

ECONOMY

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designed to be an aid for officials within each state when reopening economies and allowing people to return to work, all while continuing to protect lives from COVID-19.

During his press conference on April 17, Governor Andy Beshear presented benchmarks that Kentucky would be required to meet in order to begin reopening the commonwealth.

"We believe our approach is very much in line with the White House," Beshear said. "The plan put out by the White House has certain thresholds that states should meet before we start taking certain steps. The benchmarks are being driven by public health. We are all on the same page about what keeps people safe."

"We have to make sure we do it smart, we do it safely," Beshear added. "That we don't let our guard down, that we don't start focusing on the next game until we win this game."

Governor Beshear explained that Kentucky has seven benchmarks that must be assessed to determine the phases for reopening. The benchmarks include 14 days with a decreasing number of cases, increased testing capacity and contact tracing, ability to social distance and follow Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidelines regarding large gatherings, ability to protect at-risk populations, status of vaccine and treatment, personal protective equipment (PPE) availability, and preparedness for any possible future spike.

"Normal going forward is not the same as normal going into this," Dr. Steven Stack, Commissioner of the Department of Public Health, said during the Governor's press conference. "When we start lifting restrictions, I want to be very clear. There will be more disease. More people will

get infected. There is a counterbalancing need with people's need to go on with life and people's need to remain safe. We have recognized that all along."

Once first stage benchmarks are reached by the state, the White House has provided guidance on what the first stage of reopening may be like. For employers, this should include continuing to encourage telework or allowing employees to return to work in phases, closing common areas, minimizing non-essential travel, and considering accommodations for employees who are vulnerable.

The first stage of reopening would also include the continued closure of schools and activities for youth, continued prohibiting of visitors to nursing homes and hospitals, and continued closure of bars. Large venues such as sporting venues, places of worship, theaters, and sit-down dining could operate under strict protocols of physical distancing. Gyms could be allowed to reopen only if adhering to strict sanitation and physical distancing protocols as well.

During the first stage of reopening, individuals who are sick and also those with compromised immune systems, for example, would be encouraged to continue sheltering in place. When in public, everyone should continue maximizing physical distance from others and also avoid gatherings of more than 10 people. Non-essential travel should be minimized, and CDC guidelines regarding isolation after traveling should still be followed.

"We could see the ability to open up in some small ways before May, during May and beyond, but this will be a phased approach based on our benchmarks and recommendations from many groups," Beshear said. "We have to ensure any actions we take

protect the sacrifices that so many Kentuckians have made."

As April 17, Governor Beshear announced that there were 134 new COVID-19 cases in the state, bringing the total to approximately 2,522 confirmed positive cases. Eight new deaths were also reported by the Governor, raising the Kentucky's virus-related death toll to 137.

According to Governor Beshear, at least 30,596 people have been tested for the disease in Kentucky. He also stated that 979 people have recovered from COVID-19 in the commonwealth. At least 1,008 people have ever been hospitalized and 360 were still currently hospitalized. At least 514 have ever been in the ICU and at least 227 people were still currently patients in the ICU.

At the national level, as of April 18 there were 715,105 confirmed positive COVID-19 cases in the United States with nearly 38,000 virus-related deaths. The U.S. holds the top spot in the number of cases globally, with Spain in far second with 191,726 confirmed positive cases. New York has experienced the most number of cases and deaths of any state across the U.S. with 233,951 cases and nearly 18,000 virus-related deaths.

Globally, COVID-19 has infected 2.3 million individuals and caused nearly 158,000 deaths.

For more information regarding the White House's criteria and all three of the proposed phases of reopening, visit www.whitehouse.gov/openingamerica. More information regarding key updates, actions, and information from Governor Beshear can be found at www.kycovid19.ky.gov and also on the Governor's official social media accounts. Governor Beshear's daily press briefings occur each day at 4 p.m. CT on both the KET channel and Facebook live.

MEETING

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The four of them held the meeting in Judge Robertson's office, while the magistrates were brought into the meeting via telephone on speaker.

