



TOWN OF SHREWSBURY

Richard D. Carney Municipal Office Building
100 Maple Avenue
Shrewsbury, Massachusetts 01545-5338

COVID-19 Report from the Town Manager - 3/24/2020

The following is a transcript of the report given to the Board of Selectmen at its meeting on March 24, 2020. The meeting can be viewed here:

<https://youtu.be/9TmqQVdVRpE>

“Thank you Mr. Chairman for the opportunity to update the Board of Selectmen and the residents of the Town of Shrewsbury on the actions the Town has taken in response to the Global Coronavirus Pandemic.

First, I want to report that currently the Town of Shrewsbury has three residents that have tested positive for COVID-19. Town officials will notify residents of any new cases on a daily basis.

Starting the middle of the Week of March 2nd the Town began taking additional and extraordinary measures to reduce exposure to the infection of the coronavirus to students and staff School and Town-wide. These initial efforts were led by the Public Buildings Division through enhance cleaning in all public buildings.

Upon the issuance of the declaration of State of Emergency by Governor Baker on March 10th, the Board of Selectmen requested the Town Manager’s office begin to prepare for our response to the upcoming challenges. With the support of the entire leadership team, Assistant Town Manager Kristen Las, led the development and refining the Town’s continuity of operations (COOP) planning for this specific challenge.

From the outset of the planning efforts and at the center of each decision we have made, no matter how big or small we have had two simple priorities:

First, preserve and protect the residents of the Town of Shrewsbury taking any and all actions that we can as a local government to reduce their risk of exposure.

Second, ensure the long-term continuing operations of each and every department of the Town of Shrewsbury.

Please know that all Town departments are operating. Specifically please let me assure you that we are servicing our most vulnerable residents by providing meals-on-wheels to elders and the school department is serving grab and go lunches to families who need them. Of course the police, fire, water/sewer, school administration and SELCO are fully operational.

In order to meet those goals we have had to take extraordinary actions. We continue to assess the current situation, review all actions that we have taken on a daily basis and make changes.

To date those actions have including the following:

- Sunday March 15 the decision was made to close all Town Buildings to the Public with the Exception of the Police Station and Fire Headquarters
- The Town's Emergency Operations Center has been activated and is fully operational should we need to run our response and daily operations from that environment
- Website has been established at www.shrewsburyma.gov/coronavirus for information surrounding this pandemic. I encourage residents to visit that page and click the "Notify Me" link to sign up for notifications to be sent to their email and/or cell phone. (perhaps you could window share to the page and show where that link is). An update will be sent each day at or around 4:30 pm with additional positive cases, if any, and notifications will also be sent on any town specific coronavirus related notifications through the covid-19 alert center.
- A COVID-19 Information Line has been established at [508-799-1019](tel:508-799-1019). The line provides facts and information about COVID-19, how to stop the spread, what to do if someone is experiencing symptoms and quarantine information. The line will be available in multiple languages. If you have a medical emergency, please dial 911 and not that information line.
- Town Building Status:
 - All Town Buildings with the Exception of the Police Station and Fire Headquarters will be CLOSED to the public through Tuesday April 7th, 2020.
 - Staff will be available by phone/email during normal business hours (M-F 8:00 am- 4:30 pm). Staff are working on alternative and rotating work schedule to ensure long term operations.
 - Although the Senior Center is closed, the Meals on Wheels program will continue to operate, until further notice.
 - Transportation provided by the Council on Aging has been temporarily suspended.
 - Shrewsbury Public Schools CLOSED until April 7, 2020 and they have a variety of information on their website at schools.shrewsburyma.gov
 - Town & School playgrounds and courts are CLOSED until further notice. We want residents to be able to enjoy our parks but to also stay safe and well. Please use the parks for passive recreation activities such as walking, hiking trails, or enjoying nature.

Some other useful information that is also detailed on the shrewsburyma.gov/coronavirus page:

- Trash & Recycling will still operate as scheduled.
- Please visit our Solid Waste page on the website to review all retailers that provide blue bags. We are communicating regularly with our bag supplier and there is no disruption anticipated in the supply chain. Those retailers with delivery services will be able to deliver blue bags like other commodities subject to minimum delivery amounts or other restrictions.
- Effective March 18, 2020, Waste Management temporarily closed its residential call center. During this time, please contact the Shrewsbury Department of Public Works at [508-841-8502](tel:508-841-8502) to report any missed

pickups or to schedule any bulky items for collection. Waste Management is also asking residents to make sure that their bags are completely closed to prevent potentially contaminated items from becoming loose.

- Simple Recycling (pink bag textile pickups) have temporarily suspended operations across the commonwealth
- A drop-box is located outside of the front entrance at Town Hall for the payment of bills or other non-USPS mail. A larger drop-box (green) is located at the front entrance for the drop-off of any other town related correspondence that won't fit in the smaller box.
- All Town sponsored recreation activities and programs are postponed. A new date for the registration of summer programs will be announced.

Town is well positioned to operate in a remote environment because of our IT infrastructure: Laptops, Google Suite, VPN, DocuSign. We do ask for residents' patience during these times. Some specific things:

- Given reduced on-site staffing levels your call may not be answered live. However, leave us a message and your call will be returned
- Please use our online payment portal by clicking the Pay Online from the homepage of our website.

Some other matters:

- The SPD and SFD have and will continue to Support of CVS COVID-19 Testing Site. This site has been exclusively used for testing of first responders and medical personnel since it opened last week. This site may transition to testing individuals over 65 years of age with symptoms that have a pre-arranged appointment.
 - IT IS NOT FOR UNSCHEDULED SERVICES
- Revised and Enhanced Mutual Aid Agreements with surrounding Towns
- Mr. Rowley will detail scaled back capital improvement projects effective today 3/24/2020 in the Water Department

PUBLIC HEALTH: CMRPHA - dividends and benefits. Dr. Hirsh, Karyn Clark, their staff

- In contact several times per day
- Utilizing School nurses to support public health nurses in tracking of positive cases and direct contacts.

Town is well positioned to operate in a remote environment because of our IT infrastructure: Laptops, Google Suite, VPN, DocuSign

As you can see from tonight's meeting, we are preparing essential Boards and Committees to meet remotely and continue their very important work.

During this time Town Staff have had unprecedented support from the Board of Selectmen, State Representative Hannah Kane, Lt. Governor Karyn Polito, Senator Michael Moore and US Congressman Jim McGovern. Congressman McGovern called today to remind us he is just a phone call away to provide what is needed for Town operations and to provide updates on the relief packages he is working on in Washington.

As Representative Kane has worked to pass critical legislation on the House floor she has reached out to me to ensure the legislation has all the necessary provisions to address Shrewsbury's unique needs. Her work on behalf of the Town has led to specific provisions in the various laws that will benefit our operations and all Towns in the Commonwealth.

Lt. Governor Polito has regularly, despite the immense amount of work she is doing for the Commonwealth, reached out to ensure the stand up of the CVS testing site, review the Town's planning efforts and to ensure we had her support when needed. She explained a very detailed bill that was filed today regarding municipalities and their operations, including town and school.

Thank you Marc Serra/SMC making this and future live stream meetings possible.

Thank you to the Town employees that are working through these challenges.

Thank you to residents for your outreach, contributions and patience.

Thank you to the Board of Selectmen for your leadership in these times.”