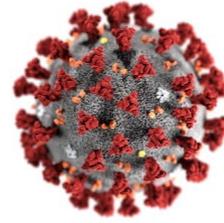




Mayor Brindle's COVID-19 Update March 12, 2020



I want to take the opportunity to provide everyone with an update regarding COVID-19, the information we are receiving, and the steps we are taking in this evolving situation.

As you know, earlier this week Governor Murphy declared a State of Emergency. To date, there are 29 confirmed cases and one death in New Jersey, with one case so far in Union County. As information continues to change quickly, I participate in a daily County-wide conference call to update each municipality with pertinent information and best practices. In addition, our Regional Health Officer, Megan Avallone, is in regular contact with state and federal health officials, and also sits on Governor Murphy's coronavirus task force in her capacity as President of the NJ Assoc of County and City Health Officials. I also remain in ongoing contact with Dr. Dolan as she, in consultation with Megan and school administrators, makes a determination about potential school closures.

TOWN SERVICES

First and foremost, Town Hall remains open and will continue to serve the public. We have intensified our sanitizing protocol, not only in this building, but also in highly-trafficked public areas. We are also making preparations for non-emergency function employees to work remotely. Rest assured that all emergency services continue uninterrupted to prioritize public safety, and have modification plans in place to limit viral exposure for responding police officers, fire department, and EMS personnel in nonemergency scenarios.

Please keep in mind that most business you conduct with the Town can be handled by phone, email, or electronic payment. A full list of each department's contact information can be found on our website.

Public meetings of all municipal boards will continue as planned. While we continue to ask for ongoing engagement and participation, I would encourage the public to attend all upcoming Town Council meetings virtually, via Facebook Live, rather than gathering in the Council Chambers. We are exploring options to include a conference call component which would allow residents to provide public comment on a recorded line.

As of now, Court remains open, pending the approval of the Union County Municipal Division's approval to make any changes, which is currently being discussed. In the meantime, the Court's staff is working on redistributing the allocation of cases in an effort to help minimize crowds.

GUIDANCE ON ACTIVITIES

All science, data, and official guidance related to COVID-19 consistently confirms two major points:

- From a public health perspective, the focus must be on mitigation and slowing the spread of the virus.
- The senior citizen population and those with underlying health conditions remain the most vulnerable.

The best way to address these priorities is to practice social distancing, and today Governor Murphy recommended the cancellation of all public gatherings in New Jersey of more than 250 people.

The Town has postponed Recreation Department programs (including senior citizen programming), library programming, and other large gatherings that were scheduled to occur on Town property through April 19. We will continue to re-assess the public health situation regularly and make further determinations as warranted.

In terms of other community organization's events that are not overseen by the Town or held on Town property, including athletic leagues, please consider a similar, proactive approach in line with the State's guidance when it comes to any activity consisting of a large gathering.

SENIOR COMMUNITY RESOURCES

Our Lifelong Westfield initiative, part of the Town's Senior Advisory Council, works with our Recreation Department to provide community programming for our senior population. We will be using the list of enrolled seniors for these programs to communicate with them going forward about any relevant health and community updates. To be placed on this list, as a senior or as a caregiver, please email westfieldnjseiors@gmail.com, or call 908-301-1287.

In addition, effective immediately and until further notice, Westfield Police Chief Christopher Battiloro has initiated a department-wide directive to assist senior citizens by providing the delivery of any essential goods and services by an available Police Officer, in order to help prevent unnecessary risk of public exposure to COVID-19.

Examples include the following:

- Picking up a needed prescription at a local pharmacy or drug store and delivering it to the senior citizen's place of residence.
- Performing any other general errand, task or detail which shall be necessary to provide for the senior citizen's general safety and welfare, so he or she does not have to leave his or her place of residence.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

As I communicated last week, we have established a Coronavirus Resource Center on the Town website, which can be found at www.westfieldnj.gov/coronavirus. It is updated regularly and provides a number of resources, including travel notices, preparedness advisories, and guidance about what to do if you feel sick.

In addition, I will be hosting a Facebook Live session on Friday, March 13 at 12:30pm, along with Megan Avallone, Town Administrator Jim Gildea, and Chief Battiloro to answer any additional questions from the public. In the meantime, I urge everyone to remain calm and follow the recommendations of the health professionals -- wash your hands frequently, cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve while coughing or sneezing, avoid touching your face, and stay home if you are sick.

Finally, I ask everyone to please look out for one another and be neighborly -- check on your senior neighbors, watch the kids of essential emergency personnel when they go to work, share resources in short supply, and stay informed through credible sources of information. Please remember our local businesses as well, as they will surely feel the impact of this situation increasingly over the coming weeks. They are working hard to sanitize their spaces and stay open, and they can use our support right now, even if it's ordering a take-out meal while you minimize your exposure to large crowds. I have been in touch with Senator Tom Kean to ask for potential legislative support to provide some assistance as needed to alleviate the potential impact to our downtown businesses.

Please know that we have an incredibly well-trained professional staff who are committed to doing everything possible to ensure the well-being and safety of our community. I am committed to keeping you as informed as possible and welcome any and all questions you may have.

Thanks in advance for your cooperation and understanding.

POSTPONED EVENTS THROUGH APRIL 19

Recreation

- Zumba
- Tai Chi
- CPR/1st Aid Training Course
- Social Etiquette Class
- Dining Etiquette Class
- US Sports Classes
- US Sports Spring Break Camp
- Fashion First Workshops
- Smartycat Kids – Littler Bakers
- Smartycat Kids – Cool Chemistry
- Volleyball Clinics
- Field Hockey Clinics
- Field Hockey League
- Track & Field
- Safe Sitter – Babysitters Training Class
- Safe Sitters – Babysitters Training Class
- Young Rembrandts – Pre-School Drawing
- Young Rembrandts – Elementary Cartooning
- Fencing
- Smartycat Kids – Jr. Bakers
- Smartycat Kids – Jr. Scientists
- Fashion First Free Demo Workshop
- Lacrosse
- Multi Sports
- T-Ball
- Soccer

Westfield Memorial Library: All programs scheduled through April 19 (for more www.wmlnj.org or 908-789-4090)

Clubs & Organizations

- Community Band practice
- Community Band Spring Concert
- Stamp Club meetings
- Sketch Group
- Rutgers Coaches Clinic

Senior Citizen Programs

- Paint and Sip
- Casino Trip
- Bagels and Bingo
- Mornin' Trivia
- Pinterest Class
- Hearing Clinic

Additional Community Events

- The New Jersey Festival Orchestra concert (3/14)
- The Lions Club Easter Egg Hunt (4/4)
- DWC Second Sunday (4/12)
- Westfield Baseball & Softball League Parade (4/18)
- Green Team Park Clean Up (4/19)
- DWC Midday Madness Clue Hunt

All community organization meetings that were scheduled to be held in Town Hall during this timeframe are also postponed, and will be contacted directly by the Town to reschedule at a later date. While registration for spring session Recreation programs is temporarily suspended, registration remains open for summer programs and for Memorial Pool.