Update on COVID-19

This is an important message from First Selectman Rob Smith on Thursday, April 9, 2020 at 5:00 p.m.

In an effort to keep our residents informed as to how the town is addressing the current Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) outbreak concerns, we will be providing periodic updates, at a minimum, Monday, Wednesday and Friday evenings via the town website. On Tuesday, March 10, the Governor issued declarations of public health and civil preparedness emergencies throughout Connecticut and on Wednesday, March 18, First Selectman Rob Smith signed a Declaration of Public Health and Civil Preparedness Emergency for East Haddam.

On March 20th, the Governor initiated a “STAY SAFE, STAY AT HOME” order. The State Department of Public Health has reported that there are now positive cases of COVID-19 in East Haddam.

The East Haddam Public Schools closed effective March 13, 2020, and will be closed until at least May 20, 2020 per the Governor’s April 9, 2020 news briefing. Please refer to the school website at www.easthaddamschools.org for the complete and most up to date information.

The Municipal Office Complex is closed. Board, Commission & Committee meetings will be scheduled as necessary to conduct required Town business. These meetings will be virtual meetings utilizing remote access technology. The Governor’s Executive Order No. 7I provided municipalities with directives on resuming their budget processes. (See separate announcement regarding Budget Process Update Due to COVID-19 on 3-27-20. Please review the 4-8-20 Board of Selectmen resolution regarding the budget process as well as the tentative budget approval schedule.) Additional updates and meeting instructions regarding the process will be posted on the town website as the budget progresses.

The Town Clerk’s Office will have very limited hours. You may leave a message at 860-873-5027 or email townclerk@easthaddam.org and the Clerk’s Office will get back to you.

For Land Record Recordings, it would be preferred if they are delivered via mail or courier service. There is a drop box to the right of the main entrance, (tax collector’s lock box) where they may be dropped. Once processed, a copy of the receipt will be scanned and mailed to you by the Clerk’s Office.

From the Assessor’s Office, due to the growing concerns over the spread of the COVID-19 virus, Governor Lamont has issued Executive Order No. 7S which suspends the requirement for homeowners who are already on the homeowners’ tax credit program to come in and reapply this year. They will automatically get the same credit that they received last year. First time applicants must submit proof of income by May 15th, 2020. This includes the 2019 1099 Social Security statement, income tax return, or any other income for 2019. The documents can be mailed, faxed, e-mailed or dropped in the tax collector’s drop box by the Municipal Office Complex front entrance.
The Public Works Office is closed. Public Works staff will continue to respond to emergencies, to repair potholes and correct poor road conditions. Public Works staff will be returning to work on a staggered schedule for public works projects the week of April 13th.

Due to the Good Friday holiday observance on April 10, the Transfer Station will be open on the following schedule for the week of April 6:

- **Wednesday, April 8 from 7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.** for all waste disposal to include bulky waste, brush, tires, televisions, appliances, mattresses, household waste (MSW) and recyclables
- **Saturday, April 11 from 7:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.** for disposal of household waste (MSW) and recyclables only

The Transfer Station will be open on the following schedule for the week of April 13 and on Fridays and Saturdays for the foreseeable future:

- **Friday, from 7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.** for all waste disposal to include bulky waste, brush, tires, televisions, appliances, mattresses, household waste (MSW) and recyclables
- **Saturday, from 7:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.** for disposal of household waste (MSW) and recyclables only

There have not been any long lines. *We will continue to evaluate the safest way to handle the Town’s trash during this emergency.* To help move the traffic flow, please maintain social distancing and do not spend time socially interacting.

Parks & Recreation has cancelled all on-site events and classes. Please see the Parks & Recreation website for on-line activities and classes. Playgrounds and parks that promote close contact and cross contamination are now closed. This includes the dog park, skate park and “Chaps Court”. Open space trails and Heritage Park walking path are open. Do not use Heritage Park exercise equipment. Please remember to incorporate all social distancing protocols when using these areas.

The Senior Center is closed to the public until further notice. The center will continue to deliver “Meals on Wheels”. The “med car” service to doctor appointments for seniors has been suspended as most appointments were cancelled. A brown bag, grab and go lunch will be available to interested seniors that are used to having lunch at the center. People will need to call the center at least by noon the day before to reserve a lunch. Anyone with questions should call the Senior Center at 860-873-5034 and leave a message.
The **East Haddam Free Public Library and Rathbun Library** are closed to the public. All programs, events, and non-library board meetings are cancelled. Online resources, including online programs & digital materials, are available on the libraries' website. Please hold on to all library materials until the libraries reopen; all fines will be waived.

The **East Haddam Food Bank** currently plans to be open regular hours (10:00 am to 12:00 pm and 2:30 pm to 5:30 pm) on Tuesdays until further notice. Changes have been made as to how our patrons will receive food items. Personal shoppers will assist our patrons with the selection of food items. Food recipients will not be allowed in the Food Bank. Please cooperate with the staff as they work through this change in the operation. If any patrons are in need of food assistance and have not been to the Food Bank in the last six months, please come between 3:30 p.m. and 4:30 p.m.

*Patrons of the Food Bank who are experiencing cold or flu-like symptoms should not come to the Food Bank. In those cases, patrons should call 860-891-8100 to make other arrangements.*

**Youth & Family Services** offices closed effective March 20, 2020. Staff will work remotely and will be checking phone and email messages. Anyone in need of services, including counseling referral, food and fuel assistance, etc., should call 860-873-3296.

**Emergency Response Services** will continue as usual. If the call is for a medical issue, please understand the First Responders may be wearing face masks to protect themselves and you.

To get your weekly **East Haddam News** in the comfort of your home, visit easthaddamnews.org and click on CURRENT AND PREVIOUS ISSUES. They are printing a limited number of papers this month and leaving them at Shagbark, the Hadlyme Store, Nutmeg Pharmacy and East Haddam/Moodus liquor stores. They thank you for your support!

We appreciate your vigilance and we will continue to keep you aware of changes. Please remember that 80% of positive cases of COVID-19 are mild and resemble a cold. If you have a fever and respiratory issues, please seek care through your primary care physician.

We ask our residents to practice **every day preventative actions** which will help prevent the spread of respiratory viruses, including:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use a 60% alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick. Stay home when you are sick.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash or sneeze or cough into your elbow.
• Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.

We ask residents to exercise proper social distancing practices by maintaining a 6’ distance from each other.

For complete details and town information please visit the town COVID-19 website page at www.easthaddam.org.

Thank you in advance for your patience and cooperation throughout this crisis. Please be Safe.