Town of Brattleboro
COVID-19 Response Status
May 2, 2020
12:10pm

An Update to the Community from Brattleboro Town Manager Peter Elwell:

The United States Government and the State of Vermont are operating under State of Emergency declarations issued by President Trump and Governor Scott related to the COVID-19 coronavirus pandemic. The Town of Brattleboro, as a subdivision of the State of Vermont, is taking emergency actions in accordance with Governor Scott's declaration of a State of Emergency for all of Vermont.

Fire Chief Mike Bucossi, who also is the Town's Emergency Management Director, is in close ongoing communication with Brattleboro Memorial Hospital, Rescue Inc., and other emergency health service providers. Chief Bucossi and Town Manager Peter Elwell are in at least daily communication with the Vermont Department of Health and Vermont Emergency Management. All other members of the Town's management team are maintaining similarly close contact with their colleagues in State government and others to ensure that the Town's actions are taken in concert with similar actions to protect the public throughout Vermont and beyond.

Please visit the Town's website at www.brattleboro. org for extensive information about COVID-19, its impacts, and actions being taken to address those impacts. All of the Town's daily updates are posted there, along with links to the Vermont Department of Health, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and the World Health Organization. Most importantly, the Town's homepage includes links to numerous resources for informing and assisting individuals, families, businesses, and other organizations. All of this information is being reviewed daily to ensure you can rely on the Town's site for current and accurate information throughout the COVID-19 emergency.

WHAT IS NEW TODAY

There is no change in the status of Town operations today. However, due to the significance of our plan to resume daily on-site office functions on Monday, May 4, we are repeating today (and will repeat through the weekend) the following announcement that first appeared in the daily update on Wednesday, April 29:

On Monday, May 4, all Town offices will resume daily on-site office functions, in accordance with the following:

- The exterior entrances to all Town facilities will remain locked at all times.
- Signs will be posted at all exterior entrances clearly indicating that no one may enter the building if they have any symptoms of respiratory illness (fever, cough, and/or shortness of breath).
- There will be only 1 employee in each office at any one time, except when more than one employee is necessary to complete a required task.
- Employees who are not in the office will continue to work from home in the same manner as they have been during the full closure of Town offices since March 27.
- The public is requested to continue to do as much Town business as possible remotely (by email, internet, phone, or mail). **Please note that this includes the payment of property taxes and utility bills. Those can be paid by mail or online. By Monday, they will also be able to be paid by dropping an envelope containing your check (no cash) into a locked black drop box that will be attached to the large wooden light pole in the parking lot behind the Municipal Center.**

- When an on-site visit is necessary for a particular individual to comply with a Town requirement or to receive a Town service, such visits can be arranged in advance (by making an appointment) or at the time of the visit (by calling the applicable office).
- Anyone who is not a Town employee will be met at the exterior door by a Town employee, escorted into the applicable office, and then escorted out of the building.
- Making an appointment in advance is strongly encouraged for two reasons:
    1. Since offices will be staffed by only 1 employee at a time, there will be unscheduled times each day when any particular office is not available to the public. There also may be some scheduled closures in certain departments (e.g. for an entire morning, afternoon, or day). Those will be announced to the public in advance.
    2. Since only 1 visitor will be allowed in any office at any given time, visitors who do not make an appointment in advance may have to wait outside the building until it is their turn to enter.
- During the visit, the 1 employee and 1 visitor will:
    - wear masks at all times (the Town will provide a mask to any visitor who does not have one),
    - wear gloves or use hand sanitizer before handling documents, and
    - abide by social distancing best practices (such as standing no closer than 6 feet apart).
- Town employees will use disinfectant cleaner to wipe down all counters, door knobs, and other commonly touched surfaces at the beginning of each shift, after each visitor, and at the end of each shift, paying particular attention to wiping down any surface that is touched by any visitor.
- Restrooms will not be available for public use. If an employee allows a visitor to use a restroom in an emergency, that employee will use disinfectant cleaner to wipe down all fixtures, handles, and touched surfaces immediately after the visitor leaves.
- Town employees will continue to do as much work as possible with other Town employees via email, internet, and phone. When 2 or more employees must meet face-to-face to complete a particular task, they will adhere to the same requirements as when providing 1-to-1 services to visitors:
    - wear masks at all times,
    - wear gloves or use hand sanitizer before handling documents, and
    - abide by social distancing best practices (such as standing no closer than 6 feet apart).
- Brooks Memorial Library remains closed to the public but cardholders may request (via phone or email) materials for curbside pick-up beginning Monday, May 4. Details will be available at www.brookslibraryvt.org. Borrowed items also may be returned through the big blue metal bookdrop box in the Municipal Center parking lot.
- The status of Recreation programming remains unchanged at this time. In the weeks ahead, the Recreation and Parks Department will provide an update about the planning for resumption of certain programs and activities as COVID-19 circumstances permit.
- The status of all emergency services and outdoor work crews is unchanged at this time.

