



City of Leavenworth

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April 7, 2020

Community Members,

We are all in this together! Let us remember that. But I also know that being “all in it together” does not mean that we will all share equally in the pain and the suffering and the anxiety in equal amounts. That is equally true. Not all of us will get sick, but some of us will. Not all of us will lose our employment, but many of us will. Some of us are very fortunate to be working in positions that are essential, and we can continue working through this crisis. I am largely retired, and as long as I don’t look at my IRAs and my 401ks, I am doing fine. The one part time job I still have is as an administrator for an adult family home for special needs adults. They still need to be cared for through this. So, other than the added stress of keeping them hunkered down, and the home sanitized even more thoroughly than normal, and not allowing family visits, it continues to function, and my work continues to be needed. So, yes, we are all in this together, but what that means for me is very different than what that means for a lot of you. I acknowledge that. But what that means for someone like me, is that I will look for those ways that I can share even more than normal. I will give extra support to our Community Cupboard and to other helping organizations. I will look for ways to support our local businesses by buying take-out food. I will offer to help others I see who need help with shopping, transportation, or other support services. I can’t pretend to be “in it together” to the same extent this is impacting so many of my fellow residents. But I can pledge to do what I can to lighten your burdens even a little bit. I can do all the right things to live out social distancing, and wearing a mask, and staying home as much as possible. And, hopefully, I can convey in words and deeds that I do care, that I do want to help us all get through this.

It is easy to feel, at times like this, that government is something of an uncaring machine. We still send out bills for water, sewer, and garbage (for some). We still send out late notices. Don’t we get it? Don’t we care? Yes, we do! And today I signed a Proclamation that will eliminate all late fees during this crisis. We will also not cut off services for anyone who agrees to participate in our extended payment plan. We will allow affected users to have an additional 6 months to get caught up again without penalty once this is over. Is it enough? No. Under these circumstances it is hardly enough. But it is something. I wish we could do more. I honestly hope that we can. But I hope you can appreciate that this is going to hit your city very hard as well. With most businesses closed and hotels and motels also vacant, our revenue stream is going to plummet. And just like you, we do not know how long this will continue. Weeks more? Or months more? We don’t know. And because it takes two months before we collect these taxes, we cannot be sure just how much this plummet will mean. And yet our costs do not go down considerably. We still have to pay for our debt service on our sewer and water projects. We will have to keep services going for our city. And while the last stimulus bill passed by Congress included direct aid to city governments to make up for some of their lost revenue, it was given only to cities with a population greater than 500,000. We have been working with our local Congressional delegation, Rep. Kim Schrier and Senators Patty Murray and Maria Cantwell, to make sure that the next package of aid includes those of us cities who are impacted proportionately as much or more as our larger cities. But without knowing if such aid will ever come our way, it is very difficult to commit the City to do more at this time.

What I can promise you is this: If we get through this with our financial health intact through stimulus dollars or however, we will look at ways we can do more for those most impacted, businesses and residents. Just be patient with us, as this is as much of an unknown for your City as it is for you who own businesses or are managing households. We truly are in this together, not equally, not identically, but together nonetheless. And how we will get through it is to continue to live that truth in big and small ways, with care, compassion, and understanding! Be safe! Hang in there!



Carl J. Florea, Mayor

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