City of New Bedford  
Jonathan F. Mitchell, Mayor  
March 20, 2020

To All Department Heads:

Earlier this week, to afford city government the time necessary to adapt its operations to the challenges posed by COVID-19, I ordered the closing of all city facilities to public access. Since then, in short order each of you has provided me with your plans to continue your department’s essential functions in the face of these challenges. I appreciate the thoroughness of the plans, especially under the tight timeframe you had to prepare them.

With the benefit of your input, and the imperative to promote social distancing for the foreseeable future, I have decided to extend until further notice the moratorium on public access, except for certain business at City Hall under the following restrictions. Beginning on Monday, March 23, a customer service representative will be stationed inside the inner doors of the 6th Street vestibule, who will direct visitors to deposit documents and payments into a large drop box inside the vestibule. The inner doors will be locked, and (thanks to the ingenuity of our DFFM carpenters), will be outfitted with a sealed drawer through which the visitor may receive a receipt for payment. Outside visitors will be allowed to enter the vestibule one at a time. The vestibule itself will be sanitized thoroughly each day.

The Treasurer’s Office will staff the vestibule, and will have a telephone line nearby, so that the person assigned to the vestibule can contact other departments if necessary. Every effort should be made to encourage residents to conduct business by telephone or email. If you have any forms that you would like to make available for walk up customers, you should make arrangements with Treasurer Renee Fernandes.

All collections at the vestibule will be quarantined for at least 48 hours to eliminate the possibility of viral transmission. The Treasurer’s Office will route mail, payments, and other documents to their intended recipients. Large deliveries will be routed to DFFM’s stockroom at 309 Smith Street. The Pleasant Street exit will serve as the building’s second egress while the 6th Street entrance is unavailable.

To be clear, under this new arrangement, City Hall will become the only site where these “front counter” services will be offered. With the exception of the airport, all other facilities will not be open to the public.

This arrangement will allow city business to continue without jeopardizing the safety of our employees. I appreciate that this will cause some inconvenience as well as losses in efficiency and responsiveness. In addition, we must remain ready to adjust to changing circumstances. Please do not hesitate to contact Ari Sky or Renee Fernandes if you have any questions.

Once again, thank you for your commitment to New Bedford during these trying times.

[Signature]

Jon Mitchell  
Mayor