



BARROW COUNTY *Georgia*

Board of Commissioners Agenda Request

ITEM NUMBER: 7.a

ITEM TITLE: Consideration of the approval of a Pandemic Illness Personnel Policy and COVID-19 First Responder Hazard Pay Plan.

DATE: April 14, 2020

WORK SESSION **VOTING SESSION** **PUBLIC HEARING**

CATEGORY: Board Action

SUBMITTED BY: Mike Renshaw, County Manager

ATTACHMENTS: YES

1. Pandemic illness policy 4-14-20
2. Projected cost of hazard pay_GF and Fire Fund Breakout

PURPOSE:

The Board of Commissioners is being requested to consider the approval of a COVID-19 First Responder Hazard Pay Plan and related adoption of a Pandemic Illness Personnel Policy.

It is proposed that the COVID-19 First Responder Hazard Pay Plan and the related Pandemic Illness Personnel Policy will have the effective date of March 26, 2020 which corresponds to the effective date of the County's first Declaration of Local Emergency and Order in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

BACKGROUND/SUMMARY:

- On March 25, 2020 the Chairman executed the County's first Declaration of Local Emergency and Order which went into effect on March 26 at noon.
- On March 30, 2020 the Chairman executed Local Emergency Order #2 which went into effect at 12:01 AM on March 31 and included a "stay at home" provision similar to that which adjacent Gwinnett County put into effect the week prior.
- On April 3, 2020 Governor Kemp issued an Executive Order that also included a Shelter in Place provision; this Executive Order superseded the County's March 30 order.

- As of noon on April 8, the number of confirmed COVID-19 cases and related deaths in Barrow County, per the Department of Public Health website, has grown to 42 and 3 respectively which represents a significant increase from the prior week.
- This pandemic is unprecedented and we are faced with a virus that we continue to learn more about each day, including how it's transmitted.
- Because of this general uncertainty, as well as recent exposures and required testing of at least 4 BCES first responders and an equal number of Sheriff's deputies (thankfully test results for all have come back negative) and the potential and heightened exposure risk for those public safety first responders that must, as a function of their jobs, come in close physical contact with individuals, a Hazard Pay monthly supplement is warranted.
- Several area counties and cities have recently approved similar hazard pay supplements to first responders, including Gwinnett, Dekalb, Walton, and City of Atlanta; Athens-Clarke is considering providing an additional PTO accrual.
- Section 6 (f) of the attached Pandemic Illness Personnel Policy outlines the eligibility requirements for hazard pay for first responders.
- The County Manager, in consultation with the Sheriff, Emergency Services Chief, and HR Director is recommending that the Board approve the following Hazard Pay for the Sheriff's Office and Emergency Services frontline first responders:
 - Additional \$250 per month during the period in which a local or state emergency declaration is in effect specifically related to the COVID-19 virus; a separate check will be generated for each eligible frontline first responder.
 - Additional 25 hours of Paid Time Off (PTO) per month in which a local or state emergency declaration is in effect specifically related to the COVID-19 virus will be provided to each eligible frontline first responder.
- Per the attached table, the projected monthly expense to implement this additional \$250/month hazard pay plan for the 182 eligible non-exempt employees (combined Sheriff Office/Detention Center and Emergency Services) is \$45,500.

DEPARTMENT RECOMMENDATION:

- The County Manager recommends that the Board of Commissioners approve the COVID-19 Hazard Pay Plan as presented as well as the attached Pandemic Illness Personnel Policy and that the effective date of the hazard pay and Policy be March 26, 2020.

OPTIONS:

- Approve the COVID-19 Hazard Pay Plan for Public Safety First Responders and the Pandemic Illness Personnel Policy as presented.
- Approve a revised Hazard Pay Plan with stipulated revisions and approve the Pandemic Illness Policy as presented.
- Approve a revised Hazard Pay Plan with stipulated revisions and a revised Pandemic

Illness Policy with stipulated revisions.

- Deny approval of both the Hazard Pay Plan and the Pandemic Illness Policy.

BUDGET INFORMATION: Applicable: Not Applicable:

Fund	Dept.	Acct No.	Budget	Balance	Requested	Remaining
General Fund	Click here to enter text.	Click here to enter text.	Click here to enter text.	Click here to enter text.	Click here to enter text.	Click here to enter text.

FINANCE OFFICER COMMENTS (IF APPLICABLE):

- FY2020 Budget did not include the Pandemic Illness Personnel Policy and COVID-19 First Responder Hazard Pay Plan of \$45,500 per month.
- The General Fund Contingency funds still has a balance of \$273,400 which would be enough to cover six (6) months of this Hazard Pay Plan.
- The Board has the option of approving the use of these contingency funds.

COUNTY MANAGER COMMENTS:

The County Manager recommends that the Board of Commissioners approve the COVID-19 Hazard Pay Plan as presented as well as the attached Pandemic Illness Personnel Policy and that the effective date of the hazard pay and Policy be March 26, 2020.

County Manager

Date