

For Official Release
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Office of the Governor
Utulei, American Samoa
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“Governor Hosts First Virtual Cabinet Meeting.”

“Today’s virtual meeting is one of the ways of how the pandemic continues to affect our daily lives, and there is no doubt that times have changed. However, it has not hindered you from doing your part in supporting the GAR, Task Force, and the EOC, and I appreciate your dedication.”

On March 1, 2022, the Lemanu-Talauega Administration held its first virtual Cabinet Meeting during the recent government shutdown. The shutdown is a result of the elevated Code Red COVID-19 threat level ordered by Governor Lemanu on 12:00 AM February 22, and has been extended until 12:01 AM, March 8th.

All Cabinet members attended via ZOOM and included Directors who are currently off island. Governor Lemanu addressed the Cabinet members with gratitude, and reminded them of their commitment to provide the best service to the people of American Samoa.

“I commend you all on the work that is being done by each and every department in prioritizing the health and safety of the citizens of American Samoa. The Department of Public Safety and Samoan Affairs has done an exceptional job in maintaining order during the hours of curfew; DOH and LBJ for keeping a fluid system at their respective facilities to specifically treat patients with COVID-19; DOE, ASCC, and The Public Library has provided support for all students and teachers carrying out virtual learning; ASTCA and ASPA has done a great job with maintaining utilities.”

“No one is sitting idly. Thank you all for being proactive.”

“This proves that we are ready to work as a team to meet the challenges of dealing with the community transmission of COVID-19, and shows our ability to stay flexible in times of an emergency. Today’s virtual meeting is one of the ways of how the pandemic continues to affect our daily lives, and there is no doubt that times have changed.

However, it has not hindered you from doing your part in supporting the GAR, Task Force, and the EOC, and I appreciate your dedication.”

“Now is the time to display our resilience; if we waver as leaders, so will the public. I ask that you reevaluate the way your department carries out its daily functions. Especially if you are dealing with services that experience the flow of heavy traffic daily. You must remind your staff and the public to remain vigilant and account for incorporating mitigation efforts such as wearing masks and social distancing, to keep from spreading the virus further. It is our goal to continue carrying out government services and functions, but doing so safely.”

“Recently in social media and the news, there are both positive and negative reactions from the public. We need to pay attention to their concerns. At the same time, we must not let negative or impractical comments dictate your ability to lead. Our primary goal has always been to serve the people of American Samoa, this is your calling, but this also means that all your actions and decisions are easy to be criticized by the public. You must remain patient during this crucial time and understand that this is not an easy time for our people. This lockdown will affect families financially, socially, and mentally. Stay the course and remember that service to the people is our priority.

I commend each of you for your efforts towards the fight to contain the community spread of the COVID-19 virus in our Territory.”

Other departments who presented during the cabinet meeting were DOH, DOE, ASCC, DOA, and DHSS.

Daily updates are received by the EOC and forwarded on to the GAR for review. Governor Lemanu and Lieutenant Governor Talauega recognize the support by departments in the EOC, and encourage all departments to continue to assist ASDHS-TEMCO in their daily operations.

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