



City of Petersburg

Office of the City Manager
135 North Union Street
Petersburg, Virginia 23803

(804) 733-2301
Fax 732-9212
TDD 733-8003

March 18, 2020

Dear City of Petersburg Local Business Leaders,

As we continue to grapple with the impact of the coronavirus pandemic on our communities, I want to provide you with an update on the ways that the City of Petersburg is working to support you during this unprecedented time. Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses known to cause sickness ranging from the common cold to more severe diseases such as Severe Acute Respiratory syndrome (SARS) and Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS). However, COVID-19 is a new strain of the coronavirus that has not been previously identified in humans. Since December 2019, cases have been identified in a growing number of countries.

Over the past week, both the President and Governor have declared a State of Emergency. As the Director of Emergency Management, I have also declared a local state of emergency. Working collaboratively between our local elected officials and City staff we continue to work with an ever-changing crisis. As of today, Virginia has 77 Confirmed Cases with 10 in the Central Virginia Region. As this time, we have no confirmed Cases in Petersburg or the Crater Health District.

On Monday, we closed our City government offices and operated with essential personnel only. During this time, we determined it was best to move the City to limited operations through March 30th. All Public Facilities will be closed to the Public with few facilities providing limited access. We have also adjusted our hours of operation to 9:30 am - 3:30 pm. These limited work hours will not apply to our Public Safety functions.

We are working to reduce the risk of community spread and one area of vulnerability is the handling of cash. Therefore, effective today, Wednesday, March 18, 2020 the Office of Billing and Collections will no longer accept cash payments. For individuals with cash, they will be directed to a local bank or post office for a money order for payments. As you can imagine, this will represent a great challenge to our residents, but we must place the safety of our employees above convenience.

As for our business community, Gov. Ralph Northam's administration issued an emergency order yesterday allowing law enforcement agencies to enforce the ban on gatherings of 10 or more patrons in restaurants, bars, gyms, and theaters. The Health Department will manage the enforcement efforts.

The City of Petersburg has set-up a full web page solely dedicated to Coronavirus Updates. It can be accessed by visiting www.petersburgva.gov. To assist you during this time we would

like to add your business to our newly established page featuring how you will function and if you are providing takeout or delivery services to our residents. We would also like to document if you are closing or reducing your hours of operations. Please respond to city.manager@petersburg-va.org with any information you would like included on this site. The City has an emergency phone line for people to call and hear recorded updates. That number is 804-203-5007.

Finally, if you are not already, I encourage you to sign up for the Petersburg Emergency Alert system. This system is a major platform the City uses to communicate in times of emergency. Link to sign up: <http://petersburgva.gov/list.aspx>

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Aretha R. Ferrell-Benavides".

Aretha R. Ferrell-Benavides
City Manager