

April 15, 2020

The Washington County Board of Commissioners met in Special Called Meeting on Wednesday, April 15 at 6:00 PM by using ZOOM—virtual meeting software (due to the COVID-19 pandemic). Commissioners Johnson, Phelps, Sexton and Walker were present by phone/computer. Also present were County Manager/County Attorney Curtis Potter, Clerk to the Board Julie J. Bennett and Finance Officer Missy Dixon by phone/computer. Commissioner Riddick was not on the call until later in the meeting.

Chair Phelps called the meeting to order. He also asked for a moment of silence for the two Washington County residents who passed from COVID-19. Chair Phelps gave the invocation; Clerk to the Board Julie Bennett led the Pledge of Allegiance. Chair Phelps mentioned that the public may be on this call and you may hear them come and go but that's normal during a ZOOM meeting.

CONSENT AGENDA: Commissioner Sexton made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda:

Items listed under Consent are generally of a routine nature. The Board may take action to approve/disapprove all items in a single vote. Any item may be withheld from a general action, to be discussed and voted upon separately at the discretion of the Board.

- a) Approval of Minutes
- b) Tax Refunds & Releases and Insolvent Accounts
- c) Budget Amendments/Transfers
- d) Continuation of Operations
- e) 2020 Medicare Fee Schedule
- f) Revised Budget Calendar

Chair Phelps stated that regarding Item f) Revised Budget Calendar, that he has talked with the Manager and the May 5th and 18th will be virtual meetings.

Commissioner Walker seconded. The Clerk took a roll call vote: Johnson AYE, Phelps AYE, Sexton AYE, Walker AYE. Motion carried unanimously.

PUBLIC FORUM: The Clerk read the public notice that was in the Roanoke Beacon and posted on our website letting the public know how they could join the meeting. Ms. Bennett stated that no one called to be put on the list to speak at during tonight's Public Forum. Chair Phelps stated that even though the Board wasn't required to have a Public Forum during tonight's meeting; they decided to in case the public had any concerns.

Mr. Lloyd Jones, 842 Gourd Neck Road, was on the call and gave kudos to the caregivers during this pandemic.

COVID-19 UPDATE: Mr. Curtis Potter, County Manager/County Attorney, Mr. Wes Gray, MTW Health Department Director, and Mr. Lance Swindell, Emergency Management Coordinator gave the Board the latest information on COVID-19.

Mr. Potter said there is a tremendous amount of information that he, Mr. Gray and Mr. Swindell have been processing and getting it out to the Board and the public. Mr. Potter said he receives daily updates from the Health Department. Mr. Potter stated that today's activities include a weekly phone call between the 3 counties (Martin, Tyrrell & Washington), then another phone call between our area providers and then a conference call with the Towns and the School System.

Mr. Gray gave the latest 5:30 PM update. See below.



Martin-Tyrrell-Washington

DISTRICT HEALTH

Wes Gray, MPA, MPH, Health Director

252.793.3023 (p) • 252.791.3108 (f) • mtwdistricthealth.org



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

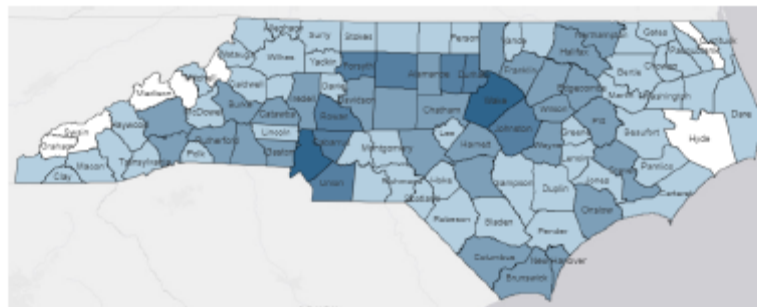
Coronavirus Update

April 15, 2020 - 5:30PM

The coronavirus COVID-19 is affecting 210 countries and territories around the world and 2 international conveyances (the *Diamond Princess* cruise ship harbored in Yokohama, Japan and Holland America's *MS Zaandam* cruise ship now traveling to port in Florida).

North Carolina		United States		Global	
Total Cases	5,274	Total Cases	641,299	Total Cases	2,073,443
Deaths	127	Deaths	28,383	Deaths	134,007
Recovered	N/A	Recovered	47,877	Recovered	508,861

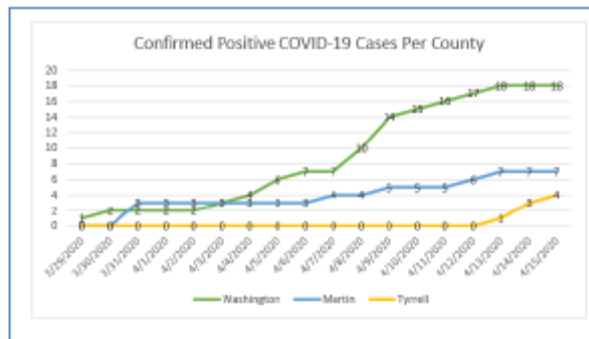
NC Case Distribution: 93 counties with cases



NC - DHHB

Positive Confirmed Cases

County	Martin	Tyrrell	Washington
Positive	7	4	18
Recovered	2	-	8
Deaths	-	-	2



Martin County
210 W. Liberty St.
Williamston, NC 27892
252.793.1819

Tyrrell County
408 Bridge St.
Columbia, NC 27925
252.793.1750

Washington County
198 Hwy. 45 North
Plymouth, NC 27962
252.793.3023

There was one death related to COVID-19 in Washington County – reported on 4/8. A second death was reported on 4/12. Active case patients are either hospitalized or recovering at home. Patients in the Recovered line have no symptoms are no longer under quarantine.

