Town of Brattleboro
COVID-19 Response Status
May 21, 2020
12:50pm

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 also are in regular 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

- **Reminder:**
  The Brattleboro Selectboard issued an Emergency Order at its meeting on May 19 requiring that face coverings be worn by all employees, customers, and visitors in any store, office, or other indoor setting where business is conducted. This requirement is effective immediately and applies equally to businesses, non-profit organizations, and governmental facilities anywhere in Brattleboro.
  The Selectboard made this decision after a lengthy discussion that included substantial public input on the GoToMeeting platform where Selectboard meetings are currently being held without any specific physical location due to the COVID-19 public health emergency. Here is the full text of the resolution that the Selectboard adopted to issue this order:

  Be it resolved by the Selectboard of the Town of Brattleboro, Vermont, as follows:

  COVID-19 EMERGENCY ORDER
  WEARING FACE COVERINGS REQUIRED

  WHEREAS, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommend the use of simple cloth face coverings to slow the spread of the COVID-19 coronavirus and to help prevent people who may unknowingly have the virus from transmitting it to others; and
  WHEREAS, the Vermont Department of Health "recommends that all Vermonters wear cloth face coverings when outside of the home to help slow the spread of COVID-19;" and
  WHEREAS, Governor Phil Scott and the Vermont Agency of Commerce and Community Development have issued the following instructions in conjunction with the Governor's executive orders regarding COVID-19:

"Employees must wear face coverings over their nose and mouth when in the presence of others. In the case of retail cashiers, a translucent shield or "sneeze guard" is acceptable in lieu of a mask. Businesses and non-profit and government entities may require customers or clients to wear masks" while on their premises

and

"The legislative body of each municipality may enact more strict local requirements regarding mask use than those set forth herein;" and

WHEREAS, COVID-19 remains a health hazard to residents of Brattleboro and a significant threat to vulnerable populations; and

WHEREAS, wearing a face covering is an important act we can do in an effort to protect others from an infection that we may not even know we have.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that this Selectboard hereby issues the following COVID-19 Emergency Order:

WEARING FACE COVERINGS REQUIRED

Requirement to Wear Face Covering.

Starting May 20, 2020, all establishments located in the Town of Brattleboro that invite the public into their premises for the purpose of receiving services, purchasing products, or otherwise transacting business, shall require both staff and customers (or visitors) to wear cloth face coverings or face shields over their nose and mouth while inside the establishment.

Exceptions.

Cloth face coverings should not be placed on young children under age 5; anyone who has trouble breathing; or anyone who is unconscious, incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove the mask without assistance.

Posting of Requirement.

Each establishment is individually responsible to post signage at the entrance and at other appropriate locations stating that customers (or visitors) are required to wear face coverings by order of the Brattleboro Selectboard.

Effective Period.

This Order shall remain in effect until the Brattleboro Selectboard amends, rescinds, or suspends this Order or until the Governor declares an end to the COVID-19 State of Emergency in Vermont, whichever occurs first.

Adopted by the Brattleboro Selectboard at its meeting on May 19, 2020.

- On Wednesday, May 27, the State of Vermont will be distributing a large amount of free food in the student parking lot at BUHS. Everyone is welcome. You will be asked only the community you are from (this is for Brattleboro and the region around us) and how many people are in your household. No names. No financial information. Just plenty of free food for anyone who needs it. To keep the distribution process orderly, everyone is requested to approach the distribution site from South Main Street, going west on Sunny Acres and north on Atwood Street. At the corner of Atwood Street and Fairground Road, you will be directed into the distribution site. Here is a link for more information:
  https://www.vtfoodbank.org/event/farmers-to-families-food-box-distribution-brattleboro

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

- Emergency services and field crews continue to operate as described below.
- The exterior entrances to all Town facilities remain locked at all times.
- Signs are 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 is 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 continue to work from home in the same manner as they did during the full closure of Town offices between March 27 and May 4.
- All email communications and most telephone communications are functioning exactly as they do during normal office operations. 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."
- 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, online, or by dropping an envelope containing your check (no cash) into a locked black drop box that is 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 are being staffed by only 1 employee at a time, there are 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 is 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 every visit, the 1 employee and 1 visitor will:
    - Wear masks at all times covering both the nose and the mouth and fitting snugly under the chin. (The Town will provide a mask to any visitor who does not have one.)
    - Wear gloves or use hand sanitizer before handling documents.
    - Abide by social distancing best practices (such as standing no closer than 6 feet apart).
- Town employees 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 are not 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 are continuing 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 adhere to the same requirements as when providing 1-to-1 services to visitors:
    - Wear masks at all times covering both the nose and the mouth and fitting snugly under the chin.
    - Wear gloves or use hand sanitizer before handling documents.
    - Abide by social distancing best practices (such as standing no closer than 6 feet apart).