The following information has previously been announced by the Town to the community. Some of the items have been modified to update the details. The information is separated into sections, as follows: "Overall Status of Town Government's Daily Operations," "Emergency Services," "Non-Emergency and Administrative Support Services," and "Public Meetings":

OVERALL STATUS OF TOWN GOVERNMENT'S DAILY OPERATIONS

- All Town facilities are closed to the public.
- In keeping with the Governor's "Stay Home – Stay Safe" order, most administrative employees are working at home. While we are not in our usual places interacting with the public in the usual manner, we are here for you during these extraordinary times. We have made arrangements for employees to conduct many of their usual activities from their homes. Some continue to come to the office occasionally to complete tasks that can only be completed there. Importantly, all email communications

and most telephone communications are functioning exactly as they do during normal office operations, but we are only sporadically able to retrieve and reply to communications via USPS + delivery services. Field crews are performing limited ongoing field work to protect public health and safety, and all field employees are "on call" every day for addressing urgent maintenance issues (like a water main break, a snowstorm, etc.). If there is anything you need from your Town government, please contact us. Those of us who have direct dial phone numbers and individual email addresses can be contacted in the usual way. If you don't have that information, please use the contact information for each department listed below under "Non-Emergency and Administrative Support Services."

- Town officials are coordinating with a variety of community organizations regarding emerging community needs that extend beyond the scope of our normal Town government services.
- All reservations for use of Town facilities by non-Town organizations are cancelled until further notice.

EMERGENCY SERVICES

- Emergency services are still being provided by the Police Department (BPD) and Fire Department (BFD).
- Both BPD and BFD have instituted policies that adjust their normal procedures to reflect COVID-19 best practices advice from public health experts. This includes screening every employee for COVID-19 before and during every shift.
- Dispatch is fully staffed 24/7 and is screening for COVID-19 on all calls.
- Both BPD and BFD are conducting "doorway assessments" for COVID-19 before entering into buildings.
- Both BPD and BFD have implemented best practices for more rigorous than normal cleaning of facilities and equipment, for the use of personal protective equipment, and for decontamination (when needed) after calls.
- BPD is still patrolling the roadways, walking downtown, and visiting merchants that are open, adhering to social distancing best practices when encountering people face-to-face.
- BPD is answering life safety calls involving physical harm or the threat of harm to individuals. Non life safety calls for service are being handled via appropriate technology (i.e. phone, email, etc.) Patrol Commanders are determining whether or not a physical response is warranted.
- Both BPD and BFD have plans in place for how additional special procedures will be implemented, if necessary. Contingency plans include coordination with other emergency service providers in our region for mutual aid coverage of essential services, as needed.

