

CITY OF PORTSMOUTH



UPDATE from the City Manager for Monday, March 17, 2020

Thank you for your ongoing patience, support and concern for your fellow citizens.

NEW SINCE MARCH 16 UPDATE:

City Council action taken at their March 16 meeting:

Downtown Parking is free through March 31, 2020. On-street and public garage parking fees are suspended at all City parking meters, effective as of March 17, 2020. In the interest of supporting downtown retail businesses and restaurants, downtown employees are asked to use the garages rather than taking up the on-street spaces.

The Small Business Administration (SBA) Coronavirus Disaster Relief Lending Program

Loans for up to \$2 million can be used to pay fixed debts, payroll, accounts payable and other bills that can't be paid because of the disaster's impact.

Eligibility: small businesses without credit available elsewhere. Interest rate 3.75% (non-profits, 2.75%).

Repayment: To keep payments affordable, loan repayment options up to a maximum of 30 years.

Get a head-start as the program is being authorized by following these steps:

1. Go to: sba.gov/disaster
2. Find the section specific to the Coronavirus Disaster Relief Lending program
3. Create an account and upload your information so that once the formal declaration is processed by SBA, yours will one of the first applications to be considered.

Public utilities Eversource, Unitil and Liberty Utilities -- and the City Department of Public Works Water & Sewer Divisions -- have suspended all disconnect orders and/or late fees.

Residents in Portsmouth, New Castle, Rye, Newington or Greenland who require assistance should contact the City's Welfare Department which assists Portsmouth residents unable to provide for their own documented shelter, food, medication, utility or other emergency needs. Call 603-610-7267 or email WFDept@CityofPortsmouth.com

Governor Chris Sununu, the NH Department of Health and Human Services, and NH Homeland Security and Emergency Management have also mobilized 211NH to handle all COVID-19 related calls from New Hampshire residents. *All residents with questions or concerns surrounding the COVID-19 outbreak can call 2-1-1.*

Food stores are operating normally and receiving shipments daily (although some products are in short supply at their distributors). For a list of food stores including those who offer delivery, [click here](#).

Gov. Sununu ordered all restaurants to switch to takeout, pick-up and/or delivery orders only. For a list of Portsmouth restaurant options, [click here](#).

Thank you to all of the restaurants, businesses and residents who have pitched in to help our neighbors, connecting food, volunteers and other assistance to those who need them. The Greater Portsmouth Chamber Collaborative is working with the City's Economic Development Department to coordinate the flow of information and assistance from these and other State and Federal offices.

Local businesses have put together the following resources:

- Information about the extent to which they are still operating, doing web programming, etc.: <http://mightysmall.io/> -
- An immediate way for businesses to share their webstores so consumers can support local businesses with the purchase of giftcards for use later: <http://www.seacoastgiftcards.com/>

Portsmouth Public Schools have made arrangements to provide all students with daily breakfast and lunch. Parents can pick food up at Portsmouth High School (cafeteria door #18) between 7:30 and 9:30 a.m. School buses will be delivering food between 11:00 and 11:45 a.m. each day, starting March 17, 2020, to the following five pickup locations:

- Wamesit/Ledgewood

- Beechstone White Cedar
- Gosling Recreation Center/ Oriental Gardens (Mr. Bubbles)
- Osprey Landing (at mailboxes)
- Patriots Park

Unless indicated otherwise, drop-off locations are at the usual bus stops. The schedule and stops are likely to change as we work to assess and meet the needs of the community.

Elementary School Materials Pick-Up

Wednesday, March 18, between 1:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m.

Elementary student remote learning materials and Chromebooks for students in Grades 3-5 without devices at home will be available for curbside pick-up at each school. Any materials not picked up will be delivered to students on Thursday. More details in individual school updates.

All land use board and commission meetings scheduled for the next two weeks have been postponed until further notice.

The Planning Department will continue to accept applications and payments through the [online permitting system](#). The Department is temporarily waiving the requirement to submit hard copy plans until we re-open. If you would prefer to submit payment by check, please mail to: Planning Department, City Hall, 1 Junkins Ave., Portsmouth, NH 03801. [Click here](#) for application submission deadlines. To confirm status [click here](#). For more information, call (603) 610-7216, or email: planning@cityofportsmouth.com.

POSTPONED:

- DPW Public Information Meeting originally scheduled for March 25 to discuss Market Street Pedestrian Bridge.
- DPW Public Information Meeting scheduled for April 1 on the Islington Street Project.
- Citywide Neighborhood Committee scheduled for Wednesday, March 18
All City Board, Commission and Committee meetings

In Case You Missed It:

All municipal buildings and facilities, schools and the Portsmouth Public Library are closed to the public. But services are staffed according to staggered work schedules to minimize the number of people in the same place at the same time.

- **City Hall is closed to the public.** A skeleton staff will be in place to answer the phone and perform City business. Residents are asked to use the City's [online services](#) to process their water bills, parking tickets, taxes, fees, fines, permits, etc.
- **Fire Department** has suspended scheduled fire protection inspections and the issuing of any burn permits.
- **Recreation Department** buildings, playgrounds, ball fields, basketball courts and dog parks are all closed.
- **Senior transportation and Meals on Wheels** are operating as usual.

DPW: The recycling center is open and trash pickup is on the normal schedule. Note: Please dispose of disinfectant wipes in a separate trash bag. Flush only toilet paper or tissues in the toilet (even the wipes marked "flushable" can clog pipes). Also use [Click 'n Fix](#) as needed so service requests can be logged and addressed.

For answers to other questions about the City's response to COVID-19, please email: hotline@cityofportsmouth.com

For more information, visit the [Health Department page on COVID-19](#)