

**COLUMBIA COUNTY, FLORIDA  
EMERGENCY ORDER 2020EO-01**

**AN EMERGENCY ORDER OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS FOR COLUMBIA COUNTY, FLORIDA, REQUIRING CLOSURE OF COUNTY PARKS, RECREATION AREAS, AND COMMUNITY CENTERS AND OF REQUIRING CLOSURE OF GAMING PARLORS AND SIMILAR BUSINESSES FOR DURATION OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC EMERGENCY**

**WHEREAS**, Resolution 2020R-07 was adopted on March 18, 2020, declaring the existence of a Local State of Emergency (“LSE”) due to the COVID-19 pandemic and concurrent states of emergency declared to exist at both the federal and state levels;

**WHEREAS**, by Resolution 2020R-07 the Board of County Commissioners has invoked its emergency powers pursuant to Florida Statutes section 252.38, and that statute provides the County with the authority to take whatever prudent action is necessary to ensure the health, safety, and welfare of the community;

**WHEREAS**, on March 20, 2020, Governor Ron DeSantis issued Executive Order 20-71, ordering the closure of gymnasiums and fitness centers, suspending on-premises food consumption at all restaurants in the State of Florida, and suspending on-premises consumption of alcoholic beverages throughout the state;

**WHEREAS**, the Governor’s orders in Executive Order 20-71 were each predicated on an urgent need to restrict gatherings of ten (10) or more people as part of the Centers for Disease Control’s “15 Days to Stop the Spread” initiative to slow the spread of the COVID-19 virus in communities throughout the United States;

**WHEREAS**, the findings of the Governor’s office in Executive Order 20-71 are clear and compelling, and are found by the Board of County Commissioners to be equally applicable to gaming parlors;

**WHEREAS**, Columbia County’s first and second confirmed COVID-19 cases were reported on March 22, 2020;

**WHEREAS**, the County’s Parks and Recreation Director has previously ordered closure of the County’s parks, recreation areas, and community centers, but those closures have gone unheeded by some members of the public;

**WHEREAS**, since the implementation of social distancing protocols in Columbia County, gaming parlors have not been observed to limit their operations or otherwise modify their operations to implement social distancing protocols in their establishments;

**WHEREAS**, the continuing use of parks, recreation areas, and community centers as well as continuing operation of gaming parlors during the COVID-19 pandemic all pose a clear danger to the public health and welfare of the citizens of Columbia County; and

**WHEREAS**, pursuant to Florida Statutes section 252.38(1), the County, by and through its Board of County Commissioners, has emergency jurisdictional authority over the entirety of this County.

**NOW, THEREFORE, IT IS ORDERED BY THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF COLUMBIA COUNTY, FLORIDA, AS FOLLOWS:**

1. All parks, recreation areas, and community centers located within Columbia County, Florida, are declared to be closed as of the effective date and time of this order. Said parks, recreation areas, and community centers shall remain closed until such time as the COVID-19 pandemic state of emergency ceases to exist or the restriction imposed by this order is lifted by the Board of County Commissioners in writing.
2. All gaming parlors located within the jurisdictional boundaries of Columbia County are ordered closed as of the effective date and time of this order. All such businesses shall remain closed until such time as the COVID-19 pandemic state of emergency ceases to exist or the restriction imposed by this order is lifted by the Board of County Commissioners in writing.
  - a. For purposes of this order, a “gaming parlor” is any establishment offering on-site for in-person use or enjoyment any: games, games of chance, sweepstakes, gambling, board gaming, bingo, poker, slot machines, video games, or any other similar form of entertainment for which patrons pay for or offer any consideration of any kind for the privilege or chance to participate. This definition is to be broadly construed by law enforcement officers so as to eliminate the gathering of people in such establishments and the associated increased risk of spreading COVID-19 that is created by such gatherings.

Any violation of these emergency measures shall subject the violator to arrest and criminal prosecution pursuant to section 252.50, Florida Statutes, or as any other violation of County ordinances.

Pursuant to the County’s authority under section 252.38, Florida Statutes, this order shall supersede all prior or conflicting orders of any municipality within Columbia County, however, any municipality within Columbia County may issue such emergency orders which exceed the minimum requirements of this order except upon property that is owned by Columbia County, which shall be solely governed by this order.

Dated this 23<sup>rd</sup> day of March, 2020 at 3:15 a.m./p.m.

**BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
COLUMBIA COUNTY, FLORIDA**

Approval as to  
form and correctness:

  
Joel F. Foreman, County Attorney

By:   
Toby Witt, Chairman

ATTEST:   
P. DeWitt Cason, Clerk of Courts