Wayne County steps up to assist businesses

The Wayne County Commission recently expanded the county’s COVID-19 Small Business Relief Fund by allocating an additional $2 million, which added to the TCF Bank match, and increased potential funding to $14 million for loans available to small businesses.

“Many people and small businesses have been hard hit by stay safe orders put in place to slow the spread of COVID-19,” Commissioner Joseph Palamara said. “While some businesses are coming back on line as part of the recovery rollout, many of them still need help. This action should produce additional assistance for small businesses Downriver.”

The loan program is a partnership between the county and Wayne County-based TCF Bank. It provides low-interest loans of up to $50,000 to eligible businesses. While the program initially targeted small business in low-income census tracts, it is now available for businesses in every county community.

Businesses can learn more about the program and apply for loans by contacting one of the 15 TCF Bank and Chemical Bank banking centers located in Wayne County.

Loan applications and a list of banking centers are available at tcfbank.com/waynecounty, chemicalbank.com/waynecounty.

Updated information on COVID-19 pandemic is made readily available

Wayne County has made it easy for residents to find helpful, up-to-the minute information on the COVID-19 pandemic through its webpage, as well as through Facebook.

Directives for the protection of yourself and others can be found on the county webpage, www.waynecounty.com. It includes a dashboard showing an up-to-the minute breakdown of the impact of the pandemic in Wayne County.

The dashboard includes information for all Wayne County communities, excluding Detroit, which maintains its own statistics. It includes information on new cases, fatalities and breakdowns by gender. Information is updated at 5 p.m. each day A link is also provided through the Wayne County Commission Facebook page.

An official report from the Wayne County Department of Health, Human & Veterans Services is also released each day at https://www.waynecounty.com/departments/hhvs/wellness/novel-coronavirus-information.aspx and shared via the Wayne County Commission Facebook page.

This report includes updated information from the county and state, as well as from federal and international health officials, regarding the COVID-19 pandemic.

Palamara leads Commission effort against new county tax increase

Commissioner Joseph Palamara led an effort against raising county taxes when he sponsored a resolution rejecting the placement of a new 1 mill county tax on the ballot to fund after school programs.

On April 14, the Commission supported Palamara’s resolution to reject the tax hike proposal by a 13-2 vote.

“In these unbelievably challenging times, when so many of our residents are struggling to make ends meet, now is not the time to put any new tax forward,” Palamara emphasized.

For comparison to this 1 mill request, the DIA, zoo and county parks millages are only 1/4 mill each. The new tax request proposed to raise an estimated $250 million over six years if passed.

The proposal also included an implementing ordinance that the Commission found would violate its budgeting, contracting, legislative enactment and auditing authority.

The matter was before the Commission as a result of a petition drive and signature submission.

On January 13, the Wayne County Election Commission voted not to place the proposal on the March 10 ballot because efforts had not been completed to determine if the signature requirement of almost 53,000 had been satisfied.

On February 21, the County Clerk found that despite submitting over 35,500 invalid signatures, the committee had met the signature requirement by a slim 132 margin, and sent the measure to the Commission for its review and consideration, as required by the County Charter-required legislation initiation process.

“Our Commission’s legal counsel and fiscal staff found that the petition contains violations of both state and county-charter law and would use up about 46 percent of our remaining unused county tax space if passed,” Palamara explained. “For me, being a leader means being in touch with the needs of the people and the realities of the times.

“The coronavirus pandemic changes the whole ballgame now and into the future. As this public health and economic crisis continues to unfold, we need to make sure that county resources are used to help our comeback,” Palamara continued. “As such, we just cannot expect to add to our residents’ tax burdens now.”
Everyone needs to be counted in 2020 census

If you have not yet completed your 2020 Census form, please take the time to fill out the information as it is vitally important in determining everything from how much federal revenue Wayne County will receive to how county, state and U.S. Congressional districts are drawn.

Once you received the Census form, you can respond in one of three ways: online, by phone, or by mail.

Beginning this month and continuing through July, homes that haven’t responded to the 2020 Census will be contacted by a Census taker to make sure everyone is counted.

In December, the Census Bureau is scheduled to deliver apportionment counts to the President and Congress as required by law.

Please take time to respond to the census and make sure your friends and neighbors respond as well.

Everyone must be counted!