

City of Keene
New Hampshire

March 14, 2020

TO: Keene City Council
FROM: Mayor George Hansel
RE: FOR PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION - COVID-19 Virus Update

While the risk levels in our community are currently low, several proactive steps have been identified by the City's emergency management team to protect the health and safety of the public. These recommendations will be implemented and are subject to change as the situation develops over the coming weeks. While these are challenging circumstances, I am encouraged by the professionalism and level of coordination being exercised by City's emergency management team and our valuable community partners.

The City is taking the following proactive measures:

Public Facilities - As of March 16th, the Keene Public Library and Recreation Center buildings will be closed to the public until March 30th. The remainder of City facilities remain open at this time, and all other City services will maintain normal operations. City facilities are being cleaned regularly according to CDC recommended sanitation practices in high-touch areas.

Homeless Services - The City is working closely with local homeless shelters and other social service agencies to address specific concerns of the homeless population. Additional information will be released as it becomes available.

Preparedness Measures – All City departments, including emergency services, have submitted Continuity of Operations Plans that provide for minimum staffing levels and equipment inventories necessary to continue to meet public needs. The emergency management team is participating in State of New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services and Division of Homeland Security briefings.

Public Services – The public is encouraged to use online services provided via the [City website](#) including bill payments, dog license renewals, motor vehicle registrations, parking ticket payments and requests for vital records certificates to allow for social distancing as recommended by the CDC. [Contact City departments by phone](#) whenever possible for services not available online.

2-1-1 (dial from any phone) is the best point of contact for coronavirus questions for NH residents. Additional resources and guidance from NH DHHS, the CDC and from the Cheshire Medical Center are provided via links on the [City website](#).

Keene businesses may consider starting to track financial impacts in preparation for potential state or federal relief programs.

The City encourages a neighbor-helping-neighbor approach to address some of the challenges that communities nationwide are facing such as providing safe environments for children during school closures and assisting seniors and at-risk citizens by making regular phone contact and running errands. Any guidance shared by the CDC and NH DHHS for these and other challenges will be shared as soon as it becomes available.

Those who wish to help are advised to contact the local Red Cross about opportunities for blood donation at a time when donations are expected to be low. Additional ideas include making financial donations to local social service agencies, contacting local organizations that are organizing meal delivery programs, and purchasing gift cards from local businesses who may be experiencing lower than normal customer traffic.

Those who are feeling sick are advised to follow [CDC guidelines](#) and call a doctor if exposed to COVID-19 or if experiencing fever and symptoms such as cough or difficulty breathing. To prevent the disease from spreading, the CDC also advises staying home when sick (except to get medical care), separation from others in the home, calling ahead before visiting a doctor, wearing a facemask when around other people, covering coughs and sneezes, cleaning hands often, avoiding the of sharing personal household items, cleaning high-touch surfaces every day, and seeking medical attention if symptoms are worsening.

We continue to encourage those not experiencing symptoms of illness to enjoy City [parks and trails](#) and to frequent local restaurants and retail businesses who are taking recommended precautions to assure public safety while shopping or dining out.

For City-specific questions, please use the [online email form provided on the website](#).