirus. Visuals were added to the report which showed the impacts in dollars and percentage changes for sales, tourism sales, meals and lodging taxes by month from the start of the pandemic. The most notable impacts were reflected in the meals and lodging tax graphs.

Highlights of Board Presentations

[Tracking York's Economic Trends through the Coronavirus into Recovery – Attachment 21](#)

Since there was essentially no economic model for pandemics, economic trend information was developed to provide insights as we continued to forecast FY2021's revenues and started to develop FY2022's budget. The presentations started by sharing the good news that the early estimated losses were less than our actual losses, primarily due to the infusion of federal funds to individuals, businesses and governments which shored up our economy. However the highest uncertainty was and still is: sales, historic triangle sales (SB942), and lodging and meals taxes. The presentation also expanded to include the impact not only on the General Fund, but also on the Tourism Fund.

Most Significant Revenues Impacted March - June		
General Fund :	DROP	
Lodging (40%)	(81%)	(\$490,000)
Meals (50%)	(36%)	(\$430,000)
Tourism Fund:		
Lodging (60%)	(81%)	(\$735,000)
\$2 Lodging Tax	(71%)	(\$310,000)
Public Works Enterprise Funds:		
Meals Taxes (50%)	(36%)	(\$430,000)

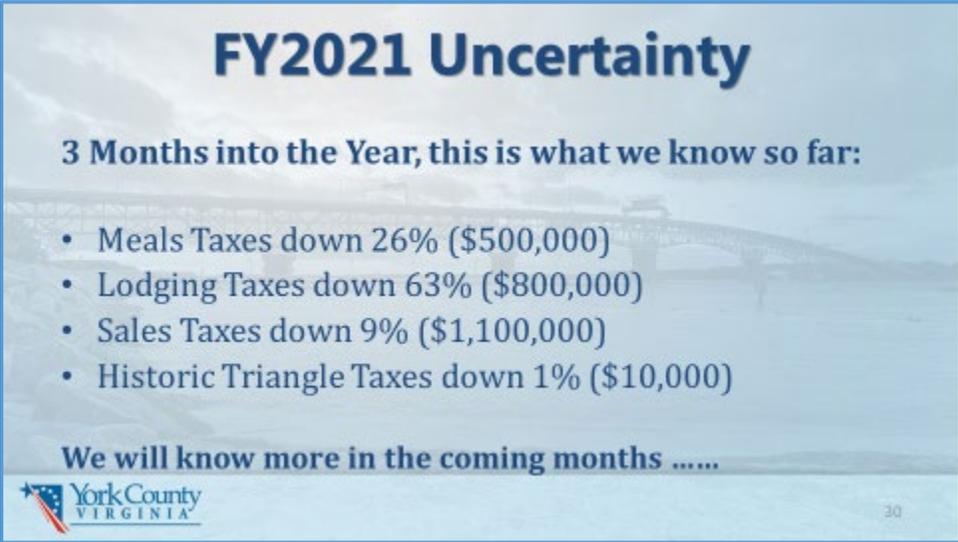
York County VIRGINIA

19

The percentage decreases are in red in the center column. Lodging taxes dropped 81% over the four months, but the impact was not only felt in the General Fund, it was even more dramatically felt in the Tourism Fund. With 40% of the revenues going to the General Fund, the revenues dropped almost \$500,000 while the Tourism Fund with 60% of the revenues dropped \$735,000. The Tourism Fund also received 100% of the \$2 lodging tax, so the \$1 million combined decrease experienced in the piro four months of the year wiped out the gains experienced earlier in the year. The \$1,000,000 loss was significant compared to the \$3.5 million Tourism Fund FY2020 budget. Fortunately, the Tourism Fund had reserve balances to fall back on and ended the year without using all of the reserves.

Anticipating that FY21 would be a challenging year for the Tourism Fund, staff approached management of this fund in two ways. First they carefully monitored revenue trend reductions forced by the COVID recession while holding down expenditures. To

ensure that the fund did not slip into a deficit, \$500,000 was earmarked as a carryover from FY2020's year-end surplus.

A presentation slide titled "FY2021 Uncertainty" with a background image of a bridge over water. The slide lists tax revenue decreases for the first three months of the year. At the bottom, it says "We will know more in the coming months" and includes the York County Virginia logo and the number 30.

FY2021 Uncertainty

3 Months into the Year, this is what we know so far:

- Meals Taxes down 26% (\$500,000)
- Lodging Taxes down 63% (\$800,000)
- Sales Taxes down 9% (\$1,100,000)
- Historic Triangle Taxes down 1% (\$10,000)

We will know more in the coming months

York County VIRGINIA 30

As staff monitored FY21's revenue and began developing the FY22 revenue forecast, the economy remained uncertain. With consumer revenues listed above already down \$2,400,000, staff anticipated reductions in revenues when FY21's budget was recalculated and subsequently approved by the Board. Very early in the pandemic the FY21 budget was dropped by \$7,100,000. With the advantage of having more information, staff knew that some revenues fared stronger than projected such as personal property taxes while others such as lodging taxes did not perform as well as hoped. However, staff believed the County was on target to meet FY21's budget without concerns, but the timing and extent of the recovery was unknown.

Economic Trend Graphs, December 2020

Graphs were developed to track the unemployment rates and the revenues most impacted by the Coronavirus. The graphs show the significant negative impact at the beginning of the crisis which was followed by months of steady recovery.

[Pandemic Revenue Impacts for FY 2021 and FY 2022, February 2021 – Attachment 22](#)

This presentation to the Board contained some positive information including a significant decline in the unemployment rate, which had reached 10.4% in April and dropped to 3.6% by November. Lodging taxes were beginning to rebound slightly, although they remained far below 2019 numbers. Meals taxes were still below 2019, but were beginning to approach those levels.

Coronavirus Impact on York's Budgets

FY2020	\$146,422,000
FY2021 Pre-Coronavirus	\$150,789,200 (+3%)
FY2021 Final	\$143,659,900 (-2%)
FY2022 Preliminary	\$150,801,000 (+5%)

FY2022 would effectively be a reset to FY2021's pre-coronavirus budget.



Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act Funding

On March 27, 2020, the President signed the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act of 2020. This Act provided funding for a number of different programs to address the COVID-19 pandemic.

The County was the recipient of various funding as a result of the passage of the CARES Act. The County was also eligible for FEMA assistance under the Stafford Act for qualified expenditures as a result of the pandemic.

A primary component of the CARES Act is \$150 billion in assistance to state, local, territorial, and tribal governments for the direct impact of the COVID-19 pandemic through the establishment of the Coronavirus Relief Fund (CRF).

The Commonwealth of Virginia received \$3.1 billion from the federal government in CRF funding. Of the \$3.1 billion, 45% of the state's allocation was based on the local populations of the cities and counties. Of that 45%, the state distributed one-half of the money to local governments based on population in June 2020 and the other half in August 2020

On May 12, 2020, the County was notified that it would receive funding from the Coronavirus Relief Fund (CRF), in the amount of \$5,957,167. This funding could be used

for necessary expenditures incurred due the public health emergency with respect to COVID-2019 and had to be expended by December 30, 2020.

On July 28, 2020, the County was notified that it would receive additional funding from the CRF in the amount of \$5,957,167.

