

# TOWN OF SUFFIELD

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March 12, 2020

Dear Suffield Community,

I am writing to provide you an update on the Town's efforts with respect to COVID-19.

This morning I participated in a conference call with public health officials from the North Central District Health Department, Superintendent Van Tassel, Emergency Management Director Spencer and Police Chief Brown. The meeting came on the heels of the Governor's declaration of a Public Health and Civil Preparedness Emergency on March 10, 2020.

As you know, there are currently a minimal number of cases within the State, and **none** identified in Suffield. However, that may change at any time. The immediate concern is that a rapidly multiplying infection rate could create a surge in patients requiring medical attention – including critical first responders. This surge would affect not only the care delivered to these patients, but also those suffering from non-related life threatening emergencies. As we have seen in Italy, the demands could potentially overwhelm medical providers, services and resources. Given this real and overriding concern, our town's task is to ramp up preventative measures, while balancing continuity of operations, in a phased approach over the coming days in an effort to stem the tide of the virus and protect those at-risk.

To that end, the first phase will curtail all **NON-ESSENTIAL** services effective tomorrow, March 13, 2020:

## Senior Center

- Hours reduced to 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.
- Adult Day Care **SUSPENDED** until further notice
- All social activities **CANCELLED**
- All exercise classes **POSTPONED** until further notice
- Use of meeting rooms **SUSPENDED** until further notice
- Lunch limited to soup or sandwich, coffee or tea due to the risk of hosting large community meals
  - Available Monday – Friday, 11 a.m. – 1 p.m.
  - No reservations required
  - \$2 per person

## Social Services

- Suffield Community Aid will monitor and assist at-risk residents

- Meals on Wheels to be delivered by Senior Center Minibus Drivers; no volunteers will deliver meals until further notice

### **Minibus**

- Special trips (including Walmart) CANCELLED
- Service to be used for non-emergency medical appointments only
- Passengers will be screened for illness according to Centers for Disease Control (CDC) protocols regarding transferring residents

### **Kent Memorial Library**

- KML OPEN during regular hours this weekend
- Effective **Monday, March 16, 2020**, KML CLOSED TO PUBLIC until further notice
- KML staff will fulfill library holds
- Patrons may request items via library catalogue found at [suffield-library.org](http://suffield-library.org)
- Holds available in “Express” location to minimize contact
- Consider utilizing library’s digital resources:
  - eBooks
  - eAudiobooks
  - Digital Magazines
  - Movies through Overdrive, RBDigital, BookFlix, Hoopla
- Additional outreach opportunities currently under consideration
- Items granted auto renewals until May 1, 2020, including amnesty for overdue fines

### **Parks & Recreation**

- All programs POSTPONED until further notice
- P&R exploring on-line options to engage children and families

### **Youth Services**

- All office hours and Youth Center programming CANCELLED until future notice
- Youth Services exploring online options to engage teens

### **Landfill**

- OPEN for regular business
- “Leave-It” pile SUSPENDED until further notice
- Office CLOSED to visitor/resident entry until further notice

ESSENTIAL services will continue. Consider the following suggestions:

### **Town Clerk**

- Consider [email](#) as option to in-person visits

### **Tax Collector**

- Residents with delinquent bills are encouraged to pay through mail or [online](#). The postmark determines payment date.

- For those individuals who need to renew or register a car with the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) quickly, please pay online utilizing checking account information. Use the drop down option to change payment from debit card/credit card to **checking account**, so you will only have to pay **\$.95**. At this time, personal checking account information will be accepted in order to enable clearance at the DMV. Once the online payment is received and posted, a release will be issued in approximately 24 hours.

#### **Assessor**

- Applications for Elderly Homeowners Program available by emailing [ltrase@suffieldct.gov](mailto:ltrase@suffieldct.gov)
- Consider [email](#) as option to in-person visits

#### **Registrar of Voters**

- Consider [online voter registration](#) or mail as option to in-person visits

#### **Building Department, Planning & Zoning, Town Engineer and Conservation**

- Consider email as option to in-person visits
- Residents will be screened for illness prior to entering homes or businesses for inspections

#### **Public Works & Highway**

- Trash will continue to be picked up according to [regular schedule](#)

#### **Water Pollution Control Authority**

- Operations will continue with required precautions
- Residents with delinquent bills, consider payment [online](#) or by mail

#### **Essential Town Board & Commission Meetings**

- To be held utilizing teleconferencing in compliance with Connecticut Freedom of Information Act requirements

#### **EMERGENCY SERVICES**

It's business as usual for our excellent Police, Fire and Ambulance Departments. They will continue to provide the professional and dependable quality of care that we've come to rely on 24-7-365.

#### **First Responders (Police, Fire & Ambulance)**

- Use of ALL meeting/training rooms in emergency services facilities SUSPENDED until further notice
- All vehicle passengers will be screened for illness according to CDC protocols regarding transferring of individuals
- Use 9-1-1 for emergencies only

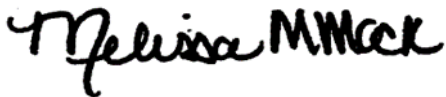
- **IN AN EFFORT TO KEEP FIRST RESPONDERS SAFE, PLEASE DO NOT VISIT EMERGENCY FACILITIES WITHOUT APPOINTMENT FOR NON-EMERGENCY MATTERS**

The basis for these measures is to make sure that community spread of the virus does not occur, particularly in our most vulnerable populations. I am in contact with local church leaders, Suffield by the River, Suffield Academy, MacDougall-Walker Correctional Institution as well as local businesses like Highland Park Market to discuss their preventative actions.

There is no reason to panic with the current situation, but there is reason to be cautious. Continue to check the [Emergency Alert](#) page on the Town website as this is a fluid situation and information is changing rapidly. Now is also a good time to sign up for [CT Alert](#) and [Town News](#) notifications via the website. Please continue to practice good preventive hygiene including frequent hand washing, sanitizer use and social distancing. Be good to one another and check on your neighbors, particularly those who may be vulnerable. If there is anything my office can do to assist you, please let us know. We will get through this together.

Wishing you all continued good health in the coming weeks.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Melissa M. Mack". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Melissa M. Mack  
First Selectman