

CITY OF PORTSMOUTH



City Newsletter

Wednesday, February 16, 2022

RESCINDED, EFFECTIVE IMMEDIATELY: Public Health Directive on Face Coverings --

Due to the precipitous and sustained drop in test positivity rates in Portsmouth, with area hospitalizations also declining. However, The Public Health Officer urges residents to continue to follow the guidance of the NH Department of Health and Human Services and the CDC in implementing the layered “package” of mitigation measures that are known to reduce the risks associated with COVID-19.

The City Manager still strongly encourages the use of masks indoors in City facilities. Please note that masks are still required in the Portsmouth Public Library. **The free N95 masks supplied by the Federal government are now available at the following local pharmacies:**

- CVS, 674 Islington St. at checkout, not pharmacy
- Rite-Aid, 800 Islington St., at checkout, not pharmacy
- Rite-Aid, 1303 Woodbury Ave., at pharmacy
- Walmart, 2460 Lafayette Rd., at doors and Service Desk

Test positivity rates on the Seacoast are still higher than they were when the first mask mandate was relaxed last June; and children under 5 are still not able to be vaccinated. Just this week, Pfizer withdrew its request for the FDA to issue Emergency Use Authorization for the vaccine they are developing for children aged 6 months to 4 years, which means that vaccine will not be available until spring. Therefore, for the continued protection of small children and high-risk adults in the community, individuals should defend against COVID-19 infection, severe disease and death with continued mask use in indoor spaces, and staying home when experiencing symptoms of Covid-19.

Celebrating Black History Month
Portsmouth is a Racial Justice Municipality.
Read more about what that means, here:
<https://tinyurl.com/2p89mvy2>

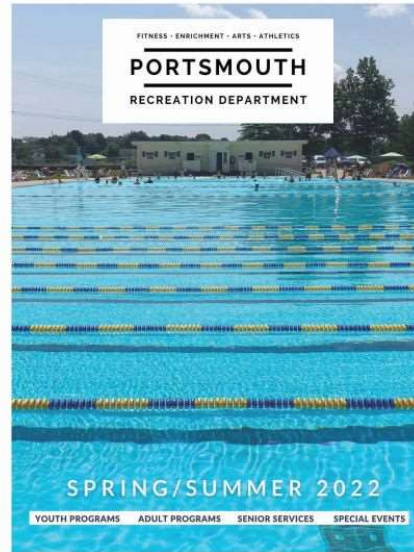
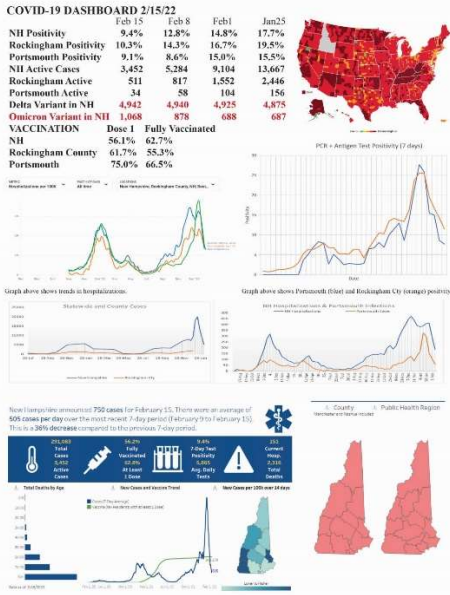
CITY COUNCIL MEETING TUES FEB 22 at 7 PM – In person in City Hall Council Chambers and via Zoom.

Questions about a City Department, program or issue? Suggestion? Email your comment to hotline@cityofportsmouth.com and you’ll receive an immediate response, or we’ll find the right person who can answer your question.



TREE OF LOVE WILL RETIRE NEXT WEEK – Check out the 400+ Valentines that Mayor McEachern, his daughter, and other preschoolers from Treehouse School created for the Tree of Love in Market Square. The holiday tree will retire for the season, next week.

SUZANNE WOODLAND NAMED DEPUTY CITY MANAGER/DEPUTY CITY ATTORNEY -- City Manager Karen Conard is pleased to announce that after serving as Acting Deputy City Manager since August 2021, Suzanne Woodland is confirmed as Deputy City Manager as well as continuing to serve as Deputy City Attorney.

