



April 5, 2020

Dear Harding Resident:

Thank you to everyone who joined our Town Hall call on Thursday evening. We had 150 participants and some really good questions. A link to the recording of the call is on the Municipal website if you missed it. We plan to do another call in a couple of weeks and will let you know the details when that gets scheduled.

Every day there are conference calls with State and County officials and groups and memos, orders and clarifications of orders. We are doing our best to get all of this on the website as soon as possible.

I want to again thank our first responders and all of the medical personnel who are keeping our hospitals, clinics, and other medical facilities open and operating, not just for Corona-related things but also for the whole spectrum of medical needs we face. I had my first experience with telemedicine this week for a long-scheduled appointment and I found it to be a good experience. I think we will all come to experience technology in ways we haven't before.

One of the sad outcomes we are seeing from our shared quarantine experience and the stress it causes is a rise in domestic violence, suicide, and other related things. We have posted links to mental health information and services on the website. If you are experiencing stress and need help, please reach out to these services, your clergy, or other professionals to help you through this time.

Help for Harding is proving to be a real blessing for many of our residents. Volunteers have helped our residents by shopping for groceries, post office pick-up and drop-offs, pharmacy pick-ups, help with online shopping, and connecting residents with services. Help for Harding is also working with some local teenagers who are assembling and delivering care packages. They are also working to assemble a phone list of residents who live alone and who would appreciate a phone call to lift their spirits. Let us know if you would like a call, once or every day. If there is anything an at-risk resident needs please reach out to helpforharding@gmail.com. You may also text or call 862-246-7648. If you would like to volunteer, please do the same. Thanks to Elizabeth Sovolos for her many hours of work on this.

Regrettably, we are seeing a proliferation of scams masquerading as aid groups. For this reason and to ensure proper contact protocols are maintained for everyone's protection, we have asked all aid groups to work through Help for Harding. Not all groups are working with us, so please be careful if you are approached by an individual or organization that is not well-known to you for contributions or offers of assistance. Please do not pay anyone for any service or let anyone into your home unless you are confident the aid or service offered is legitimate. If you have any suspicions, please contact the Harding Police Department.

We are making some headway in acquiring personal protective equipment for our first responders due to the generosity and diligent work of our residents who have donated equipment or have been able to put us in touch with sources of the equipment we need. Our attention is now focused on gowns and gloves. We need gowns in sizes L, XL, XXL, and XXXL and gloves in L and XL. Rita Chipperson has been organizing donations of PPE so if you have access to masks, gowns, gloves, or booties please reach out to Rita at ritachip@gmail.com.

To our local businesses, we have posted information from Federal and State sources regarding grants, loans, and other aid available to help you weather this. Please see the website. To our residents who have lost jobs, we have also posted links to information regarding unemployment benefits. Our prayers are with all of you.

We are working to get our Board and Commission meetings set up to allow them to continue and be in compliance with State law. We will be posting information about that soon and hope that most of the April meetings can go forward electronically and allow public participation via call-in. We will be conducting the April 13 Township Committee meeting like this and will post the agenda and call-in details as we get closer to the meeting. Events like roadside clean-up and the fishing derby have been postponed and will be rescheduled. It is likely the Memorial Day Parade will be cancelled and we will keep you posted about that. We are also waiting to see what, if any, changes will be made to the June primary election.

If you need to file for building or other permits, file for a variance, or make an application before the Planning Board, please do that. Town government is open and operating to serve you. There is also information about methods of paying tax and other Town bills on the website.

Finally, and importantly, thank you also to Christ the King and the New Vernon Presbyterian Church for the online prayer meeting on Thursday night. It was a great experience to be together and fellowship with so many of our neighbors, even if only electronically, and together offer hymns and prayers for healing and an end to the pandemic, here and around the world.

Please reach out if there is anything you need.

Sincerely,

Chris Yates
Mayor

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