

To: NPNRD Board of Directors
From: John Berge, General Manager
Date: July 6, 2020
Subject: Consideration of Re-Opening Without Appointment

Background:

As you will recall, the Board of Directors took action at the June 11 Board meeting to maintain office operations with regularly scheduled business hours with access to the public by appointment only. As part of the instructions in that motion, the Board also decided to review that policy 30 days later. On July 9, I will ask you again to review and consider whether conditions merit a change in policy.

An updated summary of our actions follows:

Due to the declared public health emergency surrounding COVID-19, I took action to modify our office operations on both March 20, 2020 and March 31, 2020 to include the locking of public access doors to the public and meeting with the public by appointment only. We have also allowed for telework and staggered work schedules to ensure that there were not too many individuals in the office at any one time – these work schedule changes continue. I took those actions in an abundance of caution and based on the Governor’s Directed Health Measures and recommendations by local, state and federal public health officials. As you know, we have a number of staff and constituents that could be described as people belonging to a vulnerable population as it relates to COVID-19 or they have people in their lives that fall into that category, and our intent has always been to provide excellent service while at the same time working to ensure safety to the extent possible. Our service has not been altered negatively. We have had to quarantine only three staff members for community exposures and close contacts. I am also aware of at least two staff members that have members of their families in quarantine for community exposure. I believe our precautions are working.

Shall we re-open access to the public without appointment?

I recommend, in consultation with our Department Heads that we do not (this is not to say that there is absolute consensus amongst Department Heads, but to illustrate that we have discussed it), because the above circumstances have not changed. The stated goals of the CDC and White House guidance for “re-opening” – primarily a 14-day decline in infections – have not been met. Cases are increasing in the double digits daily in Scotts Bluff County. If there is an exposure on our staff, we risk having to quarantine all staff members that were in close contact with that individual – which could impact our ability to operate at all.

I do recognize that there are several businesses and government services that are slowly relaxing restrictions, which is why this question is on your agenda. I should also mention that if you act to reopen, we have also taken measures to ensure the safety of the public, staff and Board in that circumstance.

Suggested Motions for Consideration of Re-Opening Without Appointment

Motion 1: XXXXX move to maintain regularly scheduled business hours with access to the public during business hours without appointment.

Motion 2: XXXXX move to maintain regularly scheduled business hours with access to the public during business hours by appointment only.