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TOWN OF KINGSTON

*Office of the Board of Selectmen
Town House*

26 Evergreen Street

Kingston, Massachusetts 02364

www.kingstonmass.org

*Board of Selectmen
Joshua Warren, Chairman
Elaine A. Fiore, Vice Chairman
Sandra D. MacFarlane, Clerk
Tammy Murray
Jessica Kramer*

*Town Administrator/
Chief Procurement Officer
Thomas J. Calter III*

Sunday, March 15, 2020

To the Residents of Kingston,

We are currently in uncharted territory, not only for the Town of Kingston but for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Efforts to respond to and contain COVID-19 are rapidly changing, but I assure you our priority is to serve and support Kingston residents, employees, and businesses through the continuity of basic services and operations.

We acknowledge that COVID-19 will significantly impact the lives of all those in our community, but we ask that you take a thoughtful and measured approach to keeping yourselves, your families, and your neighbors safe by following the news and recommendations made by the Center for Disease Control and the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, both linked below and on the Kingston Board of Health website. Federal, State and local agencies are working to provide as much information, in as timely a manner as possible, to cities and towns across the nation and the Commonwealth.

[CDC.GOV – CORONAVIRUS UPDATES](https://www.cdc.gov)
[MASS.GOV – CORONAVIRUS UPDATES](https://www.mass.gov)
[KINGSTON BOARD OF HEALTH](http://www.kingstonmass.org)

Earlier today I convened a meeting with members of Kingston's Emergency Management Team, to discuss the Town's ongoing response to the COVID-19 pandemic. After much discussion, it was decided that in order to ensure the safety of our employees and the residents of the Town we are limiting access to Town Hall to critical and time-sensitive matters only. There is a drop-off box with a mail slot located to the right of the entry door at Town Hall. This is typically used for payments and will now be utilized for any materials that the public may need to deliver. Please label the documents with the intended department and we will make sure the appropriate person receives the information. If you have any questions please call or email the appropriate department, board or committee before visiting any Town building. Department contacts are listed on www.kingstonmass.org. Staff will be available via phone, email, and limited in-person interactions.

Effective immediately, March 15, 2020, we will be implementing temporary protocols enacted by governor Baker, as they pertain to public meetings. All public meetings shall be postponed, at the discretion of the Chair(s) of the appropriate Board or Committee, unless there is a critical, time-sensitive action that must be taken, or a pending statutory deadline approaching that could lead to adverse consequences to the public interest. Please see the full PRESS RELEASE titled Public Meetings – Temporary Protocols During COVID-19 State of Emergency, attached. This action was not taken lightly and is in accordance with both Governor Baker's recent "Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law G.L. c. 30A s20," and the wellbeing of Kingston's staff, volunteers, and residents. Tuesday's scheduled Board of Selectmen meeting will still be held, however it will be closed to the public. One member of the board will be present in the building to facilitate the meeting, and the other four members will participate remotely.

Further discussion was had regarding edits to the Town's website in an effort to enhance communications with residents. We have added a chart which will track the number of confirmed and presumptive cases of COVID-19 in the Town of Kingston based upon data produced by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health. **As of now, there are no confirmed or presumptive cases of COVID-19 in the Town of Kingston.** We have also added information regarding Massachusetts 2-1-1, a resource that provides real-time COVID-19 information, resources, and referrals to residents. The hotline is open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Residents with questions can dial 2-1-1 from any landline or cellphone. Residents can also reach 2-1-1 through a live chat option on the Massachusetts 2-1-1 website, <https://mass211.org/>. Our goal is to update the website on a daily basis as new information becomes available, and as the needs of the Town evolve.

In collaboration with the Kingston Emergency Management Team, the Kingston Public Library has made the difficult decision to close as of March 16, 2020 until further notice. Information regarding what services will continue to be offered can be found at <http://www.kingstonpubliclibrary.org>.

In collaboration with the Town Clerk's Office, the decision was made to extend the deadline for dog licenses from March 15, 2020, until April 15, 2020. Those wishing to make payments online are encouraged to visit www.kingstonmass.org, click "Online Payments," and then "Town Clerk Payments."

