



COUNTY OF LAKE

Board of Supervisors

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PRESS RELEASE **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

County Insights from Moke Simon: Stay Informed, Stay Strong, Stay Home

LAKE COUNTY, CA (April 1, 2020) – On Tuesday, the Lake County Board of Supervisors held a Special Meeting, to support the ongoing work of Public Health officials and County residents to slow the spread of COVID-19. Despite their members being physically dispersed throughout the county, the Board was unified in their interest in representing the needs of local businesses and residents, and providing thoughtful policy direction to County departments as they continue to adapt, in light of the ongoing Local Health Emergency.

Board Chair Moke Simon offered some insights following the meeting:

“First, I want to say how grateful I am for the sacrifices so many people have made in recent weeks,” shared Simon. “We’ve entirely changed the way we do a lot of things, and I see social distancing improving every day, see tape on floors of businesses, and people doing their part [to support Public Health Orders]. We’re making progress. Thanks to the entire Lake County community for buying in!”

As is expected to occur every Tuesday at 9:10am during the crisis, the Board received a comprehensive situational update on COVID-19 from Lake County’s Public Health Officer, Gary Pace, MD, MPH. Pace noted there were some signs statewide efforts to slow infection rates through social distancing were paying off, and celebrated the hard work of Public Health staff to provide timely guidance through their information lines.

He was also blunt about the inadequacy of available testing thus far, and challenges to come, and indicated, “They are seeing a big surge in Sonoma County now. I’m grateful for each day we have to put structure in place and increase our capacity.” Pace further noted the broad footprint of viral activity was challenging everyone, from local medical facilities and Emergency Services personnel to State officials, to find new ways to fill gaps between anticipated needs and actual present capacity. He said a ship with a 1,000-person capacity had been docked in Los Angeles, and sites throughout the state may be used to manage the surge.

When asked whether the Shelter-in-Place Order would be extended through April 30, Pace noted it, “Depends how this thing unfolds, it looks like we are still in the early stages. What happens over the next couple of weeks is very important. We basically shut everything down in a short time. On the back end, [maybe in a month or so] we’ll reintroduce certain activities, and see how it goes.”

Supervisor Simon echoed Dr. Pace’s concerns:

“We know [observing the Shelter-in-Place order] is painful and frustrating. People want to be out on the lake, and just want to get out of the house, see their friends, but this is not the time. Dr. Pace told a story about a choir practice in Washington State, that happened early in the crisis. Everyone just wanted to come together, and no one was feeling sick, but of the 60 people there, 15-20 [contracted COVID-19] a couple died, and others were hospitalized.”

“We have to take this thing seriously,” emphasized Simon, “and you don’t have to have symptoms to spread the virus. [COVID-19] may be here now, and we don’t have testing [capacity to identify it].”

At the recommendation of District 5 Supervisor, Rob Brown, the Board began review of a set of potential Legislative Priorities that emerged from a “Blue Collar Committee,” comprised of a cross-section of business leaders from throughout the County. District 3 Supervisor, Eddie Crandell, has likewise been active with this committee. Following significant public input, submitted via PublicComment@lakecountyca.gov, the Board elected to take further time for research and discussion.

Briefly delaying advocacy action, had, “Nothing to do with [not] supporting businesses,” said Simon. “Business as we knew it prior to COVID-19... it may be completely different, moving forward. I think all the time about how I want [Lake County businesses closed due to the pandemic] to be able to get back to making investments in our communities.”

In other business, the Board authorized an emergency approach to budgeting for Fiscal Year 2020-21, which will include instruction to departments to very cautiously spend in July and August. Due to uncertainty surrounding revenues, the County’s annual comprehensive Budget Hearings will be held in September, instead of June.

“This approach is consistent with practices in other California Counties,” noted Simon, “and it’s good to move forward. We’ll [continue to monitor projected revenues] as we move through this process.”

Despite a lot of uncertainty, Simon has seen signs of the innovative capacity and resolve of Lake County’s people:

“The ways our schools have been able to embrace distance learning strategies and continue providing quality instruction, and the ways people have come together to make sure food is available to those most at risk have been awesome. The ways City and County leaders and our legislators have worked together under the guidance of our Public Health officials has been amazing, too; we’re all on the same page, and doing everything we can.”

Simon’s closing remarks for the public?

“Stay informed. Stay Strong. Stay home. It makes a difference!”

Live video of all Board of Supervisors meetings, including Dr. Pace’s valuable weekly COVID-19 updates, is accessible through the County website and Lake County PEG TV (TV8). Agendas and live and archived video are available at:

<https://countyoflake.legistar.com/Calendar.aspx>

To comment on any Board of Supervisors Agenda Item, or to arrange for Zoom participation to present your remarks in real time, write to the Clerk to the Board of Supervisors, at PublicComment@lakecountyca.gov.

Lake County-focused COVID-19 information is accessible through the County's homepage, <http://www.lakecountyca.gov/>, and at <http://health.co.lake.ca.us/>.

If you have public health-related questions about COVID-19, please direct them to MHOAC@lakecountyca.gov, or call Public Health's COVID-19 line, at 707-263-8174.