In addition, the County received a number of smaller awards as part of the CARES Act. They include:

- \$68,555 from the Department of Elections that could be used towards any expenditures related to the protection of health and safety of poll workers, staff, and voters. The money could also be used for costs resulting from anticipated increased demand for absentee ballot by mail, equipment, and temporary staff.
- \$46,252 for the assistance to Firefighter Grant COVID-19 supplemental to be used for personal protective equipment.
- For the lost revenue associated with medical transport, the County received \$62,109.
- CDBG Grant of \$1,230,000 for assistance to small businesses from HUD. This was a regional program with Williamsburg and Poquoson.

County staff continued to track the costs and expenses that were reimbursable from FEMA as public assistance to the County under the Stafford Act. It was estimated those eligible reimbursable costs would be approximately \$150,000. Some examples of the costs included overtime, personal protective equipment, and supplies.

Because of the highly constrained time frame to commit most of these funds, the County Administrator requested the Board of Supervisors grant him the authority to award eligible expenditure contracts in excess of \$50,000 without advance Board approval if the delay would cause the spending requirement of the funding to be in jeopardy. The County Administrator communicated with the Board on any action that was taken in order to fulfill the requirement. There was still the possibility that the County would receive additional funding from the CARES Act that would need to be appropriated prior to December 30, 2020. Therefore, the County Administrator requested that the Board appropriate any additional Federal funds up to 1% of the adopted Fiscal Year 2021 Budget.

The following purchases were made by the County under this authorization:

Department	Amount	Vendor	Description
E911	\$165,865.00	Ergoflex Systems	Emergency Communication Center dispatch renovation

E911	\$144,707.96	Ergoflex Systems	Emergency Communication Center dispatch renovation
E911	\$165,794.00	Motorola Solutions	Emergency Communication Center dispatch renovation
E911	\$104,228.00	Motorola Solutions	Emergency Communication Center dispatch renovation
E911	\$54,400.00	Motorola Solutions	Emergency Communication Center dispatch renovation
F&L Safety	\$384,750.00	Air-Care, Inc.	Turn Out Gear
IT	\$200,000.00	Cable Associates	Dark Fiber Connectivity (E911 to York Library)
IT	\$64,292.40	E-Plus Technology	Fire Wall Upgrade
Schools	\$2,000,176.46	CDWG	School Technology
IT	\$80,360.00	Saitech, Inc.	Hard Drives-Storage Demands
IT	\$89,786.25	Digital Video Group, Inc	York Hall renovation
ECC	\$97,500.00	BFPE International	Fire Alarm Back Up
IT	\$65,930.00	Data Cloud Solutions	Real Estate Software

After the notification on May 12, 2020 of CRF funding, the Finance Director met with the County Administrator to develop a plan for the use of these funds. The County Administrator established broad categories of expenditures and initially allocated amounts to the categories. In addition, a committee was established made up of personnel that had the most knowledge in those categories. The committee included the Grants Coordinator, Finance Director, Deputy Public Works Director, Fire Chief, Information Technology Director, Emergency Communications Director, and the Major in the Sheriff's department.

Each department submitted requests and the committee reviewed those requests before making recommendations to the County Administrator for final approval.

Guidance and/or Frequently Asked Questions for CRF Funding from the US Treasury were issued or updated in 2020 on April 22, May 4, May 28, June 24, June 30, July 8, August 10, September 2, and October 19. Reporting and record keeping guidance and frequently asked questions were issued by Office of Inspector General on July 31, August 28, September 21, and November 25, all within calendar year 2020.

Guidance for use of fund for public safety salaries was not clear until September 2, 2020 when guidelines and frequently asked questions from US Treasury were issued followed on September 21, 2020 with information from the Office of Inspector General.

In addition to the guidance from the federal agencies, the County received deadlines and reporting requirements from the state, based on the requirements to the Federal Agencies. In most cases they came with very little lead time.

The Board was briefed on COVID-19 funding many times.

The first briefing to the Board was on June 2, 2020 and included the following:

Coronavirus Relief Funds - June 2020

State Received \$3.1 Billion

State Allocation Based on Population

– York’s share \$5,957,167

- Reimbursement of COVID-19 expenditures through December 2020.
- Did not fund revenue shortfalls.
- Funds were received upfront as opposed to being provided after expenditures.
- Unutilized funds were required to be returned.

York County’s CARES ACT funding totaled \$7.4 million.

- \$5.9 Million Coronavirus Relief Funds (CRF)
- \$1.5 Million Other

Use of Coronavirus Relief Funds \$5.9 million

Criteria:

The costs incurred were necessary expenditures due to COVID-19.

The expenditures were not accounted for in the budget approved as of March 27, 2020.

Expenses were incurred from March 1, 2020 through December 30, 2020.

Eligible Expenditures:

- Personal Protective Equipment
- Sanitizing Equipment & Supplies
- Protective Equipment
- IT Equipment & Infrastructure to support teleworking
- Economic Support expenses
- Distance Learning
- Enforcement and communication of Public Health orders
- Recovery planning
- Expenses reasonably necessary to the function of government that satisfy the Fund’s eligibility criteria

Ineligible Expenditures:

- Payroll or benefits for employees not substantially dedicated to responding to COVID-19
- Workforce bonuses
- Severance pay
- Revenue shortfall

Preliminary Allocation Plan CRF Funds:

Direct COVID-19 expenses and increased preparedness	
Building modifications	
County Technology	
Personal Protective equipment & supplies	
Sanitizing equipment & supplies	\$4,250,000
Support distance learning	1,000,000
Small Business grants	250,000
To be determined	<u>400,000</u>
Total	<u>\$5,900,000</u>

On August 18, 2020, an update on the spending and the second allocation of CRF Funds was reported to the Board and included actions necessary at an upcoming meeting. The following was reported to the board at that meeting:

CARES Act Funding - August, 2020

Second Allocation from the State:	<u>\$ 5,957,167</u>
Total Coronavirus Relief funds:	<u>\$11,914,334</u>

Expenditure plan as of August 2020

Public Health & Safety Employees	\$ 4,400,000
Operations of Government Services	2,791,950
Schools	2,000,000
Telework for Government Operations	1,225,300
Building Modifications	1,107,100
Small Business Assistance	250,000
Other	<u>140,000</u>
Total	<u>\$11,914,350</u>

Additional CARES Act funding included:

Head Start	\$ 102,820
Department of Elections	\$ 68,555
Firefighters Grant	\$ 54,000
Department of Justice	\$ 45,881

Other COVID-19 expenses included:

Credit card fees	\$ 250,000
Unemployment	\$ 150,000
Health insurance claims	\$ 250,000
Emergency assistance	\$ 20,000
School resource officers	\$ 115,000
Employee distance learning reimbursement	\$ 200,000
Williamsburg Regional Library	\$ 6,521

School Funds:

Approval of Establishment of New Technology Fund:

- Transferred \$1,000,000 of current year Schools Operating Fund Year-end Balance to the Technology Fund.
- Appropriated \$2,200,000 of Current Year Additional Impact Aid Funds to transfer to the newly established Technology Fund.
- Dis-appropriated \$1,200,000 from the Grafton Complex Budget with money from insurance proceeds.