We do want to emphasize that many people with COVID-19 may not be included in these reports of laboratory confirmed cases – including the following groups:

- People who do not feel sick
- People who had symptoms but did not seek care or testing and who “self-quarantined”
- People who sought care but may have been recommended by their provider to self-quarantine or they did not meet current CDC guidelines for testing

It is for these reasons that the number of laboratory-confirmed positive tests give us an incomplete view of the true rate of infections or spread of COVID-19 in North Carolina and in our District. The number of asymptomatic patients and patients who are advised to self-quarantine will continue to grow as we experience “community spread.” It is for that reason that we should view the number of positive confirmed cases as only one piece of the larger picture of understanding and tracking this virus.

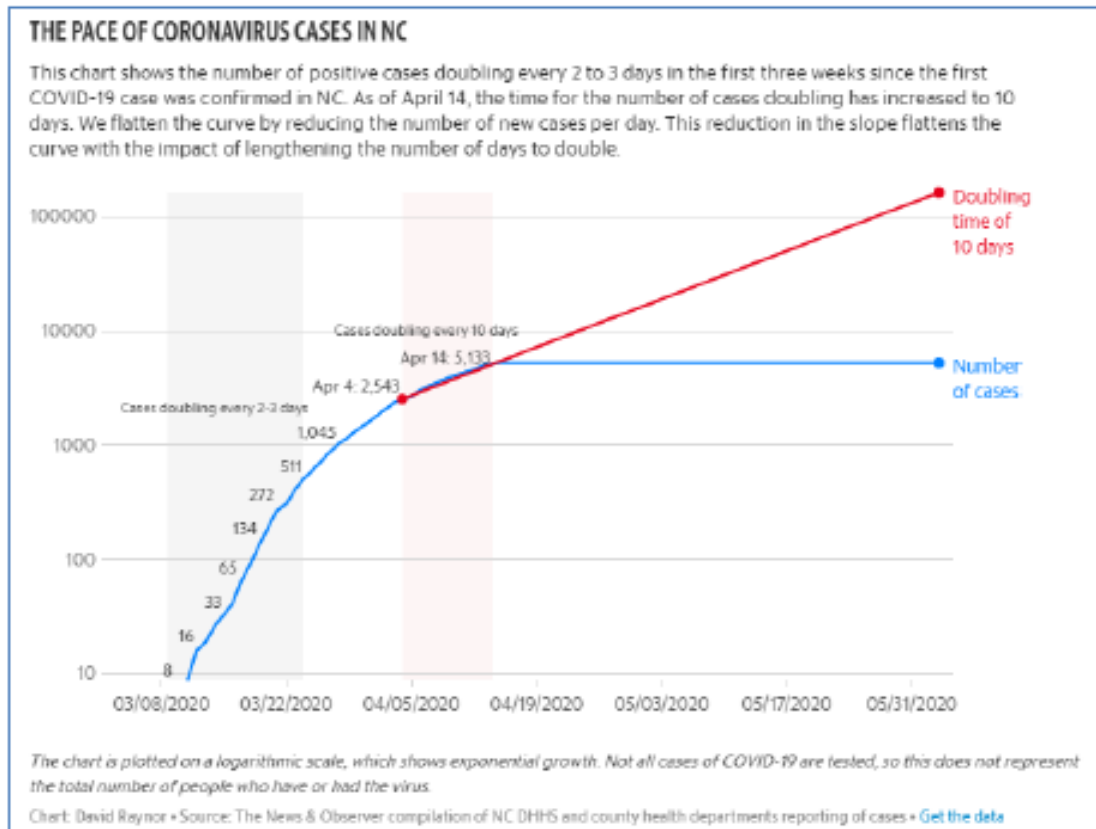
“Community spread,” meaning the source of infection is unknown, has been occurring in several nearby counties. That makes it absolutely essential that we follow social distancing guidelines that are already in place.

