



Legislation Details (With Text)

File #: 20-204 **Version:** 1 **Name:**

Type: Agendas **Status:** Agenda Ready

File created: 5/11/2020 **In control:** Board of Aldermen

On agenda: 5/26/2020 **Final action:**

Title: Consideration of Providing Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to Town Citizens
PURPOSE: The purpose of this agenda item is to discuss the Town’s capacity to provide personal protective equipment (PPE) to citizens.

Indexes:

Code sections:

Attachments:

Date	Ver.	Action By	Action	Result
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TITLE:

Consideration of Providing Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to Town Citizens

PURPOSE: The purpose of this agenda item is to discuss the Town’s capacity to provide personal protective equipment (PPE) to citizens.

DEPARTMENT: Police, Fire, Town Manager, and Housing and Community Services Departments

CONTACT INFORMATION: Walter Horton, Police Chief, whorton@townofcarrboro.org <<mailto:whorton@townofcarrboro.org>>; David Schmidt, Fire Chief dschmidt@townofcarrboro.org <<mailto:dschmidt@townofcarrboro.org>>; David Andrews, Town Manager, dandrews@townofcarrboro.org <<mailto:dandrews@townofcarrboro.org>>; Rebecca Buzzard, Housing & Community Services Director, rbuzzard@townofcarrboro.org <<mailto:rbuzzard@townofcarrboro.org>>

INFORMATION: In a continuing effort to promote wellness and safety during the COVID-19 outbreak, the Carrboro Town Council indicated that they would like to consider providing PPE to town citizens. Staff is working on acquiring and distributing some combination of face coverings and hand sanitizers, depending on availability.

Currently, PPE is a high priority item and is difficult to source in mass quantities. The Police Department, Fire Department, and Economic Development Office have reached out to local agencies and vendors to determine the feasibility of acquiring masks.

Thus far, 5,000 adult masks and 1,000 children’s masks have been requested from a community group called the Face Mask Warriors. This group has begun filling that request and a Police Officer will pick them up from a no contact bin when enough have been assembled and accumulated. This is a volunteer effort and it will take time for the masks to become available. Through this organization, the Police Station is now also listed as a donation location for the group. Sports Endeavors is also donating an additional 1,000 masks, in batches of 250, when they are made. Additionally, through a new initiative entitled Masks for Mayors, the United States Conference of Mayors has provided non-medical grade masks or cloth face covers, at no cost to the Town.

With guidance from the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) and Health Department, face coverings will be provided along with an informational flyer that will include instructions on how to properly wear and clean the masks. As per guidance from the Town Attorney, for homemade masks, the flyer will also include a waiver of liability.

Simultaneously, our Public Safety Officers (Fire and Police) are working with the EOC to place an additional order through Custom Ink. The EOC guidance is for each jurisdiction to be provided with a sufficient number of disposable masks to distribute to vulnerable populations, estimated to be about twenty percent of the population. Carrboro's share will be approximately 4,000 masks, which should arrive by next week. This purchase would be paid for through the EOC and be reimbursable through the Emergency Management process.

Distribution details are still being finalized, but the Fire Station can operate as the main point of distribution. The Police and Fire Departments will collaborate with the Housing and Community Services Department to coordinate delivery to vulnerable populations in conjunction with Orange County, Chapel Hill, the school system, and local non-profits. A regionally coordinated effort for distribution is being organized through the Human Services workgroup in the EOC.

The Town Council has also requested staff look into branded face coverings. These can be purchased through local vendors at a variety of price points. Considering no-cost options are currently available, this may be better for future needs.

In terms of Town staff, Human Resources Director, Julie Eckenrode, reached out to the Department Heads to ask if any staff members needed reusable cloth masks. Thirty three (33) staff members requested masks and the request was completely filled by a Carrboro resident who volunteered to provide the masks.

There are no known distributors of free hand sanitizer. If the Council wants to pursue the acquisition of hand sanitizer for residents, it will cost money and be difficult to get in small containers.

FISCAL & STAFF IMPACT: Staff has plans to eventually collect 11,000 masks at no cost to the Town. Above and beyond that number, and for hand sanitizer or branded PPE, a funding source will have to be identified. Staff will also be impacted by the time involved with the distribution process.

RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends the Council provide guidance on the scope of the project.