A third briefing was made to the Board on November 17, 2020:

Public Safety salaries	\$ 4,965,334
School Division distance learning	2,000,000
Nonprofit distance learning and childcare	176,000
Employee distance learning	60,000
Hazard Pay	290,000
Emergency Communications Center call center renovation	785,000
Other Emergency Communication Center renovations	103,000
Fire department turnout gear, uniforms, & boots	444,000
Fire department technology & equipment	82,000
Courthouse reconfiguration	61,000
Ineligible FEMA PPE	150,000
Building modifications	47,000
Assessor remote technology	69,500
Information kiosks & pass system	62,000
Computer systems/teleworking	300,000
Dark Fiber	200,000
Other technology projects	500,000
York Hall modifications	90,000
Fire alarm	110,000
Badging system access	228,000
CCTV, camera enhancements access control	107,500
Transport vehicle	50,000

Public assistance-rent, utilities, etc.	40,000
Tourism expenses	107,000
Election expenses	100,000
Self-check out	30,000
Credit card fees	250,000
Unemployment costs	150,000
Business assistance grants	250,000
Other smaller projects	107,000
	<u>\$11,914,334</u>

County Employees-CARES Act and COVID-19 Support - either directly or indirectly from CFR funding:

Direct support for County staff fell into four categories.

- The first category was the most direct form of assistance and was an allocation of CARES Act funds for hazardous duty pay for all uniformed Sheriff’s Deputies and Fire & Life Safety personnel. The County Administrator authorized a gross payment of \$1,150 per uniformed employee totaling approximately \$300,000. These funds were paid to employees in October 2020.
- The second category was an opportunity for all "alpha employees" (those whose jobs required them to work and in some cases forfeit leave during the early stages of the pandemic) to sell one week of leave back to the County. This included a much larger percentage of the total workforce. The total cost was subject to the number of staff who chose the optional benefit and the salary of the particular individuals who participated. The estimated cost was \$200,000. An application process was completed in October with payments beginning in early December.
- The third benefit was a reimbursement program for County employees with children in school who were learning remotely due to school closures and distancing measures. This program was intended to provide a small level of assistance to many employees whose children's education required extra resources during the pandemic. Approximately 200 employees qualified for payments ranging from \$250 to \$500 depending on the number of children in the home. The cost of this program was approximately \$60,000.
- Finally, the County Administrator strengthened the County's Health Insurance Reserve Fund in the amount of \$3,000,000 with June 30, 2020 surplus, which sustained the health care benefit for all employees for calendar year 2021, as well as better positioned the County's Health Insurance Program in the long run.

Taking these programs together, approximately one third of the CARES Act funds were used to support the hard-working staff in a year in which there was no general salary increase due to the economic impact of the pandemic.

February 2021 Board Presentation: CARES Act Funding and Related Program Update – Attachment 23

Staff presented to the Board of Supervisors charts showing the use of the CARES Act funding including program description and the total cost of each item, including gear, technology and equipment for Fire & Life Safety, School Division distance learning costs, coverage of credit card fees for taxpayer assistance, and more. In addition, other funding sources were discussed such as the Housing and Urban Development Community Development Block Grant program with Poquoson and Williamsburg that provided assistance to small businesses, Head Start Funding, and Williamsburg Health Foundation monies to assist with citizen housing costs.

Additional CARES Act and Other Funding Sources

Funding Source	Amount
Housing and Urban Development-Community Development Block Grant (includes Williamsburg and Poquoson's portion)	\$1,230,000
Headstart Funding	102,820
Department of Elections	68,555
Assistance to Firefighters Grant-COVID 19 supplemental	46,250
Department of Justice-Coronavirus Emergency Supplemental Funding	45,880
Municipal Utility Relief Program	105,560
Williamsburg Health Foundation	<u>300,000</u>
Total	<u>\$1,899,065</u>

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Reopening/Recovery

Throughout reopening planning, the County Administrator continued to stress caution and for all departments to move slowly. There was great concern that a second wave outbreak would occur as confirmed virus cases continued to be reported across the country.

A July resurgence of the virus in the region caused delays in moving to Virginia's Phase Three. Each department was asked to draft its own reopening plan to be approved by County Administration prior to implementation.

Reopening Plan

On April 17, 2020, the COVID-19 Task Force submitted recommendations to the County Administrator on a three-phase approach to the reopening of County offices and resumption of services. Many of the elements from these recommendations were incorporated into the "York County, Virginia Concepts for COVID-19 Recovery" plan, consistent with federal and state guidelines, drafted by Fire Chief Stephen Kopczynski and submitted to County Administration a few days later.

During the first week of May, Riverwalk Landing restaurants began to reopen for takeout orders. York County Department of Community Services provided short term parking for restaurant customers on the lower level of the parking terrace. Parking attendants were on site to monitor activity as well as answer any visitor questions. The pickup parking was available daily from 12:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m. The upper level of the parking terrace remained closed.

Phase One

May 15, 2020

Yorktown beaches

Following the state and federal guidelines, Yorktown Beach remained closed due to its small size, which made required social distancing difficult, if not impossible. In addition to its small size, the Yorktown Beach was a popular spot among residents from neighboring jurisdictions, which, if it remained open, would mean increased chance for the virus to spread.

Waterfront Operations

During this initial phase, Riverwalk Landing piers were open for transient and recreational boaters, but were closed to the general public. The Yorktown Fishing Pier was open, but limited to no more than 10 people at a time and social distancing rules were required. The beach picnic area was open for passive recreation of groups no larger than 10, however the adjacent parking area remained closed. The grassy areas of Riverwalk Landing were open for passive recreation and social distancing with group size requirements.

May 18, 2020

Library Services

The Library reopened book drops at both Tabb and Yorktown Libraries for limited hours during the five day work week. Returned books were quarantined for three days before being checked-in, and no late fines were assessed. The library buildings remained closed to the public.

May 30, 2020

Yorktown beaches

The County Administrator announced the reopening of the Yorktown Beach on May 28, 2020, the same day Governor Northam announced that all Virginia beaches were allowed to reopen on Friday, May 29. However, restrictions still applied. Sunbathing, swimming, and recreation were permitted but groups larger than 10 were not allowed and social distancing was required. Group sports, tents, and alcohol were prohibited. County Administration encouraged beach-goers to visit during non-peak hours to avoid crowds. All public parking lots were open, including Riverwalk Landing Parking Terrace, Beach Picnic Area, and parking lots at York Hall, County Administration, York-Poquoson Courthouse, and Archer Cottage. Waterfront restroom facilities were open. Colorful signs were placed on the beach to remind visitors to follow safety measures to ensure the beach could remain open. Waterfront Ambassadors were on duty Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays to reinforce safety messaging, answer questions, direct visitors to amenities, and to ensure that the lower level of the Riverwalk Landing Parking Terrace remained available to restaurant and shop visitors.



June 1, 2020

Library Services

Curbside pickup of library books and materials began and was available Monday-Friday, 11:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. This provided patrons who needed access to physical library materials a safe and convenient way to borrow them.

Parks and Fields

County and School Division green areas were opened for recreation by groups of no more than 10, but not for organized sports. Basketball courts and playgrounds remained closed.

Phase Two

June 3, 2020

The Gallery at York Hall celebrated its grand re-opening with COVID-19 safety precautions in place.