NON-EMERGENCY AND ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT SERVICES

Water+Sewer Utilities

- Town water+sewer facilities are being operated. Staffing and some procedures have been adjusted to reflect COVID-19 best practices advice from public health experts, but the public should notice no change in water or sewer service.
- For general water+sewer questions, please call 802-254-4255.
- Many buildings are currently in a state of prolonged shutdown. The Town's Water Department reminds all building owners that **water lines within buildings should be flushed to keep the water supply safe**. While the Town is continuing to deliver water to the meter that complies with all drinking water standards and has a trace of chlorine for disinfection, the water quality within the interior piping of a building will deteriorate if not used.
- The Town's semi-annual flushing of water mains will be completed April 23 through May 11. This is essential maintenance activity to ensure the continued safety of the Town's drinking water. To view the complete street-by-street schedule for this Spring 2020 water main flushing, please see the "News" section on the right side of the homepage on the Town's website.
- Water+Sewer crews will not enter private buildings until further notice. People who experience service problems should call the Department of Public Works, as usual. A DPW crew will address the situation on the outside of the building. If that does not resolve the issue, then the owner/customer will need to hire a private plumber to address the issue on the interior of the building.

- Until further notice, the Town will not shut-off water service to any customer as a result of that customer becoming delinquent on payment of water+sewer fees.

Parking

- Parking Enforcement at timed and metered spaces is discontinued until further notice.
- Permit holders will receive credit for the unused value of their permits after the Parking Enforcement office reopens. Parking Enforcement Coordinator Carol Coulombe will contact each permit holder personally to address the details of the adjustment of their permit.
- No one needs to purchase a new parking permit until parking enforcement resumes. When we are preparing to resume enforcement, the community will be given advance notice and an opportunity to purchase permits before active enforcement actually begins.
- The annual Winter Parking Ban has been lifted. Overnight on-street parking is allowed except where regulations prohibit parking anytime (e.g. on one side of some streets, near fire hydrants, etc.) and except on the following streets: Main Street, High Street, Elliot Street (east of School Street), Flat Street, Church Street, Elm Street, Harris Place, and Grove Street.
- Parking related inquiries should be directed to the Town Manager's Office (see immediately below).

Town Manager's Office

- All employees are working from home, coming into the office only when necessary.
- Direct contact phone numbers and email addresses remain operational.
- For general information, please call 802-251-8151 or email townmanager@brattleboro.org.

Town Clerk's Office

- All employees are working from home to the extent that they are able.
  Some are coming into the office, but only when necessary.
- Direct contact phone numbers and email addresses remain operational.
- For general information, please call 802-251-8157 or email townclerk@brattleboro.org.
- Services requiring on-site visits to the Town Clerk's Office are suspended until further notice.
- Until further notice, the Town Clerk's Office will waive late fees for any dog licensed after April 1.
- Depending upon how the months ahead unfold regarding resumption of normal social interaction, the August primary election and November General election might rely more heavily on absentee ballot voting or other processes. In preparation for those elections, it is important for all voter rolls to be up to date. All voters are encouraged to visit their "My Voter Page" to confirm or update their voter registration address, including both their physical and mailing addresses. The My Voter Page is now found at https://mvp.vermont.gov. If you encounter problems logging into your My Voter Page, please contact the Town Clerk's office at 802-251-8157 for assistance. People who are not yet registered to vote can register online at https://olvr.vermont.gov.

Public Works Department

- Administrative employees are working from home, coming into the office only when necessary.
- Operations employees continue to address health and safety concerns and are "on call" to perform urgent maintenance services, as needed.
- Direct contact phone numbers and email addresses remain operational.
- For general information, please call 802-254-4255.

Planning Services Department

- All employees are working from home to the extent that they are able.
  Some are coming into the office, but only when necessary.
- Direct contact phone numbers and email addresses remain operational.
- For general information, please call 802-251-8154 or email planning@brattleboro.org.
- The Planning Services Department is accepting zoning permit and development applications by mail or email. Any application that can be administratively issued will be processed. Use this link

to view a list of issued permits: https://www.brattleboro.org/index.asp?SEC=2CB22546-F959-4A03-B179-60D7295CD090&Type=B_BASIC. Any application requiring a hearing will be delayed until such time as those public hearings resume.