- Town officials are continuing to coordinate 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 full or partial 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 is ongoing and is scheduled to be completed by 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 use the link that is provided in 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.
- Overnight parking is allowed on most side streets at this time of year, but overnight parking is prohibited on 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

- 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

- Direct contact phone numbers and email addresses remain operational.
- For general information, please call 802-251-8157 or email townclerk@brattleboro.org.
- Until further notice, the Town Clerk's Office will waive late fees for any dog licensed after April 1. While the late fee after the April 1 deadline has been waived, dogs are still required to be licensed per Title 20, Section 3581(c) of Vermont State Statutes.
- Due to the inability to sanitize paper records and books, customers are currently not allowed in the vault. The Town Clerk's Office staff is happy to work with each customer to identify the accurate book and page number, and then pull the records for their review. The communication can occur over the phone or by email, staff can scan and email the records, and the customer can pay online.
- 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

- Direct contact phone numbers and email addresses remain operational.
- For general information, please call 802-254-4255.
- Field operations continue in accordance with special procedures required by the Governor's executive orders and public health best practices.

Planning Services Department

- 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. To view a list of issued permits visit: https://www.brattleboro.org/index.asp?SEC=2CB22546-F959-4A03-B179-60D7295CD090&Type=B_BASIC
- Monthly Development Review Board meetings have resumed. All meetings will be held via GoToMeeting. Application deadlines can be found at: https://www.brattleboro.org/vertical/sites/%7BFABA8FB3-EBD9-4E2C-91F9-C74DE6CECDFD%7D/uploads/2020_DRB_Schedule_reviswed_1.23.2020.pdf.

Brooks Memorial Library

- Brooks Memorial Library remains closed to the public until further notice.
- Cardholders may request (via phone or email) materials for curbside pick-up. Details are available at www.brookslibraryvt.org.

- Borrowed items may be returned through the big blue metal bookdrop box in the Municipal Center parking lot.
- 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

- Summer Camp registration application forms are now being accepted. You may use this link to access the application form: https://www.brattleboro.org/vertical/Sites/%7BFABA8FB3-EBD9-4E2C-91F9-C74DE6CECDFD%7D/uploads/Official_Youth_Registration_Form_With_T-Shirt_Size_2020(1).pdf. You may submit your completed form online or mail it to:

  Brattleboro Recreation and Parks Department
  ATTN: Summer Camp Registration
  PO Box 513
  Brattleboro, Vermont 05301

  All registrations will be required to be paid in full by June 1st,
  unless other payment arrangements have been made with the Recreation and Parks Director.
  No one will be turned away for lack of ability to pay.
  Please be advised, however, that the number of camp participants will be limited this year due to COVID-19 social distancing requirements and will be confirmed on a first-come first-served basis with priority given to Brattleboro Residents.
- All other on-site Recreation programming has been canceled until further notice.
- 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.
- Direct contact phone numbers and email addresses remain operational.
- For general information, please call 802-254-5808 or email recreation@brattleboro.org.
- Don't forget to "Like" us on Facebook at "Brattleboro Recreation and Parks Department" and follow us on Instagram at "Brattleboro recandparks".
- Parks Maintenance field operations continue in accordance with special procedures required by the Governor's executive orders and public health best practices.
- Parks equipment (benches, picnic tables, and playground equipment) remain closed because 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 adhering to these guidelines:
  - Keep Social Distancing (everyone wears masks + stays at least 6-feet apart whenever possible).
  - Contact sports/games are prohibited.
  - Please use the "Arrive, Play and Leave" approach to using these facilities.
  - No gatherings of more than 10 people.

- The Recreation and Parks Department has received many questions about the usage of Town parks facilities by people from outside of Brattleboro. Recreation officials all over Vermont have received many similar questions. In the Governor's "Stay Home – Stay Safe" addendum issued on Friday, May 15, he clarified earlier instructions regarding limits on day travel to Vermont from out of state. As it applies to the use of parks facilities, the Governor's clarification states that "commuter (day trip) traffic to and from Vermont … is authorized for … currently authorized … recreation." Thus, all people are allowed to use Town park facilities in accordance with the same limitations and social distancing requirements regardless of whether they are Brattleboro residents or live outside of our town or state.
- The Fred H. Harris Tennis/Pickleball Courts at Living Memorial Park are open.
- The frisbee golf course at Living Memorial Park is open.
- All softball fields are available to families for informal kickball, wiffleball etc. Softball fields are not yet open for more formal team activities (games or practices).
- Morningside Cemetery is open for visits to honor a loved one or to get some fresh air and exercise.
- Restrooms at Living Memorial Park and West River Park remain closed until further notice.
- All basketball courts remain closed until further notice.
- The Dog Park at Living Memorial Park remains closed until further notice due to COVID-19 and being recently reseeded to rejuvenate the turf.
- 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

- 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

- 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's office hours at the Municipal Center are on Tuesdays and Thursdays, from 8:30am to 5pm. The remainder of the week, the Human Resources Director is working from home.
- 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)*

- 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)*

- Direct contact phone numbers and email addresses remain operational.

- For general Police Department information, please call 802-257-7946 or email bpd@sover.net.
- 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 can 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

- There will be a Special Selectboard Meeting on **May 26** and the Selectboard's next regularly scheduled meetings will be on **June 2** and **June 16**.

  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 telecast 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 Tuesdays of each month, the Selectboard may hold special meetings, if needed, to take urgent action(s) as the COVID-19 situation continues to evolve.
- All other Town boards, commissions, and committees also are meeting on 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 executive orders re: social distancing. RTM will be re-warned when it becomes legal and prudent to do so.