Dear Fellow Members:

I usually start this monthly email by noting that this is “my regular letter to our Club’s membership after each of our monthly Board of Governors meetings.” Well, nothing feels terribly regular right now. But, it is even more important, at these times of stress, to ensure that we are providing you, the membership of our Club, with reports on the work being done to maintain our Club so that we are ready to open and renew the full range of our Club’s activities.

In the wake of the order of the [local government] to close gyms, restaurants, and bars, other than for takeout or delivery of food, we closed the Clubhouse. As part of that closure, we committed to our employees to pay them their compensation through March 31, and to provide compensation at 75% to the extent the closure remains in place through April 30. According to the Club’s management, this has been very well received by the Club staff. They have seen other hospitality organizations, such as hotels, restaurants, and bars, simply close and immediately lay off their employees. But we all know, as Club members, that our staff members are more than just employees – they are family to us. So, we were urged by Club members to provide financial support to our staff, which we have done. I am very proud that our members asked for this for the staff and pleased that management and the Board were in full agreement.

Club management and the Board are actively monitoring the various aspects of these closures, including potential government support for organizations and employees. It is a very dynamic situation, and as is often the case with government action, there is vigorous debate over the actual programs, and there will be time delays for these programs to come online. But we intended to take advantage of very avenue to help support our employees. You should have seen a communication from our Club Foundation providing an opportunity to support our Club during this time through donations to a special fund established by the Foundation. The entire Board of Governors has pledged to support this fund, and I urge each Club member to do so.

Many of you have heard me say about our Club – that we are a hotel, but more than just a hotel; we are a restaurant, but more than just a restaurant; we are a gym, but more than just a gym; we are a banquet facility, but more than just a banquet facility. We are a private membership club – one of the best in the world. That comes with all of the advantages and privileges of a private organization, but it also comes with responsibilities. We are charged with managing our Club – through good times and tough times. Our employees are long-tenured and look to us and treat us as more than just customers. We are meant to be in this together – its why we have such a vigorous committee structure, why we each insist on visibility into our operations, and why we expect our comments and concerns to be addressed.

So, the Board is focused on four tactics at this time, all designed to maintain our membership and staff and have us ready to open when are permitted to do so:

1. First, as noted above, we are providing support for our employees well beyond most hospitality operations.
2. Second, we are exploring every avenue regarding assistance for organizations facing the immediate closure of operations. We are working with our bank and insurance companies to ensure we have ample liquidity and to see if we can obtain compensation for the forced closure. And, we are actively monitoring the various government efforts, and urging our trade association to have organizations like our Club included in those efforts. We just learned that the stimulus bill working its way through Congress does not provide small business-related financing to membership organizations like our Club, which is of course disappointing. But we will continue to look for every avenue of support that might be available.
3. Third, we are seeking to maintain member engagement. We’ve led outdoor walks, distributed information around at-home fitness opportunities, provided reviews on various streaming programs for entertainment and even shared a recipe from our renowned chef. More of this type of engagement will be coming – please keep an eye out for emails from the Club – we hope to have several out each week.
4. Finally, we have asked our members to maintain their financial support of the Club. I know this is not an insignificant ask for each of us. But it is critical to ensuring we treat our staff well and have the funds to both maintain our Clubhouse and to be ready to reopen as soon as we are permitted. The continuing receipt of dues, health center fees, and food and beverage minimums are, at this point, our only revenue. While we have done everything we can think of to reduce expenses, there is a basic level of expenses to maintain our building. By keeping these revenues in place, we not only maintain our building, but we are providing a buffer for our staff and help to ensure that we can promptly reopen when we are permitted. And, I’d like us all to remember that when we reopen – we won’t receive immediate additional revenues from dining and beverage, as we bill after each month. And, it will take time to fill our hotel rooms again. So, having funds on hand when we reopen is important to our being able to open with the services we have all come to expect at our Club.

As I think about other hospitality-related organizations, we are so much more fortunate, because we have a strong and loyal membership and dedicated staff. So, I am specifically asking for your continued support of your Club and our amazing staff. I am asking you to maintain your membership, to pay your Club fees regularly and on time, to take advantage of the various ways we can stay engaged with our Club during the closure, and to take advantage of opportunities to provide direct support to our staff.

If we support each of the four tactics above, I believe we will come through this closure in a solid position and ready to reopen and renew our Club’s fabled fellowship. We will show the private clubs of the world – which see us as a premier club – that we are strong and here for the long run. Our staff, and potential future staff, will know that we truly support them. And, we as members will know that we did everything we could to support our beloved Club, and to help maintain our position as a cherished institution and a place we call our home away from home.

A couple of governance-related points. With the order prohibiting large meetings through at least April 24, we will unable to hold our annual meeting scheduled for April 22. The Board, pursuant to the Bylaws, has deferred the annual meeting to a date to be set by the Club President within 30 days after April 22. We will send out a notice to all members once we can set that date in a way that conforms to the [local government] order. Also, this is the time of year we establish our committees. I urge each of you to complete the form you should have received indicating which committee on which you would like to serve. As we come out of the closure, we will want our committees up and ready to go, as they will be a critical part of our re-opening our Club.

And, please do not hesitate to send any member of the Board of Governors or Club management any suggestions you have, particularly around potential member engagement activities and ways we can support our staff. We have already received numerous suggestions, and some of them are already in place. Keep the ideas coming!

Please take care our yourselves at this time. And, please keep your fellow members and our staff in your thoughts at this time. Together, we will get through this difficult time.

Sincerely,