

**STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA  
COUNTY OF ONSLOW**

**Resolution 20-005  
of the Onslow County Board of Commissioners  
to Phase-in Reopening in Onslow County**

WHEREAS, the President of the United States presented new federal guidelines April 16, 2020 entitled "Opening Up America Again," defining conditions for parts of the United States that have a downward trajectory of COVID-19 symptoms, a downward trajectory of documented cases, and effective testing and treatment of patients to begin opening up businesses through a phased-in approach; and

WHEREAS the President also specified the importance of local areas conducting contact tracing, having sufficient screening in place, an ability to surge healthcare capacity and equip workers with protective gear, and to advise citizens regarding protocols for social distancing; and

WHEREAS the President advised that under these conditions of contact tracing, a declining trajectory of the incidence of COVID-19 and a lack of resurgence, a three-phase reopening should begin now, which will include taking preventative precautions like hand-washing, temperature monitoring, enhanced disinfection, limiting nonessential travel, taking special care of more vulnerable populations, continuing to limit visitation at nursing homes, keeping common public areas closed, maintaining many social distancing measures and refraining from large gatherings throughout the three phases of implementation; and

WHEREAS Onslow County began COVID-19 precautionary measures in February 2020, weeks before the first case was confirmed in our area and has demonstrated the ability to initiate precautions to prevent the spread of disease and has implemented a highly effective program of contact tracing from the beginning of the pandemic; and

WHEREAS Onslow County began meetings with community partners to coordinate preventative efforts at the end of February, and a press conference was held February 28<sup>th</sup> to inform the public and began a social distancing, disinfection and enhanced hygiene campaign; and

WHEREAS widespread prevention, disinfection and social distancing practices were in place prior to the first case of COVID-19 being confirmed in Onslow County; County buildings and most businesses closed in mid-March, and Onslow County began promoting mask-wearing in public for those who must leave their home beginning April 4, 2020, the same day CDC Guidelines changed and began recommending mask-wearing; and

WHEREAS Onslow County has seen an overall incidence of COVID-19 of only 19 per 100,000, which is significantly less than the average in North Carolina (63 per 100,000) and the national average (230 cases per 100,000), having only 38 confirmed positive cases and 1 death in Onslow County with a population in excess of 200,000 people, which is fewer than .02% of our population; and

WHEREAS Onslow County has had a declining trajectory of 911 calls reporting respiratory symptoms for weeks, with reported complaints of respiratory illness being lower than this time last year, and has also had a declining number of pending tests that arose from symptoms consistent with COVID-19 over the past 14 days; and more than 1240 people in Onslow County have now tested negative to COVID-19; and

WHEREAS, the Onslow County economy is highly dependent upon retail, restaurant and other service industries, lacking significant manufacturing and other types of industry, and unemployment and hunger have increased in our area at an alarming rate; Onslow County public assistance applications for Food and Nutrition Supplements are up 46% over this time last year from March 1 through April 17; Onslow County residents have received more than \$1.2 million in additional Food and Nutrition Supplements in the last three weeks, and Onslow County has distributed an additional 75,000 meals in essential groceries to citizens in need, and this Board is concerned that the risk of the rising economic impact and widespread food insecurity is now outpacing the risk of death from COVID-19 in this area; and

WHEREAS, the 18-page plan for “Opening Up America Again” by the President of the United States identifies the circumstances necessary for areas of the country to allow employees to start returning to work, and Onslow County has a low incidence, a declining trajectory, a strong healthcare system, and has a population that has demonstrated its willingness to be compliant with social distancing, quarantine and hygiene measures; and

WHEREAS, just as North Carolina is not identical to other states, individual counties in North Carolina also have differing circumstances, risks and population dynamics; Onslow County Board Commissioners know the circumstances and risks of the local population and can work with public health officials to determine systematic, reasonable measures in a three-phase plan to reopen, and will take measures to protect the health and safety of its citizens in line with the current recommendations.

NOW THEREFORE, the Onslow County Board of Commissioners urges the State to implement the “Opening Up America Again” plan promulgated by the President of the United States, to allow all current North Carolina Executive Orders restricting the operation of businesses to expire, and to permit Onslow County Government to begin a cautious plan to reopen for business in three measured phases beginning May 1, in compliance with federal recommendations and in close consult with Public Health recommendations.

Adopted this 20<sup>th</sup> day of April 2020.

Onslow County  
Board of Commissioners





Jack Bright, Chairman

Attest:



Julie S. Wand, Clerk to the Board