



CITY OF MANGUM

201 N. Oklahoma Ave. Mangum, OK 73554

Phone 580-782-2250 * Fax 580-782-2489

May 27, 2020

From:

Mary Jane Scott, Mayor

To:

US Congress

House of Representatives

Select Subcommittee on the Coronavirus Crisis

Basic information: Mangum, Oklahoma lies in the Southwest Corner of Oklahoma. There are approximately 2700 residents. About 30% of the population is over 65, many who have come back home to retire. The school district has approximately 725 students PK to 12 and 80% qualify for free and reduced lunches. Not related, but Mangum Public Schools is a CEP school where all children in our district are served **FREE** breakfast and lunch. Our largest employers are Mangum Public Schools, Greer County and Mangum Brick Company.

Mangum was considered a “hot spot” because of our population when the Corona Virus hit. The epicenter was in the local Mangum Skilled Nursing Center formally Grace Living Center Nursing Home. More than half the residents contracted the virus as well as many of the employees. We have had a total of 67 cases as of today with 7 deaths and 59 recovered. The one case reported today was in the nursing home.

How do we stabilize local economies, protect the health and well-being of residents and safely re-open. I have contacted different leaders and directors in Mangum and Greer County to give you the real view and truth of our impact of the Corona Virus.

I need the answers too! I realize that the following comments are the problems but these need to be put forth and discussed.

Points to note about Covid19 affecting Mangum, OK:

1. **Effects happening directly to the City government**– From City Manager, Dave Andren: Our expenditures have not been great when you compare to bigger cities who are spending hundreds of thousands. Our problem is not with expenditures for COVID-19, but with the shear destruction of our economy.

The safety and welfare of our citizens have been priority one and we had no choice but to shut down the city. This is about to have a serious effect on our local economy. In Oklahoma, cities **do not** have access to **Ad Valorem tax**, we are entirely reliant on **Sales Tax for our General Government fund**. We are estimating a 75 to 80% loss in sales tax in April and May, we hope that tax revenues will rise as we open up business, but if we get a second wave, I fear many of those businesses will not reopen.

We had issues getting our first responders tested by the hospitals or health departments as strict rules stated that only those with all 4 symptoms, so when two of our first responders became ill, we had to quarantine them for 14 days. In an effort to keep our first responders on the streets the City had to purchase their own test kits, **we became the first in

Oklahoma to use rapid test kits and tested our employees once a week. It was necessary as the city does not have the human resources to deal with a loss of 2 out of 5 police officers.

I think if anything we need is help dealing with the loss of Sales Tax and to boost funding for rural development. **Rural Development** is one of the greatest assets that rural America has to keep small towns alive, and it has never been more important than it is now.

2. **Greer County Health Department and Mangum Regional Hospital**

In rural Oklahoma if several patients had needed ventilators or specialized care they would have had to **be transported to Altus, Lawton or OKC. Overburdening these Health care systems** is a real possibility and the EMS that transports becomes a concern. When EMS is transporting patients out of the City the community potentially is uncovered for emergency responses

Shutting down elective procedures to a rural hospital and other non-essential businesses/services can be detrimental to its survival. Economically, some communities may not recover from the economic burden brought on by COVID.

Testing – whether it be supplies or lab capacity the challenges have yet to cease making it difficult to test and get results back in a timely, beneficial manner. **There is little benefit to a COVID test if the results can't be received within 5 days.**

Workforce in high risk facilities is critical, yet in short supply. We have found that an outbreak in a LTC facility in rural OK has a much greater impact than in large metro areas due to shortage of workforce. In rural OK, if ten workers have to be isolated, there typically isn't ten more to step in and take their place.

Rural Oklahoma tends to have more vulnerable populations such as elderly and impoverished. Those living on fixed incomes do not have access to as many community resources to help weather the storm. Public transportation is virtually non-existent in rural OK.

Sense of urgency or “real threat” doesn't seem as prevalent in rural Oklahoma **UNTIL** an outbreak hits your town. It's important for media to cover all populations not just the population centers as it makes it too easy to disregard because it's not familiar.

Technology! Whether it's for team meetings, telehealth or access for children to engage with teachers. Technology infrastructure is lacking.

3. **Small Business Owners** – This pandemic has created a financial burden on many of our small business owners just like the rest of the United States. One daycare center has been in business for 40 years and is very worried that if there is another outbreak they may have to shut down they may not be able to reopen. A newly opened restaurant may not be able to reopen.
4. **Greer County EMS Director Comments: The farmers and ranchers need help.** This is a government issue not a city, but this affects rural communities which affects the City of Mangum. There is a shortage of beef in the grocery stores, but the price of beef is low and slowly going up. Cattle is imported from other countries when we have plenty of cattle here that needs to go in to the market. There are 12 to 15 countries that import cattle when we need to focus on the sale of cattle we have here in rural Oklahoma. Oklahoma ranchers say the bill to label the Country of Origin of meat is important. Americans support Americans.

Technology is very bad in rural Oklahoma. Internet strength is so bad that students that live in rural Greer County do not have good enough service to do online public school and college communications for classwork. Students need to be able to connect properly for at home teacher communications.