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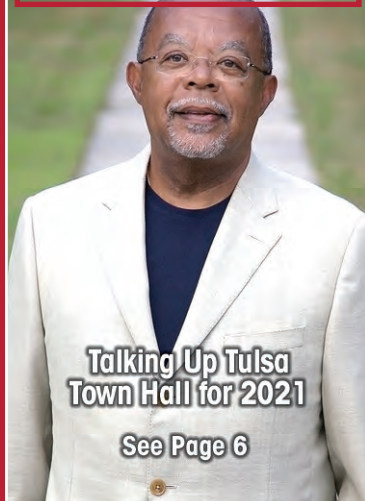
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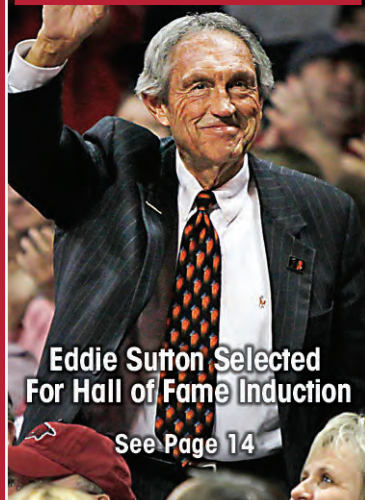
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# Tulsa County Officials Respond to the Historic COVID-19 Virus Health Crisis

By **RON PETERS**  
Tulsa County Commissioner

Never before in Tulsa County history has the entire community been faced with a public health crisis like the COVID-19 virus. As the virus has swept across our state, elected officials of Tulsa County have been responding to ensure that we can continue to serve and protect our county citizens.

County government is an essential service and the Board of County Commissioners and our employees as well as other elected officials have taken decisive action along with the governor, private sector and nonprofits to respond to the crisis.

## Board of County Commissioners

Before the state legislature recessed, a bill was passed providing flexibility to the county when public meetings are held. Under the new law, county meetings can now be streamed live to avoid large attendance at the meetings while allowing elected officials to attend remotely. County public meetings, including those of the Board of County Commissioners, can now be accessed through social media (look for posts the day before highlighting the audio streaming link).

Agendas and meeting minutes can be found at [www.tulsacounty.org/Tulsacounty/agenda.aspx](http://www.tulsacounty.org/Tulsacounty/agenda.aspx)

## Sheriff

The Tulsa County Sheriff's Foundation, Inc. partnered with several local restaurants to pay for meals for those who have lost their jobs and/or had their income reduced and are struggling to feed their families. The Sheriff's Foundation funded six area restaurants which provided meals each day for two weeks

## Parks Department

The Parks Department re-



**SURVEYING THE SITUATION:** Tulsa County Parks Director Vince Trinidad, left, and Tulsa County Commissioner Ron Peters survey the situation in the playground area of LaFortune Park recently during the Coronavirus epidemic.

duced office hours, allowing employees to work remotely from home where possible. Essential Parks and Golf Course staff, before being forced to close, rotated to ensure that they were able to provide a safe outdoor environment for the citizens of Tulsa County. Based upon the recommendations from the Tulsa City County Health Department and the Tulsa Area Emergency Management Agency the recreation centers closed to the public when the Center for Disease Control guidelines reduced gatherings to 10 or less.

## Court Services

The Court Services Department provides vital services for the court system. Though many of the court's dockets have been suspended, the Court Services staff is still responsible for supervising and monitoring court ordered conditions to be followed by defendants who have been released from jail on any type of bond. Court Services also continues to support the

work of the Drug, Mental Health, and Veterans courts and the Women in Recovery program.

## Social Services

During this crisis, the Tulsa County Social Services Department has stepped up in a big way to collaborate with community partners to provide safety and shelter for those who have no place to turn for help.

Since the county shelter facility is at capacity, the Board of County Commissioners approved using large tents as a day shelter and night shelter. These tents will be set up near the new Family Justice Center downtown. This can help relieve the overpopulation at the Day Center and Salvation Army. For the homeless that have set up their own encampments, food and supplies are being delivered to them. A medical alert system has been set up so those who need medical attention can be helped. Director Linda Johnston serves on the Community Testing Task Force led by St Johns/Ascension to have a plan in place to be pre-

pared if community wide testing becomes necessary.

## Juvenile Bureau

Daily detention hearings for youth arrested are being accomplished by phone with only the judge and recording staff in the courtroom.

The arrest reports of detained youth are reviewed daily to identify those who do not pose a public threat and can be released.

## Property Taxes

For many property owners, March 31 marked the deadline for having their property taxes paid. Because the virus has affected so many property owners in Tulsa County, payments received after March 31 will have the penalty and interest waived for late payments.

As we have seen in the past, during stressful times the employees of Tulsa County are second to none when it comes to showing leadership, compassion, and kindness for our fellow Tulsans in times of crisis.

## KUDOS of the MONTH: Health Care Providers

GTR salutes health care providers from area hospitals, clinics, doctor offices and elsewhere who are risking their lives for the treatment of others during this COVID-19 pandemic. Tulsa area health care workers, doctors, nurses, emergency responders, aides, transport specialists, and more risk their lives every day to care for those with the potentially deadly infection.

As David Blumenthal writes in STAT Reports, "Personal courage is part of the explanation. But there's more to it than that. What we are seeing is

the professionalism of people like Anthony Fauci and thousands of health care workers at work. The essence of their professionalism is that they put the interests of patients and the public before their own."

Blumenthal adds, "Professionalism is ingrained during medical training, role-modeled by the senior clinicians who teach, and reinforced by powerful aphorisms inherited from legendary practitioners going back to Hippocrates. One was the eminent Boston physician Francis W. Peabody who, in 1927, famously wrote: 'One

of the essential qualities of the clinician is interest in humanity, for the secret of the care of the patient is in caring for the patient.'"

He continues, "Professionalism also instills a commitment to peers who join together on the frontlines of medicine. In this way, health professionals resemble soldiers who sacrifice for their comrades in the trenches. And like the military, they accept collective responsibility for their behavior."

Thank you, health care providers for getting us through this pandemic.



Courtesy photo

**WORKING FOR OTHERS:** Health care workers are saluted for risking their lives for others during this COVID-19 pandemic.