June 5, 2020

Parks and Recreation

Playgrounds and basketball courts were opened. In addition, anticipating the implementation of Phase Three guidelines, registration opened for the Safety Town program, Summer Fun, Field Trip Fever, Tennis Camp for Youth, and Kayak Trips from New Quarter and Back Creek Parks. Unfortunately, when the guidelines were issued, staff determined that the programs could not be held. Refunds were issued to those who had registered for these programs.

Tourism

The Tourism Development Office worked closely with all community partners to promote re-openings and announce any modifications to operations. The Visit Yorktown website kept citizens and tourists updated on restaurants, stores, museums, and other attractions serving the public and level of capacity.

June 8, 2020

The Library began Virtual Summer Reading programs. Staff implemented the curbside distribution of prizes and activity kits. Finally, staff created a variety of video-based programs shared on the library's YouTube Channel. The Virginia Living Museum presented two Zoom-based programs on native animals to summer reading participants.

June 12, 2020

The Schooner Alliance returned to Riverwalk Landing Piers.

June 13, 2020

Market Days returned to Riverwalk Landing with vendors required to wear masks and distance themselves from other vendors and patrons.

June 15, 2020

The Yorktown Trolley returned to daily service after a COVID-related hiatus. Policies and procedures were implemented to ensure the safety of both passengers and drivers, including the requirement of face masks, limited access and egress to the rear doors of the trolley (to reduce passenger/driver contact), the installation of hand sanitizing stations, a reduction in capacity by 50%, and the posting of signage encouraging social distancing and adherence to these requirements. In addition, the County contracted with a company



to perform weekly electrostatic sanitizing of the interiors, which kept surfaces sanitized for seven days. The treatment reduced the hourly interruption in services that would have been required to have drivers manually sanitize those same high-touch areas. In an effort to reduce costs, equipment and materials were ordered to bring the weekly sanitizing of the trolleys in-house.

Phase Three

July 1, 2020

York County entered Phase Three and it did not look much different from Phase Two. During a June 26, 2020 meeting with staff, County Administrator Neil Morgan stressed caution and apprehension to opening buildings and providing services too soon since the virus was still present and cases were increasing around the County and state. The Finance Building remained closed to the public with the exception of the Treasurer's office. Public interaction with other County offices was by appointment only. However, the libraries planned to open to the public on July 7, 2020 with limited services.

July 2, 2020

Library Services

Library reopening scheduled for July 7, 2020 was postponed as a precautionary measure due to concerns over July 4th holiday travelers and an increase in virus infections across the County. Curbside service was expanded to Yorktown Library starting July 6, 2020.



Tourism

After evaluating Phase Three guidelines released by Governor Northam and as a precautionary measure, the difficult decision was made to further delay the start of the Sounds of Summer concert series in the interest of public safety. In addition, following discussions with the Episcopal Diocese, the Celebrate Yorktown Committee cancelled its 2020 August music series at Grace Church. The annual Virginia Symphony concert scheduled for Labor Day weekend was cancelled.

August 5, 2020

Libraries reopened to the public, though the planned reopening was delayed one day due to weather conditions caused by Tropical Storm Isaias. Patrons were required to wear a face covering or mask and practice social distancing while in the library. Book drops were open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. All returned items were quarantined for 72 hours.

September 8, 2020

County Offices

Parks & Recreation and Virginia Cooperative Extension offices, located in Washington Square Shopping Center, reopened to the public.

Senior Center of York

The Senior Center remained closed to daily activities. However, staff began holding programs with size and social distance requirements in place on a pre-register basis. The

return of programs, even on a limited enrollment basis, was a boost to the aging population.



September 25, 2020

The Rhythms on the Riverwalk Concerts began with 250 free tickets available for each performance and pre-registration required via the Visit Yorktown homepage. There was a minimum of two tickets per reservation with a maximum of four.

Attendees were required to remain in marked social circles within the concert area. These circles were available on a first come, first-served basis. Face masks were required for entry and exit to the concert area, but could be removed during the performance.

October 1, 2020

Remaining County office buildings reopened to the public, including County Administration, Finance, and Public Safety. Social Services, Commissioner of the Revenue, Public Works, and Planning remained closed to the general public, but appointments were scheduled on an individual basis.

December 2020

Holiday events were modified to meet restrictions as stated in the Governor's orders and guidelines provide by the CDC and VDH.

Successful vaccine development was announced.

January 2020

York County begins the process of vaccinating the staff and assists in registering the public for the vaccine.

Spring 2021

Staff assisted with the vaccination process by serving in an administrative capacity in clinics and training to deliver the vaccine shots. Through efforts of York County staff and VDH, 10,000 shots were given at the Senior Cener of York. In May, the clinic at the Senior Center was closed.



June 1, 2021

York County offices returned to normal operating hours.

School Division

View the complete School Division report [here](#) - Attachment 24

The activities of the School Division were greatly impacted by the closing order and continued online learning environment. The division began the year with the challenge of the fire that closed the Grafton School Complex necessitating the development of plans for educating those students in other facilities. The closing order eliminated the need for those plans. The March 13, 2020 closure of all schools was done to ensure teachers and staff had time to prepare learning plans for a possible extended closure.



On March 23, 2020, in response to the Governor’s Executive Order 53 that closed K-12 schools, the YCSD superintendent issued the following budgetary actions for FY20: Freeze all open positions with the exception of those essential to operations; freeze all overnight travel and conferences; freeze all non-essential spending for materials, supplies, equipment, and busses; freeze all large technology and textbook purchases; freeze all Purchasing Card charges for non-essential operations; freeze all CIP projects at the current level. Projects that were currently in design would be completed but would not advance to the A&E stage, projects under A&E would be completed but would not advance to the construction stage, and projects currently under construction would be completed.

YCSD Budget

During the first week of May 2020, YCSD Superintendent Dr. Victor Shandor, along with the Chief Financial Officer and Chief Operations Officer, had to make immediate adjustments to the FY2020 budget.

FY2020 YCSD Budget

There was an expected shortfall in sales tax and lottery revenue specifically in line item “Supplemental per Pupil (SPP) funding” by 30% for the remainder of FY20. In response, YCSD reduced the remaining sales tax revenue and lottery revenue (SPP) by \$2.7 million dollars giving YCSD a positive year-end fund balance.

YCSD implemented a blend of virtual and non-virtual Continuity of Learning Plans. The State Superintendent advised school divisions to be prepared to provide virtual instruction for summer school and that divisions should have plans in place to support synchronous virtual instruction during the 2020-2021 school year. At the time, YCSD did not have a 1:1 technology initiative and was challenged to provide synchronous and asynchronous virtual instruction.

The Chief Financial Operator identified a one-time funding source that allowed YCSD to take initial steps to purchase individual devices. This included transferring \$1 million dollars from the FY20 operating budget, captured from savings due to school closure, and transferring \$2.2 million dollars of excess Impact Aid revenue received in FY20 to a new technology reserve fund. The \$3.2 million dollars would be set aside for the payments on the lease purchase of the devices required to implement a 1:1 technology initiative.