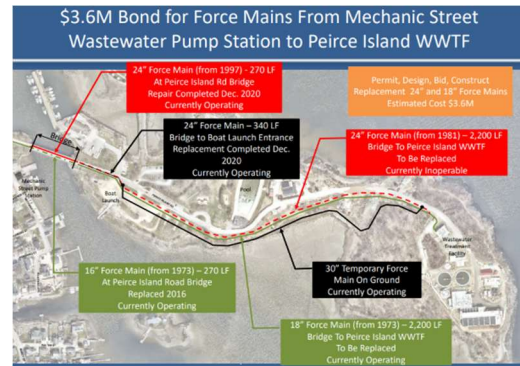


REC DEPT SPRING/SUMMER PROGRAM AND CAMP INFORMATION! -- Spring/Summer info NOW AVAILABLE on the Rec Dept webpage: <https://www.cityofportsmouth.com/recreation>
 Printed copies of the program guide also available at City Hall, the library and at all Recreation facilities. **SPRING PROGRAM REGISTRATION now open! Summer Program/Camp Registration opens TUES FEB 22 at 9am for residents** and Mon Mar 7 for non-residents. **INDOOR POOL SPRING SWIM LESSON REGISTRATION now open for residents.** Opens Mon Feb 28 for non-residents.

REGIONAL COVID-19 DASHBOARD – For a larger PDF, click here. <https://tinyurl.com/4569xnpv>



OUTDOOR DINING 2022 -- RESTAURANT MEETING FRI FEB 18 AT 10:30 AM – The Chamber Collaborative is hosting a Zoom meeting to discuss the City’s draft of the 2022 outdoor dining plan with the Portsmouth restaurant community and get their feedback. This meeting will include City Manager Karen Conard, Economic Development Director Nancy Carmer and other involved City staff. All Portsmouth restaurants who are considering outdoor dining in 2022 (not just Chamber members) are encouraged to attend this free session. For the Zoom registration, click here. <https://tinyurl.com/5xzuawxv>



PEIRCE ISLAND ROAD WORK FOR SEWER FORCE MAINS PROJECT -- Work continues on the project to replace the force mains to the Peirce Island Wastewater Treatment Facility. <https://www.cityofportsmouth.com/publicworks/peirce-island-sewer-force-mains-project>
 That work requires closing Peirce Island Road, parking and trail launch access beyond the Outdoor Pool, on a daily basis, 7 am to 4 pm. The public is advised that access is obstructed in the area past the pool.



SAFE WATER ADVISORY GROUP RESUMES WED FEB 23 AT 6:30 PM – In person in City Hall Conference Room A and via Zoom. For the agenda and Zoom registration, click here: <https://tinyurl.com/zawhaw26>

A NOTE ON NH DHHS DATA TRACKING -- On February 10, NH DHHS reported they are in the process of reworking how they report COVID-19 infection incidence and are currently working through a backlog, so [their NH Dashboard](#) is not fully up-to-date. NH DHHS expects to have a better sense of how to present data and community transmission “in a couple of weeks” but recommends watching the trends rather than individual data points.



NOTE ON INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL – Unlike CDC, NH DHHS does NOT recommend a 5-day quarantine following international travel or for those who are exposed to COVID-19. Quarantine is recommended ONLY if the infected person is part of your household and all are unvaccinated.

ALLIANCE FOR GREATER GOOD HOSTS VIRTUAL MARDI GRAS PARTY MAR 1 TO BENEFIT WOMENAID -- The [Alliance for Greater Good](#) is holding its second virtual **Cocktails for a Cause** on March 1 to benefit [Womenaid of Greater Portsmouth](#). A \$50 donation provides access to a fun and safe way to celebrate Mardi Gras at home. Gather friends and family and learn from The Kitchen’s bar manager Charlotte Capra how to make three creative cocktails while dancing to some great live music from Jamsterdam. For tickets: <https://www.allianceforgreatergood.org/events>

FREE TEST KITS BY MAIL -- Order free at-home COVID-19 tests from the Federal government website: <https://www.covidtests.gov/> which also offers 'how to test' instructions.