Brooks Memorial Library

- Brooks Memorial Library is closed until further notice.
- All employees are working from home to the extent that they are able. Some are coming into the library, but only when necessary.
- Direct contact phone numbers and email addresses remain operational.
- For general information, please call 802-254-5290 (Extension 0) or email info@brookslibraryvt.org.
- Please go to www.brookslibraryvt.org for information on obtaining a library card, which will allow access to online resources. Library cards that are due to expire can be renewed on a month-by-month basis until the library reopens. Fees for renewing non-resident cards are suspended until further notice. If you encounter a problem using your card, please call 524-5290 (extension 0) or email info@brookslibraryvt.org.
- Follow us on Facebook @BrooksMemorialLibrary and @BrooksMemorialLibraryCR or on Twitter @brookslibraryvt. Check the library website for updates and to subscribe to the online newsletter.
- Wi-fi is available near the Main Street entrance to the library and can be accessed from cars parked in front of the building.

Recreation+Parks Department

- All Recreation and Parks facilities are closed until further notice and all on-site Recreation programming has been canceled until further notice.
- Recreation employees are working from home, coming to the Recreation facilities only when necessary.
- Parks employees continue to address health and safety concerns and are "on call" to perform urgent maintenance services, as needed.
- Direct contact phone numbers and email addresses remain operational.
- For general information, please call 802-254-5808 or email recreation@brattleboro.org.
- The closure of all Recreation and Parks facilities includes the equipment (benches and playground equipment) at our parks. It is impossible for the Town to ensure that equipment is sanitized in between users. Signage has been installed to warn the public. The Town is inviting people to enjoy the open green spaces in the parks where you can get some fresh air and exercise while still practicing social distancing.
- Morningside Cemetery is open. Anyone visiting the cemetery to honor a loved one or to get some fresh air and exercise should adhere to all the requirements of social distancing.
- To stay up to date on virtual programming being offered by the Recreation and Parks Department, please follow us on Facebook @Brattleboro Recreation and Parks Department or frequently check our website at https://www.brattleboro.org/index.asp?SEC=DF7D4AE1-C4DB-477C-86FD-9892508078A9&Type=B_BASIC.
- The Spring Youth Sports Season was cancelled. People who registered can receive a refund or a credit on your account. Please email clolatte@brattleboro.org or leave a message at 802-254-5808. In addition, the Recreation team encourages everyone to follow them on Facebook for tips on how to work on your skills at home and how to access and enjoy a variety of virtual programming. Finally, the Recreation and Parks summer program brochure will soon be posted on Facebook and at www.brattleboro.org.
- The annual Memorial Day Dawn Dance scheduled for May 24-25 has been cancelled. (This is not a Town of Brattleboro event. It is a privately organized event that attracts over 500 people from across the country. The local organizing committee has been informed of this cancellation and agrees with the decision.)

Assessor's Office

- All employees are working from home, coming into the office only when necessary.
- Direct contact phone numbers and email addresses remain operational.
- For general information, please call 802-251-8156.
- The deadline for businesses to submit personal property tax data has been postponed from April 20 to July 20, consistent with the annual income tax filing deadline being postponed by both the IRS and the State of Vermont from April 15 to July 15.

Finance Department

- All employees (including the Treasurer's Office) are working from home to the extent that they are able. Some are coming into the office, but only when necessary.
- Direct contact phone numbers and email addresses remain operational.
- For general information, please call 802-251-8152 (Finance) or 802-251-8153 (Treasurer's Office).

Human Resources

- The Human Resources Director is working from home, coming into the office only when necessary.
- The Human Resources Director can be contacted at the usual phone number (802-251-8135) and email address (snix@brattleboro.org).

Fire Department *(non-emergency and administrative support)*

- Employees are working from home to the extent that they are able. Some are coming into the fire stations, but only when necessary.
- Direct contact phone numbers and email addresses remain operational.
- For general Fire Department information, please call 802-254-4831.
- Fire Safety and Rental Housing inspections are canceled until further notice.
- Burn Permits are still required for any open air fires. To apply for a Burn Permit, please visit the Fire Department's website at www.brattleborofd.org.

