



There's quite a bit of talk about next steps as the state of Colorado and our counties are preparing changes to their public health orders to begin easing some of the closures and restrictions put in place to address the COVID-19 pandemic. The state of Colorado and Governor Polis are preparing Safer at Home—a set of guidelines and recommendations as the state's stay-at-home order expires after Sunday.

Eagle County:

Eagle County will have a new public health order in place by Monday that will allow limited openings of non-essential businesses and activities starting next week. In anticipation of this new health order, Mayor-elect Bill Kane and myself joined Eagle County manager Jeff Shroll discuss the new order, guidance to our community members and businesses, testing and other COVID-related questions. Please check out the video on the Town's Facebook page.

Eagle County's phased plan for business, using ski run symbols, begins this Monday with a Green Circle as a cautious first test. From there, the county will move to phases two (Blue Square) and three (Black Diamond). The county's Transition Trail Map includes guidance for residents, businesses, recreation centers and other community organizations to understand the Green, Blue and Black timing and what will be allowed under each step.

For the Green Circle, gatherings of 10 or less will be allowed, with appropriate social distancing measures. Low-contact activities like golf, disc golf, tennis and non-contact sports will be allowed. Gyms and fitness centers will be allowed to open if they can accommodate social distancing and proper cleaning. Lodging will remain only for local residents, essential business activities, medical care and emergencies. Non-resident visitors are still not allowed, unless they are part of an essential business or service, but second homeowners may return to their properties. Haircuts and salons will also be allowed to open under appropriate social distancing measures and limited contact with customers.

In addition, when a business or activity considers reopening to the public, they will need to complete an Eagle County Business Social Distancing Protocol form and have that available to customers and government officials to review. The forms will assess a business's ability to implement measures to protect the health and safety of employees, customers and the community.

To review the new Eagle County health order and guidance to businesses, please visit ecemergency.org.

As for Pitkin County, they are also preparing updated public health orders that will be released in the coming weeks. Pitkin County already announced last week that certain activities such as construction, bike shops, golf courses and office supply stores will be reopening this week.

Town of Basalt Budget Update:

The COVID-19 pandemic has hurt our local economy and has put an unprecedented economic strain on many of our businesses and residents. The Town staff has actively participated in the formal incident response with both Eagle and Pitkin counties—and will continue to be part of the phased reopening of our communities and planning for how we slowly come out of the stay-at-home orders and resume "normal" life.

Town staff are actively working to address the economic and financial impacts to the Town's budget, and we would like to update our community on these efforts and budget projections moving forward. Our goal throughout this crisis will be to provide essential services in an efficient and effective way, while looking for ways to save money and support our community.

The largest share of the Town's funding goes toward the provision of services for the community, and the largest portion of revenue is from sales tax so it is important that we carefully monitor revenue and how we balance essential services and community support over the long run. Recovery from this pandemic will clearly be a marathon, not a sprint, and require detailed attention to our budget and community needs.

Currently, the Town's General Operating Fund is projected to bring in almost \$6 million in revenue for 2020 to provide services such as public safety and police, road and sidewalk maintenance, childcare support, affordable housing and park maintenance programs. This revenue estimate is \$1.6 million, or 21%, lower than budgeted for 2020, and has required that the Town defer or delay \$1.2 million in 2020 budgeted expenses until we know more about the effects of the recent closures on the Town's finances. Despite these recent shocks to our local economy, 2019 and the first two months of 2020 benefited from a robust economy, online sales and tourism. The previous year's strong economy, coupled with fiscal restructuring during 2019, will help the Town weather the current slower economy hopefully for the next few years.

Even though the Town's finances appear adequate to weather the current economy, we will continually monitor and report on revenue and expenses and make monthly adjustments. These monthly updates will ensure that the Town remains able to provide essential services and will allow the Town to remain nimble in assisting with future community needs as possible.

The Town has dug into its budget to provide additional support to our residents and local businesses during this difficult economy. We will be releasing funds through a phased approach to ensure that community support does not take away from essential services. This approach also recognizes that the needs of our community will shift over the coming months as families are able to get back to work and businesses are able to reopen. Future contributions for community support will then allow the Town to best address the needs of families, businesses and nonprofits. In addition, the Town will use a portion of its events and marketing funds to develop a plan to revitalize our local economy and support local businesses.

The initial round of Town of Basalt community support has been recommended to Town Council for consideration and includes a \$10,000 contribution to the Food Bank of the Rockies to help support the weekly food drive at the Basalt Middle School. This contribution will cover the cost of 40,000 meals for approximately 500 families attending the weekly food drive. Another \$10,000 is recommended for the COVID-19 Regional Response Fund established through the Aspen Community Foundation. This donation will support access to healthcare and essential human needs such as food access, rent and utilities assistance, and emergency services for individuals and families in the Basalt area. Finally, we are recommending \$50,000 to the HOPE Center in support of our community's mental health. This would provide counseling for adults, families and children in our community who are experiencing stress and anxiety due to job loss and other triggers that are resulting from COVID-19.

I know that many of us are anxious to return to normalcy and to see how the phased approach to reopening businesses and activities will impact the health, safety and economy of our community. In closing, I would like to remind each member of our community that although we are working to slowly reopen parts of our lives, please continue to practice strong social distancing measures by washing your hands often, covering your faces in public, staying home if you feel sick and seeking testing if you have any COVID-19 symptoms.

Thank you again for all your hard work and commitment to this crisis.

Sincerely,

Ryan Mahoney

Ryan Mahoney