YCSD Challenges

FY20 YCSD year-end challenges included: uncertainty with remaining state revenue; warning of lower Sales Tax and Lottery Revenues; needs for remediation and summer academy; continuity of instruction in a virtual environment; and initial implementation of 1:1 technology plan with one-time funds.

FY21 YCSD challenges included: local funding reduction of \$1.6 million – a portion of the County’s approximate 5% overall budget reduction made in response to the pandemic; state funding reduction of \$1.4 million; uncertainty of state and local economies; continuity of instruction in a virtual environment; uncertainty with student growth and staff attrition; and reductions in CIP funding.

2020-21 School Year

School Division staff continued to work through planning for the start of the 2020-21 school year, which included the acceptance of the division’s State required Health Plan allowing for the opening of buildings and campuses.

1:1 Technology Program

The County School Board and the York County Board of Supervisors approved funding to launch a 1:1 Technology Program for all students in grades K-12. Research demonstrated that when strategically integrated into daily instruction, technology was a proven tool that increased student engagement, promoted critical thinking, and extended learning beyond the classroom walls.

2020-21 School Year Planning

YCSD conducted stakeholder surveys to gather feedback on the reopening of schools, scheduled multiple focus groups, and held virtual public forums to receive public opinion.

Special School Board Meeting on Reopening - 2020-2021 Plan

On Thursday, July 23, 2020, Dr. Shandor and members of the division leadership team provided an overview of the 2020-21 School Year Planning Report. This was a comprehensive course of action to support student well-being and academic progress while protecting students and staff from the spread of COVID-19.

The plan included four instructional models that could be implemented during the school year. In addition, the division would provide a Virtual Academy for students in grades PreK-12 for families who preferred not to participate in the Flexible Framework.

The Flexible Framework would allow the division to move between models based on COVID-19 conditions in the County, as well as within individual schools. Additionally, other factors such as staffing, transportation, and student enrollment could also prompt the need to move between models.

Superintendent's Recommendation for Start of 2020-21 School Year

After careful consideration, Dr. Shandor recommended that YCSD begin the 2020-21 school year on September 8 in a Remote Learning Model for the first nine weeks.

Enrollment

The division's enrollment for the school year experienced a significant decrease of 836 students. Part of the loss of enrollment was credited to an increase of homeschooling by 248 students, with that number expected to increase. In addition, tracking the number of military students was difficult due to the impact aid survey not yet completed by the beginning of the school year. The loss of enrollment meant that the school division could lose up to \$4.3 million in funding.

Back to School

On September 23, 2020, the division completed the distribution of more than 8,500 devices to students. All families who indicated a need for a device through the Family Commitment Form received a notice of when they could pick up a device. Like many school divisions across Virginia, YCSD implemented the Canvas learning management system for virtual learning.

Part II: In Their Own Words

Departments/agencies were asked to submit a written response describing their experience with the COVID-19 crisis prior to the County reopening. These responses provide a snapshot of experiences and include highlights of those experiences. The complete submission from these departments/agencies can be found in the attachments and linked under each department/agency sub-head. It is important to note that many of the concerns or issues listed by several departments/agencies were resolved by the time this report was finalized. The majority of these reports include activities during calendar year 2020. Following 10 months of adjustments to life with COVID-19 in our midst, offices and employees settled into a routine and many hurdles had been overcome from an operational perspective.

Department of Community Services

View the complete Community Services report [here](#) – Attachment 25

Children & Family Services

In response to COVID-19, York County's Division of Children & Family Services implemented a number of strategies to continue to meet the needs of children, families, and staff. Strategies included:

- Utilizing Class Dojo to provide remote learning opportunities to children.
- Utilizing YouTube to deliver parenting curriculum materials to parents.
- Utilizing YouTube to provide Yoga sessions and training on health topics (e.g. handwashing, tooth brushing, etc.) for students.
- Utilizing Google Voice so that family service and education staff could complete weekly phone calls to families without giving families personal phone number.

Virginia Cooperative Extension

- The agency had to cancel all in-person meetings and events due to social distancing as well as the office being closed to the public.
- Employees were granted teleworking privileges and utilized remote access to their desktops.
- Soil test kits were available outside of the office door so citizens could still access them.
- Plant disease, insect, and identification questions had to be transferred to email with pictures for identification and responses.
- Master Gardner volunteers produced videos on how to grow vegetables at home. These were placed on the County website. Zoom sessions were completed on-line to continue education programs with the public.

Housing

- In an effort to continue to issue Housing Choice Vouchers, staff were able to work with VHDA to purchase the licensing rights to a HUD approved briefing video, which was placed on the website. Staff received approval to transition to a virtual briefing structure.
- A drop box was installed so that clients could drop off paperwork without having to pay for postage.
- Division staff loaded Housing Choice Voucher software onto personal computers.

Staff rotated days for easy access to their files and worked on items that could be done remotely on telework days.

Juvenile Services

Service delivery for Juvenile Services continued with only a few adjustments.

- Safety precautions were initiated for staff required to make home visits, as well as staff and residents at Crossroads Community Youth Home, when it was still in operation.
- In other programs, in-person visits were eliminated and staff moved to phone/email contact.

Parks and Recreation

The division's main goal was to offer public services and/or programs. COVID-19 had a tremendous impact on the division and required unprecedented decision-making on all fronts.

- Decisions were made on which facilities to close, which would have limited openings, and whether programs/rentals had to be cancelled in total or merely postponed.
- Full refunds were issued for programs and rentals that were cancelled, resulting in a significant loss in revenue to the division.
- Increased signage was placed at parks regarding guidelines and/or closings. Although parks remained open, certain operations were regularly re-evaluated based on the public's ability to follow guidelines or due to changes in the Governor's orders.

Economic Development

View the complete Information Technology report [here](#) – Attachment 26

From the beginning of the pandemic crisis, the Economic Development Authority and Office of Economic Development worked on mitigating the financial impact of COVID-19 on local business and the Riverwalk Landing tenants.

A COVID-19 Business Resource page was launched and businesses were encouraged to visit the site for helpful links and information.

Some of their activities included:

- Voted to forgive all rent for Riverwalk Landing tenants for April and May; approved additional funds for the E-Commerce Grant Program and modified the scope of the program to better respond to business needs;
- Approved a \$3,333 contribution to the VA 30 Day Fund to be used as local match seed funding for the Greater Williamsburg Small Business Disaster Relief Program.

- Riverwalk tenants were offered the option to defer all or a portion of their rent, for June, July, August, and September, 2020. The total amount of the deferred rent had to be paid back between July 1, 2021 and June 30, 2022.
- The Riverwalk Restaurant was offered additional leased space to establish outdoor dining.
- In late June 2020, the York County and the York County Economic Development Authority established the COVID-19 Business Recovery Assistance Grant by using \$250,000 in funds provided to the County under the federal government's CARES Act to help small businesses. This particular grant was unique in that it had to be awarded to for-profit businesses impacted by Executive Order 53 that employed no more than 250 full time equivalent (FTE) employees.
- In early July 2020, York County, in partnership with the cities of Williamsburg and Poquoson, applied for and received \$550,000 in funding from the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development (VDHCD) under the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program. This funding allowed the three partner localities to provide grants to help small businesses defray the costs of State-mandated requirements in the reopening process. The Housing and Neighborhood Revitalization Division of the Department of Community services worked with the York County Office of Economic Development on the submission of this regional economic development project to assist businesses affected by COVID-19. The application for this regional project was for CDBG funds in the amount of \$1,230,000 and no local funds were devoted to this grant.

