

A March like no other.

This has been one of the most challenging times of our lives as we go through many changes that are new to everyone. I want to start off by saying how impressed I have been with local leadership at all levels from city, to schools, to county, and to the state level. With this being a very fluid situation, information and procedures are changing daily. For this very reason, leaders from every level are working around the clock to provide everyone with as much guidance and accurate information as possible.

So how are we managing this at a City level? As Mayor, I am part of a situational meeting (via phone) daily with everyone on the county level including health organizations, schools, emergency management, county and city officials. The goal is to centralize information that is being passed along to the public. We have also formulated a city response group including department directors, the city admin, the fire chief, two council members and myself, all of whom that met this week. We will continue to meet, as needed (remotely if necessary), to help direct the city during this time. Staff is also communicating daily with a variety of sources to make sure any prevalent information is shared to residents.

How is Ely getting this information to you? The main sources include our website and social media platforms. If the information warrants the city will use news media and our direct-texting services which you can sign up for by simply texting "52227" to "888777". The previously mentioned level of communication will only be used if the content goes beyond that of which is being shared by the county, state and federal levels. An example of this level of communication is an announcement that City Hall and the Library are currently closed to foot traffic.

What if I have questions? City staff is available remotely from 8am-5pm, M-F. You can call City Hall, email staff, or message them through the City's FB page. All of that information is located on the city website which you can view by clicking [HERE](#).

How will this affect City meetings? Most non-essential meetings are being canceled or postponed at this time. City staff is working on plans for the next council meeting if the 10-person rule is still in effect. This most likely would include some form of online viewing for the residents. More details on that will be available soon.

How can you help? If you are looking for ways to volunteer I would recommend visiting the United Way of East Center Iowa site [HERE](#). There is also information on how residents can safely donate blood which is greatly needed at this time due to many blood drive events being canceled. Donated blood is a critical tool for hospitals in the fight against this public health pandemic. Most of all, please practice Social Distancing and other simple measures to help reduce the spread of the virus. There is a great resource related to what each individual can do from the World Health Organization, click [HERE](#).

I also want to catch you up on some highlights from this month's council meeting. If you have any questions on these items feel free to reach out to a council member, staff or myself.

1) Council approved a contract with Verizon. This is the next step to installing a cell tower on the same property as the water tower. I know a lot of Verizon subscribers are excited for this!

2) Mr. Novak provided a letter to council withdrawing his offer to move the house on 1600 Rowley which council accepted. Discussion then moved to have the City work with the fire department to use the house for training purposes. Details will be worked through at the next council meeting.

3) A public hearing was held on the FY 20/21 Budget. With no comments from the community council moved to approve the budget which will reduce the tax levy \$0.02 from \$10.81 to \$10.79 next fiscal year.

4) In February's council meeting residents raised concerns about the vicious animal ordinance. Council directed staff to review the current ordinance and give recommendations. Staff, along with a small committee consisting of two council members, worked through the recommendations. At the March meeting the committee presented ideas to move away from breed-specific language and bolster the ordinance to put more responsibility on ownership including language for specific penalties. Council directed staff to put together a draft ordinance for review at the next council meeting. Any changes to this ordinance will have to go through three readings before it is approved giving the public time to review, and comment, on the changes as well.

Thanks for taking the time to be informed. Once again this is a very fluid situation when it comes to information. We are doing our best to keep residents informed. As always, please contact staff, council members or myself with any questions.

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In closing, remember to support local businesses, take care of yourself and your family, and be safe!

Eldy Miller

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