

To Citizens of Washington and Wilkes County,

At a special called meeting this evening, the City Council adopted an emergency ordinance declaring that due to the Coronavirus crisis, a state of emergency exists in Washington.

We have banned large events or public gatherings of 10 or more people on property owned by the City of Washington, including any public parks. While we carved out an exception for City Council open public meetings, we may have to go to a virtual call in model to conduct the business of the City.

We have taken this step to give the City government greater flexibility in addressing this evolving crisis and to put Washington in a stronger position to claim emergency relief funds that will likely be made available.

There is no reason to panic. We are looking now into ways the City can support the excellent efforts of the Board of Education and EMS personnel to distribute food to school children around the City and County. We are investigating the available options for child care, where working parents are faced with finding care during the day for their children who would normally be in school.

We are not putting businesses and places of public accomodation under orders to close. There is no curfew. We do recommend that restaurants consider going to a take out or delivery mode of food service.

This Emergency Ordinance does not limit our churches from conducting their worship services as they see fit. We are closing Callaway Plantation, the Washington Historical Museum and the Pope Center for the time being.

It is remarkable to see how the citizens of this City are pulling together to help and support each other. We are in uncharted waters. We must persevere and help each other. Check on your neighbors, especially the elderly and those who live alone. Lend them your emotional support!

We will come out of this a stronger and even more closely knit community!

It is a privelege and an honor to be your Mayor!

Bill DeGolian

Mayor, City of Washington, Georgia