



Youngsville ABC Board
P. O. Box 387
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ABCStore@townofyoungsville.org

MINUTES

MARCH 23, 2020

8:30 AM

SPECIAL CALLED MEETING

YOUNGSVILLE TOWN HALL CONFERENCE ROOM

134 US 1A SOUTH

Member Rick Houser called the Special Called Meeting of the Town of Youngsville ABC Board to order at 8:33am. In attendance was Members Mary Margaret Norman, Rick Houser, and Todd Casado (by teleconference). Chairman Samuel Hardwick and Member Danny Stutzman were not in attendance. Also, in attendance was Town Administrator Phillip Cordeiro, ABC Store Manager Laurie Pritchett (by teleconference), Finance Officer Jaclyn Patterson (by teleconference), and Town Clerk Emily Hurd.

The Youngsville ABC Board met to discuss a response plan to the COVID-19 Virus. Member Houser knew that everyone was concerned about safety at this time and asked Pritchett to share her concerns and suggestions. Pritchett stated Staff has been diligently disinfecting but was unsure what else could be done other than reducing the hours of operations or limiting the number of customers in the ABC Store. Member Norman asked how business has been and Pritchett stated they were doing great. Pritchett stated they were running low on stock, but the delivery truck was scheduled for Tuesday. She explained this shipment was for three weeks so she ordered the maximum amount of inventory she could fit in the warehouse. Pritchett stated she was concerned about running out of the popular brands. When asked, Pritchett stated they have done over \$105,000 in sales over the past two weeks. She noted that was approximately a month's worth of sales.

Member Norman wondered why they would close early if the ABC Store was doing that kind of business. Pritchett explained she was going by Wake County ABC Stores hours, thinking perhaps 10am – 7pm. She noted they would be bringing in customers from Wake County when the Wake County ABC Stores closed early. Pritchett also wanted to note the Dalcom credit card system did go down on Saturday and she thought it might have something to do with the increased demand. She explained the reduced hours would help to keep the ABC Store from being rushed by people. Franklinton ABC Store



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was waiting to see what Youngsville did before deciding and Louisburg did not return Pritchett's calls.

Member Houser spoke with the manager at the Wake Forest ABC Store and they have started closing at 7pm but have not yet restricted the number of people in the store. He noted the Wake Forest ABC Store was full when he was there. Member Houser stated they were doing \$600,000 a month at that store. He wondered if the ABC Commission would close the stores across the state, but no one has heard anything from them at this time. He heard that Mecklenburg County was not letting people into their ABC Stores and noted that was an alternative they could do if they felt it was best for their employees. Hurd noted that Mecklenburg County had the highest number of cases in the state. Pritchett stated Chatham County ABC Board are also not letting people into their ABC Stores. She requested permission to post a sign that anyone who is sick to not enter the ABC Store. Member Norman stated that was not a bad idea and Member Houser stated the employees could help them with curbside service.

Member Norman inquired about sanitizing the doors and Pritchett stated they have increased how often it is done. Pritchett stated employees are also washing and sanitizing hands more often. Member Houser inquired about cleaning supplies and Pritchett stated they have plenty of bleach, Lysol, soap, toilet paper and towels.

Patterson asked Pritchett how she felt about not letting people in and Pritchett stated that has been discussed. She explained it depended on the number of employees and which employees want to man the door. Member Norman asked if they would be able to service the customers in a timely manner and Pritchett didn't feel they would lose any customers if service was slowed down. Pritchett explained curbside service would only be if things got worse.

Based on social distancing of six feet, Member Casado stated that would be approximately two people per aisle, possibly limiting customers to six at a time. He felt it wouldn't be a bad idea to limit the number in the ABC Store. The advantage is the customers must come to the ABC Stores for their liquor purchases. Member Casado stated that since the space was tight in the ABC Store they needed to think of the safety of the employees. He didn't feel it would hurt sales, noting people were ignoring the shelter in place requests. Member Casado explained hour restrictions on stores were mostly for sanitizing and stocking. If the employees can do that during regular hours, then they shouldn't need to limit hours.



