

MEMORANDUM



To: Bedford Town Council
From: Rick Sawyer, Town Manager
Date: May 20, 2020
Re: **Manager's Report**

News & Noteworthy:

- 1) COVID-19 Pandemic Update – Bedford remains one of most impacted communities with **over 100 current COVID-19 positive patients** with impacts in some of our long term care facilities as well as the general community. I strongly encourage all residents to follow the CDC and State of NH recommendations for protecting yourself when out completing necessary travel during the Stay at Home 2.0 Order. Those recommendations include wearing a face covering and washing hands as often as possible. Our emergency personnel are now responding to multiple COVID-19 calls on some days.
- 2) COVID-19 Relief Funds and Acts. We are currently addressing the responsibilities, requirements, and responses to all of the following financial relief programs and employer/employee programs:
 - a. GOFERR Funds – The Governor's Office for Emergency Relief and Recovery has made \$32M available to local municipalities to reimburse eligible COVID-19-related expenses out of the CARES Act funding for costs incurred from March 1, 2020 to August 31, 2020 that are outside of the FEMA PA Program. Bedford's allotment based on population is \$543,847. Currently these funds would be used for our non-emergency response items like: telework costs, increased election costs, wages and benefits required by the Families First Coronavirus Response Act for non-first responders, childcare costs for first responders and essential employees due to school closures, cleaning supplies, signage, separation barriers, increased welfare costs, and emergency responder stipend expenses not covered by that program (see item d below). They cannot be used for lost revenues. It was announced this week that the funds can be used to cover our 25% FEMA local match.
 - b. FEMA Public Assistance Program - The Disaster Declaration is valid from January 20, 2020 forward. Currently, the PA program has a 75% federal cost share, in which the town is responsible for 25% that can now be covered by GOFERR funds. This program is where we will seek reimbursement of emergency response costs such as PPE, over time, pandemic related training, and disinfection materials.
 - c. DOJ Grant – This program allows us to acquire items needed for the long response to the pandemic and we were approved for approximately \$87,000 for items such as disinfecting equipment, ventilators for the ambulances, and a decontamination shelter for the Fire Department and the Police Department is submitting a separate request for \$66,000 worth of materials and equipment.

- d. Emergency Responder Stipends – The Governor has provided the opportunity for a \$300 a week stipend to our full time police officers and firefighters and \$150 a week to our part time / call members for the months of May and June. We currently have 71 full time and 11 part time personnel that are eligible. The State will reimburse the Town for the stipend amount but we are responsible for the payroll taxes and administrative costs for making the payments through our payroll system and tracking eligibility. The costs can be recovered through the GOFERR allotment.
 - e. CARES Provider Relief Fund – Bedford has been allotted \$29,195.09 but comes with a condition that we cannot seek out of pocket expenses (beyond insurance) for COVID-19 positive patients. We do expect the majority of COVID-19 patients to be covered by Medicare where we typically receive approximately 72% of what we receive from a privately insured patient so this will help to make up those losses.
 - f. US DHS-FEMA Assistance to Firefighters Grant – We have made a request through this grant for 8 powered air purifying respirators (PAPRs) which is a superior form of PPE that cover the head and face could be utilized by those on shift each day and are reusable. Value is approximately \$25,000.
 - g. Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA), Expanded Paid Sick Leave Act (EPSLA) and the Emergency Family and Medical Leave Expansion Act (EFMLEA). All three of these acts have taken significant time to understand and implement with new policies across all departments and education to our employees.
- 3) Motor Vehicle Registration – The lobby of the Town Office Building is open 10 AM – 4 PM for motor vehicle registration and other bill payments ONLY. At risk members of our community or anybody else who is not comfortable coming in with the general public can make an appointment for weekday morning 8-10 AM by contacting the department at 472-3550 or MV@BedfordNH.org. Motor vehicle registrations also includes boats and trailers. We do encourage people to continue taking advantage of online or mail in options whenever possible as maximum occupancy in our lobby is 4 customers. **Please wear a face covering and keep a 6 foot separation to others when coming to the building.** Offsite payment options can be found on our website <https://www.bedfordnh.org/819/Online-Bill-Payment>.
- 4) Public Library – The Library is now offering contactless curbside pickup of library materials for cardholders 10 AM – 2 PM, Monday - Saturday. They are currently seeing 100 requests a day.

How It Works:

- o Place a request on a Bedford item by using the [online catalog](#) or by calling 472-2300.
- o We will call you when your item(s) is ready for pickup.
- o Before you leave the house for the Library, or when you arrive, call 472-2300. We will then check the item(s) out to you and place your item(s) on the table outside the main entrance. After the staff person has returned to the building, come to the table to pick up your items.