Emergency Communications

View the complete Emergency Communications report [here](#) – Attachment 27

- Staffing levels were quickly examined to ensure an adequate number of 911 dispatchers was available for each shift, especially after several staff members becoming infected with COVID-19. A plan was developed that allowed for senior management and administrative staff to rotate working from home. Three-quarters of the staff were not able to work from home since they were 911 dispatchers and had to work at the call center. A multi-leveled on-call staff process was developed.
- Childcare needs were assessed for all staff and there was a daily situation bulletin, the COVID Memo, for the dissemination of information.
- The Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP) was revamped to include pandemics. A backup plan was developed with James City County, Hampton and Gloucester that allowed for consolidated services with minimal staffing if an outbreak occurred at any location.
- A process was also established to procure masks, hand sanitizers, and cleaning supplies not available to the general public.

- Access to the 911 Center was limited to only emergency personnel and no food delivery or outside food were permitted. Vendors also had access restrictions to the building.

Finance

View the complete Finance Department report [here](#) – Attachment 28

Critical functions were needed even with the closure of buildings. Employees and vendors needed to be paid, critical reporting deadlines had to be met, debt payments paid, mail delivered, budgets had to be prepared and adopted, and financial transactions needed to be recorded in order to provide the best information for management and the Board so that the best financial decisions could be made.

- The added financial recording and reporting of the costs associated with COVID-19 was also a challenge. While we had experience in dealing with hurricane disasters, this was uncharted territory and required various individuals within the department to learn rules in a very short period of time.
- The amount of legislation became a challenge to keep up with and to understand. Guidance was coming out frequently and keeping up with it was difficult.
- Office coverage in Finance was considered and included the following: Finance Director and Deputy Director rotated weeks in the office; Budget staff (two employees) remained in the office as a result of “budget season” and not having the capability to work from home; one payroll staff person remained; one Utility Billing staff person who did not have the capability to work from home; and two mail couriers rotated the delivery of mail on Monday, Wednesday and Friday.
- The use of Zoom for electronic meetings was an important tool in connecting with one another and continuing business as usual. At least weekly calls with division chiefs were established. Within the divisions, daily or weekly communication was made with employees’ supervisors.
- COVID-19 forced staff to reduce printing documents and saving them in file cabinets.

Fire & Life Safety

View the complete Fire & Life Safety report [here](#) – Attachment 29

- Due to the nature of their jobs, personnel continued to interact directly with the public and came into contact with COVID positive patients. The department did experience a challenge when several Fire/EMS staff tested positive for the virus and were required to quarantine.

- Supplies were limited and all County functions were searching for the same items and ultimately in competition with each other. York County formed a logistics team that included personnel from Fire & Life Safety. This team worked to meet the needs of the County offices and served as a central point of contact for supply orders.
- The department worked in coordination with other jurisdictions to form the Virginia Peninsula Covid-19 Operations Center, which was a regional task force formed to share resources and better manage the impact of the virus on the Peninsula.
- A regional effort was required to provide a smooth vaccination program to the citizens of the Virginia Peninsula. The department helped to form the Operation Vaccinate the Peninsula cooperative effort that worked in coordination with the other Peninsula Jurisdictions, regional Health Departments, three regional medical health centers including Riverside Hospital, and other local partners.
- As vaccines became available, staff worked to staff clinics and provided inoculations to the public.



Human Resources

View the complete Human Resources report [here](#) – Attachment 30

- The department was in the process of relocating from the Finance Building to County Administration. Due to the pandemic, however, the contract was delayed, which further challenged the plans. Once it was determined that the contractor could return and continue the renovation work, the project was back on track and staff successfully relocated to County Administration
- Staff members worked from home with staff using remote desktop and telephone software and the office was closed to the public

Information Technology (IT)

View the complete Information Technology report [here](#) – Attachment 31

COVID-19 required a drastic, immediate response to restructure the County’s Information Technology infrastructure and accessibility options for both citizens and employees. One of the first hurdles was to allow employees to work remotely to promote responsible social distancing, thus reducing the chances of COVID-19 quickly spreading through an office. IT rapidly deployed Avaya Equinox soft phones on work PCs at home and cell phones so staff could be reached at their normal office extension.

Additionally staff obtained 26 Zoom meeting licenses and, by the end of 2020, conducted about 1,500 Zoom meetings, totaling about 9,000 hours for over 13,000 participants. The use of technology for virtual meetings continued into 2021 accounting for thousands of hours more in online meetings.

Library Services

View the complete Library Services report [here](#) – Attachment 32

- Creation of a Digital Library Card, a contactless way to allow community members to gain access to the library’s online services and resources, proved to be a popular alternative to traditional in-person library browsing.
- In collaboration with Video Services, the Library staff developed a short series of library website/service tutorial videos for the County’s YouTube channel.
- Use of Facebook Live, Instagram, and YouTube to provide video-based programming was a helpful alternative to in-person programming. Examples of programs include Virtual Storytimes, Poetry Read-a-Louds, and Harry Potter chapter readings.
- The 2020 summer reading program was transformed into a primarily virtual experience through the use of the Beanstack platform and themed YouTube videos.
- Additional modifications included development of to-go craft and story-time kits in lieu of in-person programs for Summer Reading and beyond; installation of plastic shields at all service spots within both libraries; establishment of designated quarantine spot for library materials; placement of floor markers and signs to encourage social distancing; and periodic cleaning of surfaces and bathrooms by County-affiliated cleaning staff.

Planning & Development Services

View the complete Planning & Development Services report [here](#) – Attachment 33

- COVID-19 posed multiple challenges in this department. First was the inability to personally interact with customers including contractors, architects, engineers, developers and homeowners in order to advise them on submitting site or subdivision plans and the zoning implications of their proposals.
- Second, performing plan reviews without face-to-face meetings was a challenge.
- Third, the suspension of Pre-Application meetings with engineers and developers.
- Fourth, the difficulty in distribution of plans and compilation of comments due to closure of private offices and limited staff availability throughout the organization.

- Finally, the zoning inspections were curtailed to only non-contact inspections or time sensitive/pre-arranged inspections allowing the occupants of a property to vacate the dwelling so staff could enter.

Building Safety

- Challenges included the inability to personally interact with contractors, architects, engineers, developers, and homeowners. Performing the permit application process without face-to-face contact was problematic.
- Officers were closed to all walk-in traffic and individuals conducting business with Building Safety were instructed to place plans, applications, checks, etc. in the vestibule for collection once a day. Work was processed by phone or e-mail only with all members of the public. When complete and ready to be issued, approved plans and permits were placed in a different bin in the vestibule for collection.

Public Affairs

View the complete Public Affairs report [here](#) – Attachment 34

Working remotely and while practicing social distancing was a challenge for an office that is tasked with sharing resources to effectively communicate regularly with the public. The free-flow of information is key to successfully achieving communication goals. While continuing to perform job duties in various locations, staff worked to communicate electronically and by telephone/teleconference to ensure necessary materials were shared.

Citizen News

The quarterly newsletter's transitioned to an online-only version.

