

TOWN OF NEWINGTON
BOARD OF SELECTMEN'S
COVID-19 BULLETIN

April 27, 2020

Since the Governor's order of March 26th Newington remains free of any Covid-19 case. We have all made adjustments to our typical routines, but social distancing is working to keep infections out of our town. It is important that we all remain vigilant in following the recommended social distancing guidelines.

Several weeks ago the New Hampshire Municipal Association surveyed all 234 towns and cities that are members of the association. 54 % or 127 municipalities responded to the survey. The survey did not address the reduction in state revenue paid to the communities e.g. Rooms and Meals tax, municipal aide, or highway block grants.

Many communities also indicated a substantial increase in expenses related to emergency management services. The State Assistant Commissioner for Emergency Management has stated he believes many, but not all local emergency management expenses will be reimbursed by FEMA.

The survey also identified financial concerns that would negatively impact our anticipated revenue. In addition to the aforementioned reductions in revenue we anticipated a reduction in property tax revenue, an increase in property tax delinquencies, and increase in tax abatement requests.

Communities responding to the survey all agreed there will be revenue shortfalls and Newington is no exception. It is too early to estimate the loss in revenue but several communities have already indicated they may need to secure a tax anticipation note.

Town Operations

The Town continues to operate, and our departments and employees are doing a great job. The Town's boards, committees and commissions continue to meet via Zoom and other internet applications. The public may participate in these meetings by utilizing the various virtual meeting tools that have been put in place. Connection info is available on all posted meeting agendas on the town website (www.newington.nh.us) or on our bulletin boards around town. Further, car registrations and property tax payments may be completed via the town website (www.newington.nh.us). Building permits may be applied for by emailing the town building inspector at kelley@townofnewingtonnh.com.

Town Finances

We are continuing to closely monitor the Town's finances. On March 26th we asked all departments to limit spending to those items essential and necessary. Projects that affect the health and safety of the residents and our town employees have and will take precedence as we work through these challenging times. We also will schedule a virtual meeting with all departments to discuss the town's capital and operating budgets and see

their input in identifying other cost saving measures we may need to implement. We have conducted a detailed cash flow analysis to project the Town's cash flow needs based upon the potential drop in State fund revenues and grants, non-payment of taxes and other factors.

Specific areas of concern that we are tracking include:

- Devaluing of power plants (see September 2019 E Newsletter report)
- Rooms and Meals tax State revenue (due to Covid-19 and the resulting hotel and restaurant closures; the revenue that the town traditionally receives will be significantly reduced)
- Mall and other commercial property vacancies (due to Covid-19 and resulting closures of many retail stores and other commercial properties the town has been notified some tax payments may be delayed or in jeopardy of being paid)

Emergency Management

The Police and Fire Departments, along with the town Health Officer, are on the job and available should any resident need assistance. Following are their contact numbers and emails:

E.J. Hoyt, Fire Chief- ehoyt@ehoyt@newingtonfire.org 436-9441

Michael Bilodeau, Police Chief- (mbilodeau@newingtonhpd.com) 431-5461

Kevin Kelley, Health Officer- (kkelley@townofnewingtonnh.com) 436-7640

We are very proud of all the Town employees and the work that they perform every day during this emergency. We also want to express our gratitude to the residents of the town of Newington for understanding our decision to comply with the governor's directives to shut down our town buildings.

We are, and will continue to be conservative with our financial plans and preparations to address unanticipated loss in revenue. We are hoping for the best and planning for the worst. We will share all new information as it becomes available.

Our sincere thanks to all,
Newington Board of Selectmen

Ted Connors
Ken Latchaw
Mike Marconi