



May 14, 2020

Dear Executive Team Members,

Thank you for your continued patience and commitment to your colleagues and to the community we all serve.

While Governor DeWine is beginning to relax restrictions on commerce, services, and travel, questions remain about balancing Ohio's reopening with the health and safety of County employees and the individuals we serve. We have not yet reinstated public access to our lobbies as we continue to monitor the effectiveness of serving clients and residents remotely and virtually. Additionally, with the success of our work from home initiatives, we are committed to continuing those practices.

You have likely read that the County received funds from the federal government through the CARES Act. While that is true, the restrictions that come with that money currently prohibit us from using it for covering budget deficits and making up for lost revenue. We have developed a plan that will offer the opportunity to keep our employees working and provide desperately needed budget relief. It is our hope that these efforts will put us in a better position to weather the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

In an effort to promote public health and safety while using the federal CARES Act funds granted to Summit County, the Office of the Executive intends to create new opportunities for continued work for those departments where work is scarce or has been discontinued. To this end, we are asking County Council to approve the creation of a new division under the Department of Human Resources entitled "Division of COVID-19 Response." This division will provide COVID-related prevention and support to County operations and the community at large. Federal guidelines under the CARES Act allow organizations to assign this work for public employees who would otherwise have been furloughed or subject to layoff for a lack of work or due to budget shortfalls.

Beginning June 1, 2020 paid administrative leave for "non-essential" employees will conclude. Those employees impacted will be contacted by their supervisors to discuss next steps. Those employees designated as "non-essential" as well as those currently designated as "essential" may be re-designated to work within the Division of COVID-19 Response. Additionally, any County employee may be asked to work in and/or support the operations of the Division of COVID-19 Response based on technical or other skills they possess or based on the operational needs of their appointing authority.

It is important for you to know that we will work to place employees in assignments that are a good fit. Employees who do not wish to transfer to the new division will be placed on furlough through the Shared Work Ohio program and assisted with enrolling in unemployment benefits or may opt to be laid off and receive unemployment benefits if they so choose.

If employees wish to take their paid leave during any of the time they are on reassignment to the Division of COVID-19 Response, they will need to receive approval from their usual supervisor and the supervisor of the Division of COVID-19 Response. All policies related to sick and vacation leave will revert back to those previously established by Section 169 of the Summit County Codified Ordinances. Additionally, on June 1, 2020, employees who previously clocked in and out will be required to do so either on site or from their work from home stations.

The uncertainty of this time is very difficult. Please take some measure of comfort in knowing that compassionate care for the wellbeing of our employees leads each discussion we have about how to best move Summit County forward. Promoting public health, ensuring the safety of employees and stopping the spread of COVID-19 are paramount to the rebuilding of our economy and social community.

I wish you all good health at this trying time. I continue to be proud of the resiliency of our team.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Ilene Shapiro". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Ilene" and last name "Shapiro" clearly distinguishable.

Ilene Shapiro