First discussed in Fiscal Court news was Resolution 20-03 from the Sheriff's Department. The department is applying for a grant for an armored vehicle. Homeland Security would be approving the grant and there would be no money coming from the county. County Treasurer Kim Fenske explained the resolution.

"This is a typical resolution, and anytime applying for a Homeland Security Grant, reading it at the meeting and voting is just part of the grant application process," Fenske said.

The motion was made and approved for the Sheriff to apply for this grant.

The financial report was read by Fenske and approved by the court. The ending balances for March 31 were: Payroll \$0, General \$1,012,605.93, Road \$618,832.51, Jail \$714,623.57, LGEA \$6,183.80, ASAP \$116,010.33, Grants \$0.00, Tourism \$6,528.72, Dispatch \$133,631.46, Airport \$66,175.28, Airport Project \$11,048.21, DFC \$12,101.21, Airport Board \$45,379.56,

ABC \$50,670.11. The total of all funds was \$2,793,790.69.

In new business, the second reading occurred and motion was made and passed on the budget amendment 20-01. An Ordinance relating to the Fiscal Year 10-20 annual budget and amendment thereof, whereas the Russell County Fiscal Court has realized unbudgeted receipts from the following funds: General Fund TVA- \$4,011.58, General Fund Excess Fees Clerk- \$20,344.47, General Fund Flood Control- \$7,705.37, General Fund Eli VFD Reimbursement- \$40,614.00, General Fund Miscellaneous- \$24,000.00, Road Fund Discretionary Funds- \$3,375.00, Road Fund County Road Aid- \$20,353.00, Jail Fund State Inmates- \$63,607.04, Jail Fund Other County Inmates \$19,534.89, Dispatch Fund Cities/ Ambulance \$27,083.31 and Road Fund Driver License \$1,733.25. Total Amended Revenues was \$232,381.91. The motion was made for the amendment, voted on, and approved.

In other fiscal court news, Judge Robertson discussed the 18-19 State Audit. He thanked Fenske for the work she puts in and for always being on the ball. There was only one write up, which

was a discrepancy Judge Robertson said. During the flooding in Russell County there was no bids put in for Gaddie Shamrock to work with some detours, but Judge Robertson felt it was a discrepancy since during this time there was a State of Emergency declared during this time.

Also, voted on was the transfer of \$19,105 Grants Fund to the General Fund for the Sheriff watercraft. The down payment was made prior to the full grant coming in, and once the grant came in that money is now being placed in the correct allocated spot. Motion was made and passed.

Judge Robertson brought up a roll-off truck to be sold in Alabama in June.

"During times like we are having, it would be silly to sell it at this time," Robertson said.

He called KACO to discuss buying it back and using it for the county instead, extending the note on KACO. Motion was made and approved.

Please watch The Times Journal Facebook Page, The Russell County Fiscal Court Facebook Page, and listen to WJRS 104.9 for updates on the next Fiscal Court Meeting.

Online Grocery Shopping

Online grocery shopping and grocery delivery services are becoming more and more popular. We used to think of these services as being limited to urban environments, but large supermarkets and big-box retailers are selling food items and shipping them everywhere. In a survey of more than 30,000 people ranging from teenagers to those older than 65, approximately 10 percent regularly participated in online grocery shopping.

The main reasons for online grocery shopping included saving time, the convenience of using the services during major life events (new baby, caring for loved one, recovering from illness/

injury), and be able to spend time on other things. Studies commonly report the barriers of online grocery shopping to be lengthy waits for deliveries and/or delivery fees, difficulty in doing cost comparisons between items, orders filled incorrectly, and substituting items for out-of-stock purchases without approval.

Other considerations for online grocery shopping include the following:

•Food choices: People who use online grocery shopping are less likely to purchase perishable or fresh items than when they shop in the actual store. Although there are healthy shelf-stable options, purchases included more processed, packaged foods that aren't as likely to go bad during delivery or pickup.

•Impulse buying: Studies have shown that impulse buying is lower for people who

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