Tests are available at the Health Department and the hospitals if patients meet the current guidelines, which as of March 29th are:

1. Have fever or lower respiratory symptoms (cough, shortness of breath) and close contact with a confirmed COVID-19 case within the past 14 days; OR
2. Have fever and lower respiratory symptoms (cough, shortness of breath) and a negative rapid flu test
3. Prior approval by public health is not required for testing at commercial or hospital-based laboratories. However, clinicians are encouraged to consider the following recommendations:
 - Testing is not recommended for asymptomatic persons.
 - In general, patients in non-congregate settings with mild illness that does not progress (defined above) do not need testing.
 - Clinicians should use their clinical judgement and prioritize testing of patients with more severe respiratory symptoms; hospitalized patients; patients for whom clinical management would be different if they were infected with COVID-19; patients in high-risk settings (e.g., congregate living settings, long term care); and health care workers and first responders.
 - For patients who have more significant symptoms and do need medical attention, clinicians are strongly encouraged to also consider and test for other causes of respiratory illness, including infections such as influenza.
 - Patients should be counseled to call if they have worsening signs or symptoms of respiratory illness (e.g. increasing fever, shortness of breathing, difficulty breathing, chest discomfort, altered thinking, cyanosis).

Graphic of the Day (News and Observer)

The N&O has a [new graph](#) on their site showing an estimated number of cases given the current 10-day doubling time:
(see next page)



Notes on Numbers:

For the counts above, I check the following four sources regularly (Some have different update times so if I see any discrepancy I record the highest number):

- [Johns Hopkins Case Map](#)
- [Coronavirus Worldometer](#)
- [NC DHHS Coronavirus State Count](#)
- [News and Observer Running State Count](#)

(Commissioner Riddick joined the call at this time.)

Mr. Gray said the backlog of testing is easing up. He also said he has been disseminating information to the County Manager’s, their EMS Directors and their staff. Mr. Gray said he is not doing the press release for cases but is adding it to the afternoon report.

Mr. Potter also said there are weekly ZOOM meetings that EM has. Mr. Swindell said that he continues to get calls regarding the supplies being slow to get here but he is dispersing them out as needed. He said he makes orders every day. He noted that the Monday/Wednesday/Friday ZOOM meetings are for the region.

Mr. Potter said he participates in many teleconferences throughout the week. There is a tremendous amount of information going around.

Commissioner Sexton asked who is responsible for letting folks know when someone has been found to have COVID-19. Mr. Gray said because of HIPPA they can only say so much. It's a voluntary basis if that person wants to contact others that they may have been in contact with, unless MTW puts them under quarantine...which they have not.

Commissioner Johnson asked Mr. Swindell about the PPE he was ordering. She asked who he is ordering them for. Mr. Swindell responded that he is ordering them for EM responders and personnel.

Chair Phelps asked if the County has enough PPE for our folks. Mr. Potter said the County does currently have enough PPE, but this situation is unprecedented and supplies are scarce. We don't want to burn through them too quickly. Mr. Potter said folks are working to resolve those shortages. He tried to head it off early by having those that would need PPE to order supplies early and he also asked Mr. Boone to take inventory of what the County had and find out what the County would need and start ordering. Staff has done a good job of making sure we are not running into issues. Mr. Potter said he asked Ms. Liverman, Cooperative Extension Director, to make some homemade supplies. Cooperative Extension has been making masks.

Chair Phelps asked if there is anything the Commissioners need to do such as budget amendments for supplies. Mr. Potter said not at this time. The departments have been able to stay within budget. Ms. O'Neal, EMS Director, said EMS has been able to get supplies and pay for them within their budget. Mr. Potter said departments are tracking such things in case the County can get reimbursed for these items in the future.

Commissioner Sexton asked how the hospital (Washington Regional Medical Center-WMRC) is. Mr. Potter said he spoke with someone there this morning, and so far it's going well. WRMC has opened a Respiratory Clinic and the amount of folks coming in has plateaued. They have what they need to continue operating. Commissioner Sexton asked about the nursing homes. Is everything alright there? Mr. Gray said he hasn't heard of any cases in our nursing homes.

Commissioner Walker asked Mr. Gray about the individuals that were in a nursing home in Northampton County. Mr. Gray said many tested positive; however, only one death was reported.

Commissioner Riddick stated she has talked to Mr. Potter about making a Public Service Announcement (PSA) about how serious COVID-19 is. Commissioner Riddick said she has a citizen who will be willing to talk about one of her family members who experienced COVID-19 how hard it was on them. Mr. Potter said that over the weekend, he and Commissioner Riddick discussed the seriousness of staying home and social distancing. Mr. Potter said he will probably send out a press release in the near future regarding social distancing and hopes to get some information from the individual that Commissioner mentioned to use in the press release.

Chair Phelps reiterated that the Commissioners' meetings in May will be virtual (ZOOM) meetings. He also thanked residents for calling in and also the Department Heads who called in. He thanked EMS for all they are doing.

Chair Phelps asked the Board to keep the citizens of the County in their prayers. The Board will continue to meet and conduct the business of the County.

At 6:40 PM, with no further business to discuss, **Commissioner Sexton made a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Johnson seconded. The Clerk took a roll call vote: Johnson AYE, Phelps AYE, Riddick AYE, Sexton AYE, Walker AYE. Motion carried unanimously.**

D. Cole Phelps
Chair

Julie J. Bennett, CMC, NCMCC
Clerk to the Board