

TOWN OF SUFFIELD

83 Mountain Road, Suffield, Connecticut 06078
www.SuffieldCT.gov



Melissa M. Mack
First Selectman
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860-668-3838

May 1, 2020

Dear Suffield Community & Town Employees,

To date, the Health Department confirmed 92 COVID-19 cases and 17 related deaths in Suffield. For context, cases for nearby towns follows:

Agawam: 317

Enfield: 287

East Granby: 4

Granby: 13

Southwick: 39

Springfield: 1317

Suffield: 92

West Springfield: 217

Westfield: 344

Windsor Locks: 42

Windsor: 316

We will continue to update the [Emergency Alert](#) website page and [Town Facebook](#) with new figures as available.

Though numbers are still growing in Suffield and our focus remains undeterred, efforts now include planning for the next phases - reopening and recovery of our town. This undertaking involves a collaborative approach with the State of Connecticut, the North Central District Health Department and neighboring communities as our boundaries and activities directly impact one another.

The Town's tasks also entail the creation of long-term recovery committees to both identify unmet needs and determine ways to fill them. All of us can play a part – please let us know about anybody needing a helping hand.

[Governor Lamont Urges Local Government and Community Partners to Establish Long-Term Recovery Committees](#)

We look forward to these next stages and will continue to keep residents in the loop as plans progress.

Public Safety - Wearing Face Masks in Public

As a reminder, Governor Lamont's [Executive Order 7BB](#) requires the use of masks or cloth face-coverings in public. Our friends at Highland Park Market, who have gone above and beyond the call of duty to keep our pantries full and families fed, ask residents to **please use masks while shopping at Highland Park** for the safety of each other and their valued employees.

Tax Deferment Offered to Suffield Residents Affected by COVID-19

On April 22, 2020, the Board of Selectmen adopted the Governor's Tax Deferment program to provide relief to taxpayers during the COVID-19 crisis. The program, created by Governor Lamont's Executive Order 7s, provides a three-month grace period to those taxpayers adversely affected by the pandemic. Typically, this grace period runs from July 1 until August 1, but the Tax Deferment allows qualifying taxpayers to extend the grace period until October 1, 2020 without interest or penalties. Water Pollution Control Authority fees can be deferred under the program as well.

To qualify, taxpayers must apply by *filing a form with the Tax Collector prior to July 1, 2020*. The form, issued by the CT Office of Policy and Management, follows:

- [Fillable Deferral Application](#)
- [Plain Deferral Application](#)

[Read complete 4-24-2020 press release](#)

Suffield Community Aid COVID-19 Crisis Relief Fund

The State of Massachusetts reports a 20% unemployment rate with the State of CT approaching these numbers. We know some of those unemployed or underemployed are Suffield residents with the CT Department of Labor currently noting 528 residents ([unemployment claims](#) from March 15 - April 12, 2020). We expect those numbers to increase as the data is updated.

In collaboration with Suffield Community Aid, the Town's social services provider, we have formed a COVID-19 Crisis Relief Fund.

Objective: To help preserve the financial well-being & dignity of all residents impacted by the recent pandemic. Serving as a safety net, this special fund will target assistance to those individuals and families who do not qualify for other need-based programs and services.

Considerations:

- Aid will focus on “bridging-the-gap” for residents who were financially on track before the crisis, but are now struggling as a result of pending return to their job commitments or due to an interruption of consistent income.
- Eligibility for monetary assistance will take into consideration that the help given is both practical and impactful in preserving their economic well-being.

Any funds, not used specifically for Covid-19 relief, will be earmarked for purposes of alleviating hardships caused by other catastrophic life-changing events for the benefit of Suffield residents.

For more information on this program or to donate, contact Suffield Community Aid at (860) 668-1986. Contacting SCA for assistance will be treated confidentially.

2020-21 Budget

This week, the Town Boards (BOS, Board of Education and Board of Finance) completed their budget process for fiscal year 2020/21. Mindful of COVID-19’s financial impact on our residents, we are proposing a conservative budget containing a slightly reduced mill rate from last fiscal year.

Please mark your calendars with the following important dates:

- **Virtual Public Hearing**
Thursday, May 7, 2020 at 7 p.m.
[Legal Notice](#)
- **Budget Adoption Meeting**
Thursday, May 21, 2020 at 7 p.m.

As discussed at the April 22, 2020 BOS Meeting, we hoped to hold a drive-thru Town Meeting similar to one hosted earlier this week in Vernon, CT. This innovative approach would uphold the democratic process and ensure that all residents have the opportunity to vote on the FY 20/21 budget. However, we received word today from the CT Conference of Municipalities and the CT Council of Small Towns that the Governor's office intends to clarify Executive Order 7I as MANDATORY. The Order requires the town's legislative body (or the BOS where the legislative body is the Town Meeting) to authorize its budget-making authority (the BOF) to adopt the municipal budget and set the mill rate. The Governor’s position reflects his belief that holding in-person town meetings poses a serious risk to public health during COVID-19. Given that direction, a joint virtual meeting will be held on Thursday, May 21, 2020 at 7 p.m. for the BOS to authorize the BOF to approve the FY 20/21 budget and set the mill rate.

