

City of Keene
New Hampshire

March 24, 2020

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

Each weekday morning at 8AM, I will be hosting a virtual town hall to answer questions from citizens on the COVID-19 emergency. Other participants may include City staff members and representatives from Cheshire Medical Center and Keene State College. Those interested in participating in the virtual town hall can follow @MayorHansel on Facebook. Additionally, they can go to www.notifykeene.com for links to join the video conference. Those without internet access can dial (603) 766-JOIN (5646) and use the participant code 981441. I encourage you to pass this information along to your constituents who are interested in these updates.

Governor Sununu has also released several new emergency orders over the last few days. Two of these orders are highlighted below:

- **Emergency Order 16:** This order prohibits scheduled gatherings of more than 10 people in the State of New Hampshire. This includes social, spiritual and recreational activities, including but not limited to, community, civic, public, leisure, faith based, or sporting events; parades; concerts; festivals; conventions; fundraisers; and similar activities. This prohibition does not apply to day-to-day operations of for profit or not for profit organizations and the State Government. Gatherings that are required for urgent medical purposes such as blood drives or meetings of medical personnel to discuss efforts to combat the COVID-19 pandemic are also exempt.
- **Emergency Order 12:** This order provides additional guidance for the City to hold virtual meetings in compliance with RSA-91A during an emergency. As a result of this order, we no longer need to provide a physical space at City Hall for the public to witness our meetings, as long as we give them access via electronic means. The public will now only be able to participate or listen to our meetings electronically and cannot attend in person at City Hall.

On Monday, March 23, 2020, DHHS announced 23 new positive test results for COVID-19. There have now been 101 cases of COVID-19 diagnosed in New Hampshire (1 in Cheshire County). There are 869 tests pending at the NH Public Health Laboratories (PHL), and the number of confirmed cases is expected to rise.

Most recent activity as part of the City's proactive response to COVID-19:

Fire Department –The fire department continues to review and implement the latest best practices. In collaboration with SAU-29, the City has started to use their disinfecting/sanitizing machine in both stations and for our response units. This device does not replace our normal cleaning procedures but adds another level of protection for our emergency responders and those requiring transport. Two Keene first responders were isolated pending the test results of a patient they transported. Fortunately, the patient's results were negative for COVID-19 and the first responders are now out of isolation.

Homeless Population – The overflow shelter that was being operated at the UCC Church has been closed as of Sunday, March 22nd. City staff have continued to meet with the operators of Hundred Nights and the shelters operated by Southwestern Community Services. To address current needs, the City is working with Hundred Nights to create safe additional living space in their current building. City staff has also found alternative housing options for those in need.

Emergency Planning– Community Development Director, Rhett Lamb, is drafting an “essential services” plan. This plan would be required should the State move to a Shelter in Place order. In addition, all departments have ramped up cross training for essential services.

Volunteer Coordination – The City Assessor, Dan Langille, is working to connect volunteers with non-profits in the community. Going forward, links will be added to the [City’s website](#) to share volunteer opportunities.