

M E M O



TO: Commissioners
FROM: Robert W. Wilson
DATE: July 2, 2020
SUBJECT: COVID-19 Update

**County
Administrator**

Robert W. Wilson
701-241-5770
wilsonro@casscountynynd.gov

The County's response to COVID-19 continues to evolve as conditions warrant. Originally, we planned to drop the 'by appointment only' status for entrance to County buildings on Monday, July 6th. After hearing thoughtful, well-reasoned concerns from employees about why that will be particularly difficult in several offices and buildings, it became apparent it was wise to delay the action. More specific procedures are needed for limiting the number of individuals gathering in certain areas before the overall change is appropriate. Employee feedback was helpful in this decision-making process.

Information is expected shortly from the State about CARES Act funding requests submitted by Cass County. Chair Peterson and I continue to work with NDACo and ND Office of Management and Budget about the status of requests related to jail facility upgrades that were deferred in June by the State Emergency Commission. More work is needed, but it still appears Cass County is in a strong position to receive the full amount that was requested in the application. We also expect to see a list, within days, of County funding applications that were approved at the June meeting.

Over the last month the Administration Office has worked closely with District Court to facilitate a safe reopening of in-person court hearings, including jury trials. The first trial is scheduled next week. Courtroom modifications have been made to practice social distancing. Under normal conditions during jury selection with a large jury pool, a microphone is passed around as potential jurors answer attorneys' questions. The County has purchased equipment for one courtroom for potential jurors to interact and be heard without touching the same equipment. The cost of this system is \$20,186.68, and the order was placed due to the immediate need. This cost is expected to be reimbursed from CARES Act Funds.

Part of the local COVID-19 response coordinated by Fargo Cass Public Health has been a program to house homeless individuals and victims of domestic violence while awaiting test results or quarantined. That program was under state control until June 30th. It has now been turned over to local entities. Operationally the work will be led by the local shelters, but there may be a potential financial responsibility for Cass County and the City of Fargo. Administrator Wilson and Chair Peterson are working with Fargo and NDACo to utilize CARES Act funds to cover the potential local match cost. This is an on-going effort.

PO Box 2806
211 Ninth Street South
Fargo, North Dakota 58108

www.casscountynynd.gov

SUGGESTED MOTION:

Move to approve the purchase of audio equipment in the amount of \$20,186.68 for District Court.