



Mayor Brindle's COVID-19 Update May 29, 2020



CONFIRMED CASES

- Today, there are 158,844 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in New Jersey, with another 1,095 still under investigation. Currently, the County reports 15,610 cases, with Westfield reporting no new cases again today, keeping our total at 274.
- For a more detailed breakdown of statewide numbers, visit the NJ Department of Health COVID-19 Dashboard.

STATE UPDATES

- Governor Murphy reported that the following services can resume over the next several weeks if they follow health and safety safeguards, with specific guidance forthcoming to help inform local decision making:
 - Child care centers can reopen on June 15.
 - Non-contact organized sports activities can restart on June 22.
 - Youth day camps, including municipal summer recreation programs, can begin on July 6.
- The Governor signed legislation which temporarily extends the deadline to file a property tax appeal to July 1, 2020, and the deadline for county boards of taxation to render decisions in tax appeal cases to September 30, 2020. The bill takes effect immediately and applies retroactively to April 1, 2020.

- The Governor announced the Short-Term Rental Assistance Program, which will provide \$100M in rental assistance to low- and moderate-income households that have had a substantial reduction in income as a result of the pandemic, including those who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.
- Finally, the Governor indicated that he anticipates being able to raise the limits on indoor gatherings in a way that will allow for greater indoor religious services for the weekend of June 12.

LOCAL UPDATES

- With Governor Murphy's announcement today permitting municipal recreation day camps to open beginning July 6, our Recreation Commission and Recreation Department will evaluate the forthcoming guidance to be provided by the State Department of Human Services, examine all options, and make decisions that prioritize the safety of our employees and residents. We will communicate any updates once the information is finalized.
- It's not easy to think about October right now, but we were given something to look forward to today from the AddamsFest team! Chaired by Councilwoman Dawn Mackey, this year's festivities, dubbed Alt AddamsFest and funded by sponsorships, will adapt to our new normal and provide some new experiences (including Dudley's Drive-In!) along with some returning favorites. While there is of course still uncertainty about some of the details as the public health data continues to evolve, they are working on a Plan B, C, and D to bring the essence of Charles Addams back for another year of celebrating one of Westfield's most influential residents. To find out more, make sure you subscribe to the AddamsFest updates at addamsfest.com/updates.
- We need you on our Summer Pothole Patrol! With the nicer weather arriving and many residents walking throughout Town, we are looking for your help to identify the remaining potholes for the DPW to repair this summer. All pothole repair suggestions, along with all other Public Works requests, are accepted through Westfield Connect. Launched just over a year ago, this free app (available in the Apple App Store and the Google Play Store) allows users to easily report non-emergency issues in town -- including potholes, park and tree maintenance, and more. We currently have just under 600 users and I'd like to see that number reach 1,000 in the coming months.

Our Public Works team has done an extraordinary job of using Westfield Connect to resolve a variety of issues in a timely manner, with our average time to both acknowledge and close incoming requests consistently improving as user numbers continue to increase. Please note that potholes on County and State roads are not ones that we have the authority to repair -- including North and South Avenues, Central Avenue, sections of East Broad Street, Springfield Avenue, West Broad Street, Lamberts Mill Road, and Mountain Avenue -- although we are happy to pass the information along to their respective contacts for follow up.

In closing, I want to acknowledge the horrible events that have transpired in Minnesota over the last few days and extend all of our thoughts and prayers to a community and country that is reeling from the death of George Floyd in police custody. There is simply no room for this utter disregard for life that continues to perpetuate harmful race and police community relations.

Here in Westfield, we are fortunate to have a Police Department that is committed to fairness, transparency, and community policing which includes newly initiated body worn cameras, bias training, and the first ever full review of every department's Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for the explicit purpose of seeking and obtaining law enforcement accreditation from the New Jersey State Association of Chiefs of Police -- which would be the first time in the history of our department we have obtained it. This review is to ensure that our department is fully compliant with the law, Attorney General law enforcement directives and guidelines, and County Prosecutor's directives, as well as law enforcement's best practices. I am confident that under Chief Battiloro's leadership we have processes, protocols, and a culture in place that does not allow for or tolerate any discriminatory action that myself, the Council, and our community finds unacceptable.

That being said, I will soon be convening the newly formed Human Relations Advisory Committee, which was established earlier this year to foster an environment of inclusivity, mutual understanding, and respect within the Westfield community. It will serve in an advisory capacity to promote these values and help ensure that all individuals can participate fully in all aspects of community life. More immediately, please join me in extending prayers to the people of Minneapolis, and to all those in our country seeking a better way forward to prevent this from happening again.

Wishing you all a wonderful weekend. Please continue to wash your hands frequently, wear a face covering when close to others, and maintain proper distance whenever possible so that we can continue the momentum of positive public health data that all of you have produced together.