In collaboration with the Collector's Office, decisions have been made with respect to the payment deadlines. Please see the Collector's page at www.kingstonmass.org, click "Town Directory," "Financial," then "Collector of Taxes."

The Town currently has a plan in place for supporting our vulnerable seniors who have self-identified as having special needs or requirements during states of emergency. Earlier today, Paula Rossi-Clapp, Kingston's Director of Elder Affairs, worked with the Town Clerk's Office to expand the list of Kingston seniors who may be in need of additional services during these challenging times. If you or someone you know requires additional support in the coming weeks, please do not hesitate to call the appropriate contact person below:

Elderly Services & Residents with Disabilities: Paula Rossi-Clapp, Director of Elder Affairs / 781-585-0511

EMS: Mark Douglass, Fire Chief and Adam Hatch, Deputy Fire Chief / 781-585-0532

General Information: Thomas Calter / 508-717-1483

Board of Health: Arthur Boyle / 781-585-0503

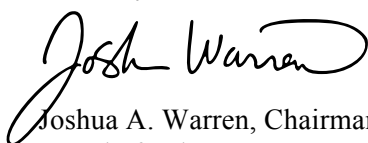
For All Medical Emergencies Call 9-1-1

We will be checking voicemails regularly and will work diligently to direct residents to the appropriate resources as quickly as possible. As of now, Town House and daily operations within the Town of Kingston are still open.

Kingston's Emergency Management Team, which consists of Thomas Calter (Town Administrator), Elaine Fiore (Vice-Chair of the Board of Selectmen), Mark Douglass (Fire Chief), Adam Hatch (Deputy Fire Chief), Maurice Splaine (Chief of Police), Paula Rossi-Clapp (Director of Elder Affairs), Arthur Boyle (Health Agent), and myself, will continue to meet twice daily to respond to the evolving health risks and challenges posed by COVID-19. Starting tomorrow, there will be a daily conference call to brief all five members of the Board of Selectmen on the Emergency Management Team's ongoing response to COVID-19. Pursuant to Governor Baker's recent "Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law G.L. c. 30A s20," these meetings will be posted however they will not be open to the public.

We are all in this together.

Sincerely,



Joshua A. Warren, Chairman
Board of Selectmen



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PRESS RELEASE

SUNDAY, March 15, 2020

Public Meetings – Temporary Protocols During Massachusetts’s COVID-19 State of Emergency Effective Immediately.

All public meetings shall be postponed, at the discretion of the Chair(s) of the appropriate Board or Committee, unless there is a critical, time-sensitive action that must be taken, or a pending statutory deadline approaching that could lead to adverse consequences to the public interest.

Kingston requests that all applications and petitioners agree to an extension and/or waiver of statutory deadlines during Massachusetts’s COVID-19 State of Emergency to allow for additional flexibility in conducting public business.

If a public meeting is deemed critical by the Chair(s) of the appropriate Board or Committee, the agendas shall be limited to only those items that are time-sensitive or required by statute. All other business should be postponed until further notice. Should a meeting be necessary, it shall be scheduled in Room 200 and all necessary participants will be required to spread out and maintain social distancing of six (6) feet between all other attendees. Any applicants that are waiting for a specific agenda item shall be instructed to spread out and wait in other parts of the building – lobbies, hallways, etc. until their agenda item is before the public body. All necessary meetings will be closed to the public but will be available for viewing on PACTV whenever possible.

All documentation and/or information required for a critical or time sensitive public hearing should be submitted electronically. Paper copies should not be distributed to Board Members or the public at meetings to protect the members from potential exposure to the COVID-19 virus.

When possible, only the chair or vice-chair and up to two staff person(s) should attend in-person. All other members are encouraged to access the meeting(s) telephonically. To the extent possible, all attempts will be made to record and broadcast public meetings via PACTV and/or online streaming platforms.

Additional instructions and information will be released as it becomes available on www.kingstonmass.org. Technology resources and Room availability will be allocated based on the urgency of the business pending before the public bodies in collaboration with the appropriate Boards and Committees. All attempts will be made to accommodate virtual meeting requests, but are not guaranteed.

Sincerely,

Joshua A. Warren, Chairman
Board of Selectmen