



CITY OF HALLOWELL

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Mark L. Walker, Mayor

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To the Hallowell City Council:

At our most recent Special Meeting, the Council referred the matter of inconsistencies between Chapters 4 and 12 of our Revised Ordinances (1997) to the Ordinance Re-Write Committee (ORC) for review. While in the midst of the current COVID 19 pandemic, there is an urgent need for immediacy so the City may respond to circumstances that change day by day.

The ORC will take on a full review of these Ordinance sections, assuring Chapter 4 and Chapter 12 are consistent and deliver a plan of action for the Council, the City Manager, staff and others in times of declared emergency.

Hallowell's current Ordinances anticipate a natural or man-made disaster with damage to property and infrastructure, with the possible need to evacuate residents from threatened areas and establish temporary emergency facilities. None of these conditions exist with the COVID-19 pandemic. However, the need for a State of Emergency is clear. Current conditions require strong action, and justify the Declaration of Emergency, as approved by the Council.

After this Declaration of Emergency, City staff and the Emergency Management Director need flexibility to respond to emergent needs so as to protect public health, safety and property, and coordinate with Federal, State and County partners including Maine CDC, Maine EMA, and Kennebec County EMA. These needs may come in the form of community health response, shortage of food or supplies, and/or outages of infrastructure, or as some other emergency not yet identified!

At this time, we propose revisions that identify and address the lack of clarity in the Council's role as an advisor and resource. Council must approve the Emergency Operations Plan; Council will provide guidance to the Emergency Director in preparing the Plan; Council will prepare and promote ordinances as necessary; Council will provide consistent information and guidance to the public; and Council will provide resources to the Director and City staff in establishing and operating an Emergency Operations Center. Under oversight of the Council our revision gives broad administrative authority for the City responses to the City Manager.

Until the Ordinance Rewrite Committee can fully revisit Chapter 12, which is the Emergency Plan template, we recommend it be suspended, and that Chapter 4 be amended as submitted.

Chapter 12, Section 110, the Annexes A through M, will continue to be used as the template for City Response and delegation of responsibility to City Departments.

Thank you to the Council for your consideration of these proposed amendments.

Mark Walker
Mayor

Kate Dufour, Chair
Ordinance Rewrite Committee
City Council Ward 1