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# **CITY OF BLAINE**

## City Manager’s Office

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date: March 13, 2020

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**Blaine City Manager issues proclamation declaring emergency related to COVID-19**

On March 13, Blaine City Manager Michael Jones issued a proclamation declaring a state of emergency related to the COVID-19 virus outbreak. The proclamation allows the City to modify policies and procedures so that the City can move more quickly and efficiently to address issues presented by the virus outbreak as they arise. A copy of the proclamation is available on the City’s website under “City News and Updates” at cityofblaine.com.

Michael Jones said, “Issuing the proclamation is a technical administrative step. It might sound alarming because it uses the word “emergency,” but really it just allows the City to be more responsive to the needs that may arise over the next few weeks. Under a declaration, we can take steps such as expediting purchasing or changing rules related to the use of sick leave.”

The City Manager consulted with City Councilmembers in advance of the declaration, and a Special City Council meeting is scheduled for Monday, March 16, 2020 at 5:00pm so that the City Council can consider a resolution to reaffirm the proclamation. The City Manager will also be requesting that the City Council amend the City Council Rules of Procedure to allow Councilmembers to attend meetings by phone. The current rules are very restrictive, essentially requiring City Council members to be physically in attendance at City Council meetings. The change will make it easier for the City to operate while supporting virus control through things like social distancing.

City Manager, Michael Jones said, “Keeping the City operating as smoothly and normally as possible is of utmost importance to us. Declaring an emergency will help us continue to provide our services as we respond to the virus outbreak.”