Budget information will be available on the Town and BOE websites early next week. As public involvement is still key to the process, we encourage residents to review the budget, submit any questions to www.budget2021@suffieldct.gov prior to the Public Hearing, and participate in the call.

Presidential Primaries – August 12, 2020

A double primary is scheduled for August 11, 2020. Please note the following important voter information:

May 11th is the last day that an enrolled elector can transfer from one political party to another and be eligible to vote in the August 11 primary of their new party. There is a three-month waiting period, when switching from one political party to another, before attaining voting privileges in the new political party.

Seventeen-year-olds can vote in a primary if (1) turning 18 before November 4th, (2) a U.S. citizen, (3) a bona fide resident of Suffield, (4) pre-registered to vote and (5) enrolled in the political party holding the primary.

Links to online [voter registration](#), [voter registration lookup](#) and [election night reporting results](#) can be found on the [Town website](#) under the [Registrar of Voters](#).

Register to vote and/or enroll into a political party:

- Online at VoterRegistration.CT.gov
- Via applications available in entrance of 61 Fflyer Place
- Or print an application [form](#)
- Completed application may be mailed or dropped off at Town Hall

Parks & Recreation Late Spring & Summer Update

For the past month, Parks & Recreation offered well-received free virtual activities via social media which included physical activities for kids and adults, field trips to parks and museums, as well as other fun points of interest. Spring programs that were unable to be rescheduled or that registrants chose not to attend, will receive full credits applied to P&R accounts to be available for use through July 2021.

P&R remains cautiously optimistic regarding summer programs and facility openings but continues to plan for more in-depth virtual options including virtual camps. The timeline for the potential virtual camps reflects an earlier launch than usual with the start date slated to immediately follow the end of the school year. A “Camp in a Box” concept includes virtual content, craft supplies ready to go, live feedback, and guest speakers. If P&R is able to offer physical programming this summer, a virtual option will still be offered for those unable or who do not want to attend a traditional camp setting.

P&R, Kent Memorial Library, the Senior Center, and Youth Services are also collaborating on a

“Speaker Series” via Zoom. This will bring in speakers on a variety of topics from: travel, cooking, outdoors, sports, and other areas of interest. Some of these will be interactive, round-tables, and others will be a traditional presentation.

Please check www.suffieldrec.com for additional program alerts.

Thank You

Suffield Rotary Club

Thank you to Suffield Rotary Club for their continued generosity and support of our first responders and local businesses. Suffield Rotary donated \$ 1,500 to be shared between six businesses in town – Highland Park, Zantos, Francesco’s, Suffield Pizza, Coco Thai and Nutrition Shack. The funds enabled gift cards and tabs for use by Suffield first responders.

Suffield Dispatchers

As a small token of appreciation, Suffield’s dispatchers received a gift card to Dunkin Donuts during National Public Safety Telecommunicators Week. Dispatchers play a vital role in keeping Suffield residents safe, never more apparent than during this current crisis. On behalf of the Town of Suffield, thank you to our dispatchers for all they do!

Continue to visit the [Emergency Alert](#) page for new information – this is the first place we post followed by other means. Included below are additional updates and happenings.

Town of Suffield/Municipal Partners:

- **Tax Collector**
 - [Tax Deferment Offered to Suffield Residents Affected by COVID-19](#)
- **Lake Congamond**
 - Visit [website page](#) for new guidelines for boating, boat ramps and Special Use Permits
- **Building Department**
 - Inspections currently underway utilizing Zoom/FaceTime with some constraints
 - **Some inspections limited by project complexity**
 - Able to perform most inspections for new construction and outside projects
- **Kent Memorial Library**
 - [Video message](#)
- **Sunrise Park Pavilion**
 - All events cancelled through month of May
- **Human Resources**
 - [Safe Workplace Rules for Essential Employees](#)

- **Suffield Public School**
 - Spaulding and McAlister Parade [Video](#)

Federal, State & Local:

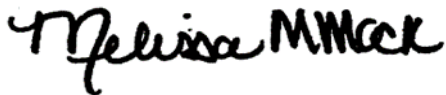
- [Community Health Resources](#)
 - Launches [Hero Hotline](#): 888-217-HERO
 - Free resource connecting “frontline heroes” with CHR professionals
- [Murphy Presses USDA to Provide Relief for Local Farmers During COVID-19 Pandemic](#)
- [Governor Lamont Announces Implementation of System That Will Significantly Speed up Unemployment Claims During COVID-19 Emergency](#)

Local Business

- **Connecticut Department of Labor**
 - [Labor Market Information](#) – Initial Unemployment Claims
- [Small Business Action Plans](#)
- **For Nursing Homes**
 - [Letter to CAHCF/CCAL](#)
 - [Letter to District 1199 New England, SEIU](#)
- **Suffield Chamber of Commerce Sidewalk Chalk Competition**
 - [Flyer](#)

Continue to take care of each other and be well.

Sincerely,



Melissa M. Mack
First Selectman

Sincerely,



John Spencer
Director, Emergency Management

cc: Board of Selectmen