Press Releases

Several press releases were issued over the course of the pandemic event regarding the change in programs, services, and office status. The weekly status update – released on the final day of the work week – evolved into an electronic mailing called “Citizen News Weekly.”

Social Media

The first post regarding COVID-19 was made to the County's social media platforms on March 6, 2020. Over the course of the fiscal year, well over 100 posts were made. Of these, some were shared from other sites including the York County Public Library, York County Department of Fire & Life Safety, York-Poquoson Sheriff's Office, Peninsula Health District, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Website

Beginning Mid-March, the County website launched the Alert Center to notify visitors of our County Government's response to the COVID-19 crisis. A COVID-19 Resources page and a County Operations Update page were created and placed in the number one and two positions on the homepage showcase. Information on those pages was continuously updated throughout the weeks. All department and division home pages were updated with office closing information and a daily auditing of those pages continued to ensure that the latest information was shown. The homepage showcase incorporated individual newsworthy items in addition to COVID-19 related resources and operations updates.

Employee Connector

In early August, the Employee Connector for learning pods and remote learning was developed by Public Affairs and information was posted on the employee intranet. This was a volunteer resource to help employees with school-age children connect with each other and to explore opportunities for sharing the burdens of remote learning.

WYCG-TV

When it became clear that offices would be closed to the public beyond the initial two days for what would eventually become, as declared by the Governor, several months, the messaging on WYCG-TV and the Announcement channel reflected the changes.

A series of cancellation and postponement notices of programs, facilities, and events rolled out across the channels.

Like the rest of the organization, the TV staff practiced social distancing with two of three producers working from home.

Department of Public Works (DPW)

View the complete Public Works report [here](#) – Attachment 35

Utility Operations-Construction

- Staff implemented “split shifts” for each crew in order to keep employees separated.
- Communicating with homeowners, typically done face to face, was performed by telephone whenever possible.

Engineering

- Most staff worked from home due to the functions of their job allowing for remote login and operations.
- All operations and inspections staff were able to work out of their vehicles and at the job sites.

Facility Maintenance

Staff was split into two crews, with one crew working from 5 a.m. to 1 p.m. and the other from 1 p.m. to 9 p.m., allowing the division to make repairs/perform maintenance while the facilities were vacant with urgent items addressed during normal work hours as needed.

Vehicle Maintenance

- Vehicle Maintenance purchased several items to cover high touch areas: steering wheel covers, seat covers, and gear shift covers.
- Staff wiped down high contact points when vehicles arrived for service and also as they were released back to the office/department/agency.
-
- A wireless doorbell was installed for quick and safe staff response to internal customers that needed assistance.
- Technicians and office staff were allowed to work a two shift, multi-day schedule, reducing the amount of staff in the building two days of the week. Support staff were allowed to telework as much as possible.

Waste Management

- In order comply with social distancing orders and minimize risk, the number of staff in the office was reduced to one in the office and two working from home.
- Due to COVID-19, the VPPSA Composting Facility, located adjacent to the Waste Management Center, closed to the general public. The County staff stepped in to accept yard debris deliveries from residents and non-credit commercial account VPPSA customers.

Grounds and Stormwater Operations

- Due to the nature of the work of this County function, social distancing challenges were faced from the onset. To help alleviate some social distancing challenges, crew start times were staggered. Crews were limited to no more than two employees per vehicle.

Mosquito Control

- Separation was the most important effort. However, due to the type of work involved, which was typically weather dependent, better planning would have allowed for employees working from home or staggered shifts depending on weather forecast.

Tourism Development

View the complete Tourism Development report [here](#) – Attachment 36

COVID-19 had a profound impact on the tourism industry and a major impact on operations and events. These difficult financial times included loss of lodging revenue that assisted in funding marketing efforts for Yorktown. Tourism Development was forced to cancel events and delay operations of the trolley service, pier openings, and rental of the events venue on the waterfront.

- Tourism worked to adapt to the new way of working remotely and introduced new ways to serve the community during this time.
- Since the pandemic began, staff maintained a COVID-19 web page with business updates and worked closely with their partners and businesses.
- Tourism Development joined in the Virginia Tourism Corporation’s state-wide “We’ll Be Waiting” campaign. The goal was to meet travelers where they were mentally, physically, and psychologically during the crisis by utilizing beautiful scenic images unique to each destination – with the tagline “We’ll be waiting for you.” It provided a sense of calm and comfort in the midst of uncertainty and reminded visitors of the experiences that make the Historic Yorktown community so great.
- Tourism Development joined the U.S. Travel Association’s National Travel & Tourism Week social media campaign in celebrating the spirit of travel. All social posts tied in to themes of the day to shine the light on things to do Yorktown.

York-Poquoson Courts

View the complete Courts report [here](#) – Attachment 37

- The Clerk of the Circuit Court’s office closed to the public and no appointments were taken. However, the office continued to transact business, Monday through Thursday from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., and Fridays from 8 a.m. to 12 p.m.
- The Clerk of the Circuit Court made a drop box available at the Courthouse for individuals who wished to submit Criminal Filings, Civil Filings, Land Recordings, payments, and any other correspondence. Citizens were encouraged to utilize the online services.

York-Poquoson Sheriff’s Office

View the complete Sheriff’s Office report [here](#) – Attachment 38

The Sheriff's Office had to make operational changes due to the pandemic.

- The dangers associated with the office's public interaction caused Sheriff's Office personnel to conduct business in a more impersonal manner so that their safety and the safety of the citizens was enhanced.
- The Sheriff's Office issued PPE to all personnel and conducted numerous training sessions on how to use the equipment.
- New directives were issued reducing interpersonal contact with citizens, taking lower offense crime reports via telephone and creating an online form for citizens to report those types of crimes.
- The office initiated cleansing policies for vehicles and equipment when the situation warranted that staff had to take someone into custody and transport them in vehicles.

York-Poquoson Social Services

View the complete Social Services report [here](#) – Attachment 39

Much of the department's work related to approving financial assistance, providing child welfare services, and providing services to vulnerable adults, involved client contact and face-to-face interviews. Shifting to virtual work, telephone and on-line contacts was a major change to business practices. Adding to the challenge was the difficulty in getting VPN access to Virginia Social Services Systems.

- A second challenge was providing enough work for child welfare and adult services staff. Many child welfare referrals come from the schools, and most adult protective services referrals come from the community.
- Acquiring Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) was challenging. Supplies of shoe covers, gowns, and face masks dwindled four weeks after PPE was required of Child Protection and Adult Protection staff.
- A drop box was installed at the building's entrance for clients to submit applications and verifications.
- Staff increased skill level in processing on-line and telephonic applications.
- Child Welfare and Adult Services staff developed mechanisms and techniques for virtual interviewing and utilized Zoom and other conferencing tools for internal staff meetings.
- A locked box was placed in the lobby for customers to pick up gas cards to assist them with getting back and forth to their jobs.

