



## Mayor Brindle's Opening Remarks January 26, 2021

Good evening, everyone, and thanks for joining us virtually tonight. Please remember that public comment will only be accepted via Zoom, although we are live streaming for viewing only on Facebook. The replay will also be available afterwards on Facebook, YouTube, and TV 36.

### **COVID-19 UPDATES**

- The seven-day average for confirmed COVID-19 cases in New Jersey is down 13% from a week ago, and down 3% from a month ago, indicating that the pandemic's second wave may be starting to decline, even as today's COVID-related deaths represent the second-highest total this month and January has been the most deadly month since May.
- On a statewide basis, the rate of transmission decreased slightly today to 0.92, and the statewide positivity rate for tests on Thursday, the most recent day available, was 9.62%. As always, more detailed information about statewide numbers is available on the NJ COVID-19 Dashboard at [www.nj.gov/health/cd/topics/covid2019\\_dashboard.shtml](http://www.nj.gov/health/cd/topics/covid2019_dashboard.shtml).
- On the vaccination front, New Jersey has received approximately 1 million doses of coronavirus vaccines, 450,000 of which were dedicated for use in the federal program that contracted with CVS and Walgreens to run vaccine clinics at 1,500 long term care and congregant living facilities statewide. While all six vaccine mega-sites and nearly 300 other locations are up and running, there continues to be widespread frustration as demand outpaces the supply available for these sites. Yesterday, the State launched a hotline to schedule vaccinations for those who are eligible (855-568-0545), although limited appointments are available. In total, 627,677 doses have been administered to date in New Jersey.
- As many of you know, Union County opened up additional but limited online appointments on Sunday for its Kean University vaccination site, which were quickly filled due to extremely high demand. The County has stated that they will not open additional appointments online for the upcoming weeks until they can verify how many doses they will be receiving. I want to reiterate that, while the County is overseeing local distribution currently, our Regional Health Department continues to explore all possible avenues to provide broader vaccination access for our residents who, like many across the State, are finding the process of securing a vaccination appointment very difficult.

## LOCAL UPDATES

- Please remember that first quarter property taxes are due on February 1. As the Office of the Tax Collector remains closed to the public, payment can be made online, by mail, or by using the drop boxes at Town Hall. The last date to pay without penalty is Wednesday, February 10.
- Thank you to Lifelong Westfield for organizing a virtual forum this Thursday at 2:00PM for Westfield's seniors and other interested residents to discuss the recently authorized COVID-19 vaccines with experts from Atlantic Health, the Westfield Regional Health Department, and Lifelong Westfield. To register, please email [westfieldnjseniors@gmail.com](mailto:westfieldnjseniors@gmail.com) and the Zoom meeting information will be sent to you.
- Please join the Town Council Finance Policy Committee for a Zoom forum on Thursday night at 7:00PM to review the performance of the 2020 budget, provide an overview of the 2021 budget process, solicit input from residents prior to this year's budget formation. This is the third year we've provided this public meeting forum as part of my administration's ongoing commitment to a transparent and public municipal budget process. This year's discussion will take place via Zoom and can be accessed at [bit.ly/2021WestfieldPublicInputBudgetMeeting](https://bit.ly/2021WestfieldPublicInputBudgetMeeting).
- In terms of tonight's agenda, we have a well-deserved proclamation to commemorate the Westfield Green Team, which was recently awarded Silver Certification by Sustainable Jersey for the first time in Town history, increasing our eligibility for grants and funding, and demonstrating our continued commitment to sustainability across all of our efforts. We will also hear an ordinance on second reading to amend the Town's Bicycle Board. This initiative is intended to further our public safety and green efforts detailed in the Master Plan Reexamination, taking a more holistic approach to making bicycling and walking in Westfield more comfortable, accessible, and safer for residents and visitors alike.

I want to remind everyone that I will once again be enforcing Robert's Rules this evening to ensure we stay on topic and the meeting runs efficiently.

Thank you.