

***Town of Weymouth
Massachusetts***

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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With COVID-19 now recognized as a global pandemic, and after much communication with our department heads, the state Department of Public Health, the Federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, as well as South Shore Health Systems, Mayor Robert Hedlund has implemented a local Emergency Declaration that includes specific guidelines for town events, programming, and operations that will be in place through at least **March 30, 2020**.

“The health and protection of every resident is our primary concern. While we are not aware of any confirmed or presumed COVID-19 cases in Weymouth as of today, we are planning under the assumption that will change given the increase in testing and the expected growth rate in confirmed and presumed cases, based on information provided to us by Medical Professionals including South Shore Health Systems, who are on the front lines of dealing with this pandemic,” said Hedlund

The town has already taken and will continue to take the following steps to respond to COVID-19:

1. Created emergency response protocols to minimize exposure to our First Responders.
2. Posted signage in municipal buildings to educate people about COVID facts, personal protection and asking them not to enter public buildings if they have flu like symptoms.
3. Conducting enhanced sanitizing of surfaces with in buildings, vehicles and outside structures.
4. Posted links on our website to the DPH and CDC coronavirus pages.
5. Consulted with town and school departments about meeting cancelation and modifications.
6. Consulted with town and school departments about travel restrictions and limitations.
7. Participating in numerous conference calls and webinars to stay up with the latest information regarding COVID, from multiple state, federal and private sector sources

The Town of Weymouth is moving forward with stricter precautionary measures to help slow the spread of COVID-19. “We understand these decisions will have an impact on many in our community. These decisions are based on current conditions and are being made with utmost precaution. The COVID-19 situation is extremely fluid, with some information changing by the hour, and our actions will be adjusted as the circumstances dictate,” said Hedlund.

The Emergency Declaration is an administrative tool that allows municipal government to access state and federal resources to better serve the community as COVID-19 evolves. It also allows us to more quickly and efficiently utilize and coordinate municipal services, equipment, supplies, and facilities.

The following measures are in effect immediately through March 30, 2020:

- All programming and events at the Weymouth Elder Services are suspended. Outreach, Transportation, SHINE, and AARP Tax assistance will continue to take place for now. In addition, Meals on Wheels by South Shore Elder Services will continue to use the McCulloch building for food preparation and delivery to area seniors.
- All group programming at Weymouth Public Libraries is suspended. Each branch will remain open for regularly scheduled hours.
- All group programming at the Weymouth Teen Center is suspended. Individual assistance through Youth and Family Services will still be available.
- Weymouth Schools have announced that classes and all school activities will be cancelled.
- The Town will not issue any special event permits and we will be in contact with Organizers of currently approved events to consider postponing or cancelling. This includes organized events permitted through the Recreation Department.
- All non-essential government meetings will be cancelled. Using the Governor's order on making public meetings more available by phone or conference call as guidance, we are working to procure means to hold essential meetings remotely. We will also encourage limited (essential) agendas and encourage postponements when possible. We also ask residents to participate by these remote means when possible. We will be providing more detail soon on these alternative means of public participation to essential public meetings during this emergency.
- We are asking residents and the public to utilize the Town website, phone calls, and email to conduct town-related business when possible. Contact info for town departments can be found at <https://www.weymouth.ma.us/departments>. The link to pay bills online is on the front page of the Town's main page - <https://www.weymouth.ma.us>. You may also call the Town's main line at 781-335-2000 or the Mayor's office at 781-340-5012.

In addition to the emergency declaration, we are announcing recommendations and guidance pertaining to town employees and operations. The mayor encourages businesses and community organizations to implement similar measures, as appropriate:

1. No travel outside of the state for any work-related purposes.
2. Employees must stay home when sick with flu-like or respiratory symptoms and should contact their health care provider.
3. Maintain personal hygiene practices and begin social distancing:
 - Wash hands often with soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds.
 - Avoid touching your face.
 - Clean things that are frequently touched like doorknobs, countertops, and light switches, with disinfectant cleaning spray or wipes.
 - Cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or the inside of your elbow.
 - Reconsider personal travel outside of the United States.
 - Reconsider personal attendance at large scale events.

- Keep at least 6' between you and people around you when in public.

4. If you have recently traveled to any countries of high level transmission and have symptoms of respiratory illness and/or fever or if you have come in contact with someone who meets these criteria, you should contact your, health care provider, the Massachusetts State Epidemiology line at 617-983-6800, or the Weymouth Health Department at 781-340 5008. Please call first, do not go to any medical facility without calling and informing them of your medical condition. The health care facility will determine if you are eligible to be tested for COVID-19.

5. Using sick time will be waived for employees who have been identified as COVID-19 positive or who are quarantined based upon public health guidelines. (The Town will work with impacted employees on a case-by-case basis to assess sick time use and associated documentation).

Many businesses and community organizations have already been proactive and have cancelled events with mass gatherings. The Mayor and Health Department are urging all other organizations to do the same.

For additional guidance on mitigation strategies, please visit:

https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/MA_Community_Mitigation.pdf

At this time, while we are cancelling the activities mentioned, the Town is not closing public buildings such as the McCulloch Building, libraries, and Town Hall. School buildings will be closed. Weymouth public spaces, such as parks and fields, will remain open. We encourage users to adhere to CDC guidelines when using the public space.

These decisions are all subject to change as this is a very fast moving situation. Stay informed. As this is a new virus, unknown to the medical community, information about the virus changes by the minute. The best sources of accurate up to date information are available on the Mass Department of Public Health (DPH) Website www.mass.gov/2019coronavirus and the Center for Disease Control (CDC) Website: www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov

For more information, please contact Chief of Staff Ted Langill, Office of the Mayor, 781-853-8821.

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