Vaccines & Conclusion

While the public was actively participating in minimizing the spread of COVID-19 – through the wearing of face masks, maintaining at least six feet of distance between themselves and others, using hand sanitizer and frequently washing hands, working from home and staying home if exposed to the virus, etc. – the White House announced Operation Warp Speed. The program was initially funded with \$10 billion (increased later that year to \$18 billion) for the research and development of vaccine candidates from several different pharmaceutical laboratories. Then, in June 2020, the FDA announced that a vaccine would need to be at least 50 percent effective for reducing the severity of COVID-19 symptoms for the vaccine candidate to obtain approval. The race was on! But it was boosted by the fact that, as soon as COVID-19 emerged, laboratories were already working on potential vaccines and had been studying this type of virus in its earlier iterations.

Although the overall pace of vaccine development was the fastest in history, information emerging from laboratories was slow to arrive and, when it did, revealed the potential challenges to vaccination, including: cold storage, number and frequency of doses required, as well as acquisition of needles, syringes, gloves, etc. Attempting to anticipate delivery of a vaccine, supply needs, as well as the distribution of a vaccine was a challenge.

Informing and educating the public was understood to be paramount, especially with the politicization of not only the vaccine, but of the virus itself. Although no one can plan when a pandemic may strike, having such a catastrophic event occur during a presidential election year brought about a new set of challenges, which continued into the new White House administration in 2021 with some basing their vaccine confidence on the rhetoric of the prior year's election.

After several months, two positive vaccine candidates emerged – Pfizer followed by Moderna – while other laboratories continued to work on development. The White House, upon receipt of the two vaccines' emergency FDA approval, left the administration of the program to the state governments, very few of whom were prepared to distribute the vaccine, as many had believed the federal government would provide the nation with a vaccination plan. In Virginia, inoculations began in late December 2020, with health care workers and residents of long-term care facilities receiving the first doses, including several of York County's public safety employees. However, vaccine supply was extremely limited and continued to be a supply issue for many weeks. As the vaccine rollout commenced, those over age 75 and individuals 16-74 with high-risk medical conditions and other essential workers were next on the list for vaccinations.

County management and involved staff were under the impression during much of 2020 that its role in vaccinations would be limited to organizing opportunities for its own staff to get vaccinated under state run programs and general national government guidance. By the Christmas 2020 holiday period, it became evident that an efficient mass vaccination on the Virginia Peninsula would require a much larger role by its local governments.

York County Administrator Neil Morgan, along with the other Chief Administrative Officers of the Virginia Peninsula localities, began meeting weekly with the representatives of the Health Department. It was clear that local health officials did not have the information, the authority, the staff capacity, or the logistical experience to develop a mass vaccination program without local government resources.

Beginning in early January until the end of May, the Virginia Peninsula evolved an incident command structure to get as many residents vaccinated as quickly as possible. York County played an important role in this undertaking providing staff in support of these clinics, serving in the various planning groups, and identifying issues needing resolution such as access for homebound seniors, assistance with the registration process, taking Department of Defense vaccinations into account, and strategies to increase vaccine efficiency.

The command and control of the Peninsula-wide vaccine effort changed over time as experience, information, and vaccine supply improved. York County leadership contributed to understanding in January that the newly available vaccine could not all be used for intended primary groups (people over 65) because there was no functioning registration system. Command and control methods were used to bring public school and local government employees to these early clinics in January. With vaccination efforts slowed by the registration program, and the prospect of not getting more doses if the available supply was not used in a timely manner, the decision was made to vaccinate the groups that could be easily located and rescheduled for their second shots. In this way, too, staff would be inoculated and able to assist with the vaccination process.

By February, registration processes and clinic logistics made it more practical to reach targeted groups. A new challenge emerged which was that the high capacity clinics we had learned to create did not have sufficient vaccine to meet demand. In addition, the registration program did not provide for scheduling of actual inoculation appointments due to the low vaccine supply. This led to frustrations among members of the public – who were understandably frightening and anxious – and further resulted in citizens reaching out to their respective local governing bodies and staff requesting assistance.

York County, along with our neighboring jurisdictions, established a phone-in helpline where citizens could receive answers to frequently asked questions and also for help with

registration. In its initial stages, the registration program required an email address as a point of contact for registrants, which was a challenge for the elder demographic, many of whom did not use computers and email on a regular basis, if at all.

As the vaccine supply increased, the Governor issued an executive order allowing for EMS providers to be trained to deliver the shots. These additional personnel enabled the clinics to proceed in a faster manner and the general public to receive their vaccinations. Clinics were set up in strategic areas to serve the population: York County and Newport News at Christopher Newport University's Freeman Center, Williamsburg and James City County at the Colonial Williamsburg Visitor Center, and Hampton and Poquoson at the Hampton Convention Center. These large-scale clinics supported the activities that were underway at smaller clinics such as at the Senior Center of York.

By April, the Peninsula Vaccine Management System had been reimagined once again to include the three major hospital systems as well as health department and local government participants. The Riverside Healthcare System deserves specific recognition for the resources it made available to support the entire effort. Specifically, Riverside provided some of its vaccine allocation for school and local government personnel and contributed Pharmacy, IT, Emergency Planning, and Logistics experts to the vaccine project that became known as Operation Vaccinate the Peninsula, which was an incident command structure to help manage the vaccination program and was a tremendous success. State officials, most especially the Secretary of Health and Human Services Dr. Dan Carey, should also be acknowledged for their flexibility in accommodating some of the Peninsula's special challenges.

Also during this time, local pharmacies became points of vaccination and many members of the public turned to their neighborhood drugstore to receive their shots, just as they often do for the seasonal flu vaccine. While this did cause some confusion with individuals registering and scheduling a vaccination with a pharmacy while remaining on the VDH registration list, the situation was eventually resolved with leadership pleased to have shots in arms, regardless of where they were provided.

By May of 2021, it is estimated that 70 percent of York County residents (including active duty military dependents and retirees) had been vaccinated. As vaccine supply and demand came into balance, the regional effort shifted toward pop-up clinics, plans for school children over the age of 12, and preliminary ideas in anticipation of the need for fall 2021 booster shots. The larger clinics began phase-down with the widespread availability at pharmacies and doctors' offices. Also, in May the clinics at Colonial Williamsburg and the Senior Center closed.

While much of the vaccine story is one of York County's role in a larger regional effort, the time, attention, and resources of York County required to support the vaccination program cannot be overstated. The County had approximately 50 paramedics working

overtime at three different clinics in York, Newport News, and Williamsburg. A similar number of staff supported the clinics as registrars and assistants. The County's Senior Center was largely dedicated to the effort for five months at which just over 10,000 residents received vaccinations. Ten members of the senior staff served as part of the Operation Vaccinate the Peninsula Incident Command for several months while still performing their regular job duties. Most of the effort occurred with the impediments of COVID-19 health restrictions still in place.

By the summer of 2021, it appeared that a 16 month ordeal for the County and the country was beginning to come to an end. The governance of the County, its finances, and the health of its citizens and employees had been the central focus of County government for about 16 months. Every County employee worked tirelessly to maximize outstanding communications and customer service throughout the pandemic, and also to maintain as much "normalcy" as possible during these extraordinary times. This pandemic was unlike any local government emergency experience in living memory. Throughout the situation, we adapted, adopted, evolved, and pivoted to provide whatever services were needed on any given day. Everyone hopes that no additional chapters will have to be written about York's COVID-19 experience and, while we pray that it will be a very long time before the County again endures anything like the COVID-19 pandemic, perhaps this report will prove useful when the time comes.