



OFFICE OF THE CITY MANAGER

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CORONAVIRUS STATEMENT FROM ATHENS CITY MANAGER

ATHENS, TENNESSEE – March 16, 2020 – In the course of current events that have led up to the global pandemic of the novel coronavirus disease of 2019 (COVID-19) and following suit with federal and state agencies as well statements from private entities across the nation, Athens City Manager C. Seth Sumner, on behalf of the municipal government and its governing body offers the following statement:

“As of today, fifty-two (52) cases of COVID-19 have been identified throughout the State of Tennessee. While none of those are in McMinn County, the City of Athens began taking precautions last week to protect public health. I began coordinating information and planning with the County government, our school system, utilities, Tennessee Wesleyan, the Department of health, and others.

We are experiencing an unprecedented response to the threat of this particular coronavirus. Athens City Schools, as well as the other systems in our area have preemptively closed this and next week – food is still available to children in need. All courts, including Athens Municipal Court, are closed to in-person proceedings with some exceptions until March 31st. The City of Athens Animal Shelter will halt intakes, and our Recycling Center will be strictly limiting personal contact. I also have limited access to city office spaces. However, the City of Athens will continue to conduct business as usual, as much as possible. Although organized activities are being cancelled, our parks are still open and available for citizens’ use. The regular meeting of the Athens City Council will continue Tuesday night, and you are always welcome to watch your Council conduct the business of the City by livestreaming through our Facebook page.

I am asking that if you have any business with the City, please call ahead. All offices can be reached through (423) 744-2700. We can take most payments over the phone, or by mail. Please call if we can be of any assistance.

According to CDC and TN Dept of Health guidance, please limit contact with others, practice good hygiene, if you are ill, then please stay home. During this time, I am also calling on Athenians to do what we do best during difficult times, and let’s take care of each other. If you are healthy, call and check on your neighbors – especially our elderly population or vulnerable citizens – help them get food and medication so they don’t have to risk exposure.

The Friendly City will keep calm and carry on.”

Further information and updates can be found on the CDC and TN Department of Health websites at [coronavirus.gov](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus) or [tn.gov/health/cedep/ncov.html](https://www.tn.gov/health/cedep/ncov.html).

Background: In December 2019, Chinese health authorities identified an outbreak of pneumonia associated with a novel, or new, coronavirus which has resulted in thousands of confirmed cases in China. Additional cases have been identified in a growing number of other international locations, including the United States. There are ongoing investigations to learn more. (TN Dept of Health)

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