



WHERE THE FOREST MEETS THE PRAIRIE

**Todd County**

• MINNESOTA • EST. 1855 •

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PRESS RELEASE: FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DATE: March 23, 2020

Todd County Board Issues Declaration of Local Emergency

This morning, Todd County Board Chair David Kircher declared a local State of Emergency regarding the COVID-19 pandemic. MN State Statute 12.29, authorizes the County Board Chair can declare a local emergency for up to three days, at which time a majority of the full County Board must agree to extend such local emergency or allow it to expire. Extending this declaration of local emergency will be addressed at an emergency meeting of the County Board to be held on Tuesday, March 24, 2020 at 9 am.

At this time, Todd County has no known cases of the COVID-19 virus.

A declaration of a local emergency invokes necessary parts of the county's emergency response and recovery plan to authorize aid and assistance under those plans. This allows the County to act quickly without compliance with time-consuming procedures and formalities prescribed by law pertaining to: the performance of public work, entering into contracts, incurring of obligations, employment of temporary workers, rental of equipment, purchase of supplies and materials, and the appropriation and expenditure of public funds to protect the health, safety, and welfare of the citizens of Todd County.

The declaration also provides authority for the County Board to limit the size of public gatherings at County Board meetings as well as other public board meetings in order to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 in such circumstances. It also allows meetings to happen via telephone conferencing or other electronic means.

In order to continue to provide maximum public transparency, the declaration also includes a requirement to live-stream County Board meetings and other public board meetings. A link will be provided on the Todd County website to access the live stream.

County Offices closed to the public last Wednesday, March 18<sup>th</sup>, 2020, but services continue to be provided through email, phone, online and drop box access. At this time, District Court and court proceedings are still accessible through secured access and the Todd County Transfer Station remains open with limited services to the public.

Employees will continue to be available to help the public via email, phone, online and drop-box. Please call 320-533-4643 or email us at [tcadmin@co.todd.mn.us](mailto:tcadmin@co.todd.mn.us) if you need assistance in directing inquiries or calls.

# **Todd County Declaration of Local Emergency**

The United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has identified the public health threat posed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The President of the United States has declared that the COVID-19 outbreak in the United States constitutes a National Emergency.

The Governor of Minnesota has declared a Peacetime State of Emergency to authorize any and all necessary resources to be used in support of the COVID-19 response.

The White House, the CDC and the MDH now recommend restrictions on gatherings of more than 10 persons and further recommends practice of social distancing of at least 6-feet in all settings.

The significant community, organizational, institutional and business responses to the COVID-19 pandemic have the potential to compromise the provision of essential public services, including a reduction in the size of the workforce due to school closures, isolation, or quarantine.

The necessary resources to respond to and recover from this pandemic, as well as to mitigate the significant business disruption experienced within the County, will exceed existing resources available within the County, and additional resources will be needed from Todd County, and state and federal sources.

THEREFORE, the Chairman of the Todd County Board of Commissioners, under the authority given in Minn. Stat. § 12.29 Subd.1, has declared that a local emergency exists within Todd County, effective March 23, 2020.

The Chairman of the Todd County Board of Commissioners hereby authorizes and directs Todd County Coordinator, public safety, public health and Emergency Management officials to undertake all actions necessary to protect the health, safety and welfare of the citizens of Todd County, including through the judicious exercise of the powers and responsibilities provided in Minn. Stat. § 12.37.

The Chairman of the Todd County Board of Commissioners further directs County Coordinator and County department heads to immediately review ordinance and regulatory requirements, operations, civil and legal proceedings, events, and resources that can and should be adjusted, modified or suspended, or to enact emergency regulations to support Todd County's response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Chairman of the Todd County Board of Commissioners further directs the County Coordinator and County department heads to request and coordinate appropriate aid and resources from surrounding jurisdictions, the State of Minnesota and the federal government, as needed.

Further, under Minn. Stat. § 13D.021 and Minn. Stat. 373.052 Subd. 1b., the Chairman of the Todd County Board of Commissioners further directs the County Coordinator along with County department heads to take all right and prudent steps necessary to amend, suspend or otherwise adjust public access to County facilities, and normal locations, days and hours of County activities, operations and programs, in order to comply with the guidelines set by the White House, CDC and MDH for gatherings and social distancing, as well as based upon available County staffing and resources during this COVID-19 pandemic.

Further, under Minn. Stat. § 13D.021, the Chairman of the Todd County Board of Commissioners declares in-person meetings of the County Board of Commissioners and other public bodies of the County to be impractical or imprudent during the COVID-19 pandemic, under the guidelines set by the White House, CDC and MDH for gatherings and social distancing, thus leading the Chairman to direct that:

- Pursuant to Minn. Stat. § 13D.021, in-person meetings of the Todd County Board of Commissioners and other boards and commissions of Todd County are not practical or prudent due to the COVID-19 health pandemic and the emergency declared by Governor Walz pursuant to Minnesota Statutes, chapter 12.
- Meetings of the County Board and other County boards and commissions may be conducted by telephone, video conferencing or other electronic means and live streamed via the County's website and social media channels.
- In-person public attendance at meetings of the County Board, and other County boards and commissions is not feasible, except by limiting in-person public attendance to as few people as possible for the necessary conduct of the public's business in the meeting room, with social distancing guidelines enforced, or as otherwise limited by recommendations and guidelines from state and federal authorities.
- County staff shall take such action as may be necessary to allow for such meetings to occur via telephone, video conferencing, or other electronic means as well as live streamed via the County's website and social media channels pursuant to Minnesota Statutes, § 13D.021, until such time as it is determined that in-person meetings may resume.
- County staff shall take such action as may be necessary to limit in-person public attendance to as few people as possible for the necessary conduct of the public's business in a meeting room and enforce social distancing guidelines, or otherwise limit such attendance based on recommendations and guidelines from state and federal authorities.
- County staff shall take such action as may be necessary to live-stream meetings where in-person public attendance is limited in order to allow members of the public who wish to attend the meeting to hear all discussion and testimony and all votes of the members of the board or commission.

Further, pursuant to Minn. Stat. § 12.29 Subd. 1, the Chairman of the Todd County Board of Commissioners directs that this emergency declaration is in effect from the date of this declaration, as indicated below, and shall continue and remain in effect as long as the State of Minnesota peacetime emergency declaration remains in effect, pending ratification by and official act of the Todd County Board of Commissioners within seventy-two (72) hours of this declaration.

Further, the Chairman of the Todd County Board of Commissioners directs that this Declaration of Local Emergency, additions or changes to this declaration, the eventual termination or expiration of this declaration, and any and all official communications pertaining to the same, shall be given prompt and general publication, including on the County's website and social media sites, and immediately filed by the County Clerk.

Declared this 23<sup>rd</sup> day, of March, 2020.

BY:



David Kircher  
Chairman, Todd County Board of Commissioners

ATTEST:



Denise Gaida  
Todd County Auditor/Treasurer/Clerk of the Board