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Member Casado stated the ABC Board did need to discuss how to handle any employees that have underlying health issues or are over the age of 60. Pritchett stated she had one employee over the age of 60 that was high risk, she was high risk herself, and one other that was possibly high risk. Member Casado stated that may change how they look at things, including setting up a table for curbside service. They may want to try to keep people out of the ABC Store, especially with the increased traffic. Pritchett noted two of the employees worked at other ABC Stores. She stated they would do whatever the ABC Board felt best. As for government shut down, Pritchett felt that would not pertain to them and Member Casado agreed. Member Casado felt they needed to look at how to handle the staff. He noted the CDC does not recommend against wearing gloves but expressed concerns this gives a false sense of safety. Pritchett explained that only one employee wears them, and she noticed they were not changed often. She noted the gloves affect the touch screen system they use. Member Casado stated Pritchett needed to be observant of employees to make sure they are washing their hands. He stated that she needed to call them out and Pritchett stated the employees are calling each other out at this time. Member Casado stated it looked like they were complying with CDC recommendations at this time. He noted that if customers touched a lot of the bottles and put them back, they would need to be wiped down more often. Pritchett stated they are offering customers the option of bagging their own purchases, but no one has taken them up on that offer.

Member Casado inquired about a plan of action should one of the employees test positive. It was requested that Pritchett keep the information confidential for legal reasons and to prevent spreading panic. Pritchett agreed, explaining one of the cases in Franklin County has affected their business. Member Houser stated Benchmark is telling employees not to come to work if they don't feel well and to get tested. They are requested to stay out the recommended 14 days if they have a positive result.

Member Norman wanted to make sure customers could be handled in a timely manner if they decided to move to door service. Pritchett stated door service would be a last resort and Member Casado agreed it should be a worst-case scenario.

Member Casado inquired about employee morale and Pritchett stated they were concerned. She reiterated that she would like to post signage about not entering the ABC Store if they were sick. Pritchett felt this would help make people feel better. All the employees are still showing up for work. Member Casado stated he oversees ten stores, noting that nine are doing fine but the tenth store is very high stress. He stated the employees needed to be comfortable and if anyone wasn't comfortable working during



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this pandemic, they can be given the option of unpaid leave. Member Casado stated he didn't want the employees or customers to get the perception that something is wrong. He stressed the importance of talking to Staff and making sure they understand what is being done and why. Member Casado asked that Pritchett be open to suggestions and listen to the employees' concerns. Pritchett stated that she has tried not to downplay the situation, but they are taking the same precautions as they would with the regular flu. She expressed they are being diligent.

Member Norman stated the signage was not a bad idea if it let the customers know they would still be served. Pritchett stated that she would also like to request sick customers leave the building and let them know the clerk would bring their items to the car. She stated that she did not want any illness spread to other customers. Member Norman reminded everyone that pollen was a big factor this time of year, noting it put people in a difficult spot.

Member Houser summarized the suggested plan of action. Safety of the employees is important and sick employees should be asked to go home. If someone is uncomfortable working, try to accommodate but make sure there is enough Staff available. Schedule employees to be off during times when the ABC Store is not as busy. Try to be as flexible as possible.

Member Houser wanted clarification on changes in hours, noting it wouldn't be hard to schedule our closing hours to match Wake County, but they all needed to agree. He expressed concerns there would be more people coming in during the shortened hours.

As for signage, Member Houser agreed with requesting sick customers to stay outside while the clerks handled them at curbside. He also agreed they should reserve the right to limit the number of people inside the ABC Store at one time.

After a brief discussion, the two main reasons to close early was to restock and sanitize. It was noted that some of the stores were working limited hours because of staffing shortages. Pritchett felt they should be able to keep up with stocking and cleaning if they keep most of the employees, so there was no need to close early at this time. Member Norman agreed unless there was a strong reason such as limited staffing or the situation gets worse.

Member Houser requested that Pritchett, or any of the ABC Board Members, reach out to either Cordeiro or him and they can run point for the rest of the ABC Board. He spoke



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with Chief Whitley and noted the Police Officers will be more visible during open hours. They will also come by at closing or if they notice a high volume of traffic at the ABC Store.

Member Norman stressed the importance of keeping up with cleaning, especially items that have been touched often. She noted employees need to be consistent. Pritchett stated Staff has been buying sanitation supplies as they become available.

Member Houser adjourned the meeting at 9:02am.