



## NEWS RELEASE

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### **City of River Falls responds to Wisconsin Supreme Court's May 13 "Safer at Home" ruling**

River Falls, Wis. – City of River Falls Mayor Dan Toland said that the Wisconsin State Supreme Court's May 13 decision to invalidate Governor Tony Evers "Safer at Home" order has caused confusion and frustration among Wisconsin municipalities about how to move forward with local recovery plans.

"The decision leaves us without state guidance for moving into the next phase of our pandemic response and recovery process," said Toland. "However, we intend to immediately amend and utilize our plan, 'Crushing COVID-19,' to guide City operations, clearly communicate community guidelines and expectations, and ensure the health and safety of our residents – which is our top priority."

Toland said he expects that an updated version of the plan will be available early next week on the City's [COVID-19 webpage](#).

"In the meantime," he said, "I expect that local businesses that choose to open or expand operations, will carefully follow [CDC guidelines](#) for reopening and expansion, as well as [those](#) provided by the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation."

Toland cautioned that new orders from St. Croix and Pierce counties are expected within the next few days that will limit some business reopenings and operations. "I know that this adds to the current confusion and want to thank our local businesses for their flexibility and perseverance during this very difficult time."

Regarding City operations, Toland said the City will begin moving into Phase 1 of its current plan. However, he said, not every action anticipated in Phase 1 will occur immediately.

"We need to make sure we have the capacity and resources to open facilities and provide face-to-face services thoughtfully and carefully, both for the protection of the public and our staff. I ask community members to be patient as we take the necessary precautions.

"For example, we plan to open the dog park soon, but only after some maintenance work is completed. Playgrounds and sports courts are now open for use at one's own risk and

by utilizing CDC guidelines. However, I'm asking residents to stay off the equipment until caution tape and signage is removed and disposed of properly."

City Hall will remain closed to walk-in traffic until modifications for customer safety are completed, reported Toland.

Toland said the City will continue to closely monitor pandemic developments and case data as well as changing state mandates to ensure that safety is maintained. "This might mean a return to the measures we took under the 'Safer at Home' orders. We need to continue to be both diligent and flexible, something we have excelled at so far."

"Remember," said Toland, "we are in a federal, state, and locally-declared emergency. Cases of COVID-19 are in our region and in our community. We are in no way out of the woods."

Toland urged the public to continue using public health-recommended safeguards including social distancing, sanitizing, and masking in public settings.

Toland said that City staff are on hand to answer additional questions about prevention measures and City plans, or route callers to those who can, including the River Falls Area Chamber of Commerce and county health officials. City staff can be reached at 715-425-0900 during business hours. The City's COVID-19 [webpage](#) includes frequent updates and helpful information. Resources for local businesses, including reopening guidelines, are available on the [Chamber website](#).

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