Police Department *(non-emergency and administrative support)*

- Most employees are working from home to the extent that they are able. Some are coming into the Police Station, but only when necessary.
- Direct contact phone numbers and email addresses remain operational.
- For general Police Department information, please call 802-257-7946 or email bpd@sover.net.
- BPD Clerks are working from home. Public Records requests are being accepted by email, but the majority will not be able to be processed until the "Stay Home - Stay Safe" order is lifted.
- The Police Department is waiving alarm fees until further notice.
- The Police Department is not performing Vehicle Identification Number (VIN) verifications until further notice.

Small Business Assistance Program Loans

- Businesses who are repaying loans to the Town's Small Business Assistance Program can defer (without penalty or additional interest) their monthly payments until further notice.

Curbside Garbage, Recycling, + Compost Program

- Due to the closure of Town facilities, individual pay-as-you-throw bags are not being sold at the Treasurer's Office and the Gibson-Aiken Center until further notice. Packages of five pay-as-you-throw bags are still available at retail outlets.
- Some residents asked the Town to suspend the pay-as-you-throw program so that no one would have to buy the yellow and purple bags during the COVID-19 emergency. Unfortunately, our local pay-as-you-throw system is required for the Town to comply with a State-mandate to have "variable rate pricing" for garbage collection and disposal (i.e. the more one throws away the more one pays) so it can't be suspended without the State's permission. The Town asked the State if we can temporarily suspend the pay-as-you-throw system and the State said "no."

U.S. Census Reminder

If you have not completed your census form yet, now is a great time. You can complete it without leaving home or coming into contact with any other person. There are three simple ways to complete the Census form:

1. **Online:** Go to www.2020census.gov. Can't find your 12-digit code that you received in the mail? No problem. Just follow the instructions and you will be able to complete the questionnaire on-line.
2. **By Phone:** Call 844-330-2020 to get started in English. The 2020 Census can be completed by phone in 14 different languages.
3. **By Mail:** All homes that do not respond online or by phone will receive a paper questionnaire. Simply respond using a blue or black ink, and return the questionnaire in the envelope provided. Regardless of how you respond, your answers will be kept confidential. Every Census employee takes an oath to protect your personal information for life and the U.S. Census Bureau cannot release any information that identifies you individually.

The results of the 2020 Census will help determine our eligibility for billions of dollars in Federal funding to flow into our community, county, and state every year for the next decade. This money means better health care, schools, roads, job opportunities, housing assistance, disaster assistance and more. With so much at stake, every response counts!

Brooks Memorial Library Staff are available to assist the public in accessing the Census questionnaire. Call 802-254-5290 ext.1206 or email info@brookslibraryvt.org for assistance. For more information, visit: www.2020census.gov.

PUBLIC MEETINGS

- The Selectboard's next regularly scheduled meetings will be on May 5 and May 19.
  Here is how the public can watch and/or participate in those meetings:
  Please join the meeting from your computer, tablet, or smartphone using this link:
  https://global.gotomeeting.com/join/804762765
  You also can dial in using your telephone (but this alternative is not recommended):
  United States (Toll Free): 1 866 899 4679
  Access Code: 804-762-765
  New to GoToMeeting? Get the app now and be ready when your first meeting starts:
  https://global.gotomeeting.com/install/804762765
  The meetings will be carried live on BCTV,
  whose broadcast also can be accessed using the following links:
  https://www.brattleborotv.org/
  https://www.facebook.com/brattleborotv/
- In addition to its regular meetings on the first and third Tuesday of each month, the Selectboard may hold special meetings, as necessary, to take urgent action(s) as the COVID-19 situation continues to evolve.
- In general, meetings of Town boards, commissions, and committees are cancelled until further notice. Individual boards, commissions, or committees are meeting on a case-by-case basis. All are using the GoToMeeting platform for remote-only meetings (with no physical location) until after the COVID-19 emergency has passed.
- The Representative Town Meeting (RTM) that would have been held on March 21 was cancelled in compliance with the Governor's orders re: social distancing. RTM will be re-warned when it becomes legal and prudent to do so.