- Read, enjoy, and return in the outdoor bookdrop between 10 AM - 2 PM, Monday – Saturday.
- 5) Temporary Outdoor Dining Permit – The Town has created a [temporary permit](#) that allows existing food service establishments that choose to operate under the “NH Stay at Home Order 2.0” to begin serving customers through outdoor seating. Establishments with previously approved outdoor seating do not need a temporary permit unless they request additional seating beyond what has been previously approved.
- 6) Bedford Cares – continues to provide an incredible service to members of our community who are in need of assistance with such things as shopping and picking up of prescriptions while also making donations to the Bedford Food Pantry that now exceeds well over 1,000 pounds of food. If you need their support please reach out to them at 792-1319 or on <https://www.facebook.com/BedfordNHCares/>. I can't thank Councilor Ricciardi enough for her continued relentless efforts.
- 7) Bedford Sewing Battalion – has been a tremendous resource for the community by providing thousands of masks to anyone who needs them. I truly appreciate their efforts. They can be reached at: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/222249565687445/>
- 8) Tennis Courts were able to be opened on May 19th in keeping with of the Governor's approval of Stay at Home 2.0 guidelines for outdoor attractions. The pool, basketball courts, skateboard park, playgrounds remain closed and we continue to monitor the Governor's Reopening Recommendations for guidance on how to move forward with these facilities. It is possible these items may need to stay closed at least through the Stay at Home 2.0 order. We are looking closely at keeping the pool closed for the year as a way to save costs, especially if physical distancing requirements will force us to have a very limited number of participants at any one time.
- 9) The last day to make party affiliation changes prior to the September 8th Primary Election is Tuesday, June 2, 2020. As a result of the pandemic Governor Sununu issued [Emergency Order #43](#) which so party affiliation changes no longer need to be made in person. [A form](#) on the Town Clerk's website can be filled out and mailed in. You can check your affiliation through the Secretary of State's website at <https://app.sos.nh.gov/Public/PartySearchResults.aspx>
- 10) Tax bills are on schedule to be issued by the end of May with a July 1st due date. The first bill of the year is based on the tax rate set in 2019 with property valuation updates made for any changes to the property completed by April 1, 2020. 71 lien notices for failure to pay taxes from the previous year this month.
- 11) The deadline for applying for elderly, disabled, blind property tax exemptions and veterans, disabled veterans tax credits is extended from April 15 to June 1, 2020 for NEW applicants. Please contact the Assessing Department at 472-8104 or visit their website for more information <https://www.bedfordnh.org/149/Assessing>
- 12) Please register your dog(s) prior to June 1st in order to avoid any late fees.

- 13) The Bedford Farmers Market opens June 16th and continues on Tuesdays from 3-6 PM through September at the St. Elizabeth Seton Church parking lot.
- 14) 2020 Census – Bedford currently has a response rate of 78.9% which is third in the State which means we have taken a step back since my last report. I would love to see Bedford be the first community to reach 100%. Please complete the Census by going to <https://my2020census.gov/> It truly takes less than 10 minutes to complete.

Project Updates:

- 1) 2020 Roads Program – The Program continues to be completing a great amount of work this year and completed \$1M worth of construction in the community of the second week of May. Paving this week was scheduled to take place on Grey Rock Road, Dearborn Lane, and Hunters Road.
- 2) Village Common Fence Replacement – As part of the Route 101 widening project the Town Council agreed to use funds received from the sale of town owned land for the project to replace the fence along the Common. Work is expected to be completed in the next 2-4 weeks and will be similar in style to the existing fence but be vinyl for ease of maintenance and will also match fencing to be installed by the State along the roadway in certain areas.
- 3) 2019 Audit – The Finance team with assistance from most departments have been extremely busy over the last few weeks completing the 2019 audit which is being conducted remotely as a result of the pandemic. The team has answered all questions generated and we expect our financials and CAFAR to be completed on schedule in June.
- 4) Personnel: One Communications Specialist position has been filled leaving one vacancy remaining. One conditional police officer position is pending a background check and if approved would have the officer in the Police Academy this summer. All other hiring's have been placed on hold at this time and will be reviewed on an individual basis to determine if they should be filled during the initial phases of the pandemic.

Events:

- May 24th – Bedford Library Closed for Memorial Day
- May 25th – Bedford Town Offices, Library, Transfer Station, & BCTV Closed for Memorial Day
- June 27th – Household Hazardous Waste Day, 8:30 AM – 3 PM, Highway Garage, 19 Chubbuck Road.

Upcoming Meetings:

- ~~May 26th – 7:15 AM, Highway Safety Committee~~
- May 26th – 7:00 PM, Conservation Commission
- **May 27th – 7:00 PM, Town Council**
- May 28th – 7:00 PM, Energy Commission
- June 1st – 7:00 PM, Planning Board, Special Meeting for Market & Main

- ~~June 2nd – 7:00 PM, Historic District Commission~~
- June 8th – 7:00 PM, Planning Board
- **June 10th – 7:00 PM, Town Council**
- June 11th – 7:45 AM Water & Sewer Committee
- June 16th – 7:00 PM, Zoning Board
- June 22nd – 7:00 PM, Planning Board
- June 23rd – 7:15 AM, Highway Safety Committee
- June 23rd – 7:00 PM, Conservation Commission
- **June 24th – 7:00 PM, Town Council**
- June 25th – 7:00 PM, Energy Commission

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