NH SOURCES FOR FREE AT-HOME TESTING KITS – To order a free kit, visit: <https://learn.vaulthealth.com/nh/>
For a list provided by NH DHHS of FDA-Emergency Use Authorized at-home antigen test kits, click here: <https://tinyurl.com/ymzjbj2r>

AARP TAX PREP ASSISTANCE AVAILABLE
AARP Tax Prep is drop-off only this year. Envelopes are available at the Senior Activity Center and Portsmouth Public Library, and drop-offs should be made at the Senior Center ONLY, February 1 – April 10, during the following times:

FREE COVID-19 TESTING SITE AT FOX RUN MALL IN NEWINGTON–**Note: This site is closed when school is closed because of weather.** Open 7 days a week, 9 am to 3 pm in the parking lot behind the JC Penney store. 48-hour results. For other free testing center, click here:

- Sundays, 11 am – 12 noon
- Tuesdays, 4-5 pm

For detailed instructions on what you need for filing, click here: <https://tinyurl.com/2p87ee45>

DAILY WALK-IN VACCINATION & BOOSTER CLINIC IN ROCHESTER -- Spaulding Commons, 306 N. Main Street. Hours: 10am-7pm weekdays, 9-2 on Saturdays, closed on Sundays. For additional local pharmacies and same-day sites, click here: <https://tinyurl.com/kbvemrbk> including in Concord, 273 Loudon Rd. opposite Steeplegate Mall. **NH Dept of Public Health expects to keep this fixed site in place through March 2022.**

As the 2021 Tax Year filing period opens, the IRS is encouraging taxpayers to file electronically. They estimate that refunds on electronic filings without errors will be processed in 21 days, but caution the IRS still has a backlog of 6 million unprocessed returns.

BOOSTERS FOR HOMEBOUND

INDIVIDUALS – Call On-Site Medical Services, the company contracted by NH to provide homebound boosters, at [603-338-9292](tel:603-338-9292) or book an appointment online at the On-Site Medical website: <https://www.on-sitemedservices.com/>



WEEKLY FREE LUNCH REMINDERS:

- **Middle Street Baptist Church** – Seacoast Community Lunch brown bag lunches from the parking lot (18 Court St.), 12 noon to 1 pm on Wednesdays. For more information call 603-436-2337 or email lunch@middle.st
- **St. John's Church** -- Common Table bag lunch pickup in the St. John's parking lot (100 Chapel St.) Thurs, 12 noon to 1 pm.

GATHER COMMUNITY MARKET, FRIDAYS,

10 am – 1 pm – A FREE market for all. No paperwork. No ID. No one is ever turned away. Located at the NH National Guard building, 801 McGee Drive in Portsmouth.

GRANTS FOR ARTISTS! The NH Council on the Arts reminds artists of two grant programs currently accepting applications:

[NH CARES Artist-Led Project Grants](#)

Grants to individual artists for specific, definable projects that connect artists and organizations to local initiatives. This program will support employment opportunities for artists impacted by COVID-19 by building new structures and partnerships that will help to sustain New Hampshire's creative sector. **Deadline: March 4, 2022.**

[Artist Entrepreneurial Grant](#)

WORK FOR THE CITY OF PORTSMOUTH!

To review job postings and benefits, [click here](#). For example, one of the current job openings is: **Business Administrator for Regulatory Compliance**. This position is responsible for assisting the City Engineer and DPW Senior Management with a variety of short and long term projects. This role is responsible for overseeing tasks assigned by the City Engineer are completed on time, all regulatory requirements are met, and long term document retention processes are maintained.

The City offers a generous compensation and benefits package that includes retirement, generous paid time off including vacation, holidays, medical & dental insurance, flexible spending account, professional development, career growth, longevity incentives, and more! For details and to apply, click here:

<https://www.cityofportsmouth.com/hr/work>

PORTSMOUTH NH 400 ACCEPTING OFFICIAL PROGRAM PARTNER APPLICATIONS

– Organizations, groups and anyone planning a Portsmouth NH 400 celebration program, project or event is invited to submit an Official Program Partner Application.

<https://tinyurl.com/mw5664bm>

The goals of the Application Process are:

- To help Portsmouth NH 400 Management Team keep track of events, projects and programs (including any fund-raising efforts in 2022)
- To maintain a central calendar on the PortsmouthNH400.org website
- To connect organizations and artists who seem to be working on similar themes and ideas
- To coordinate fund-, fun- and friend-raising efforts
- To coordinate marketing efforts

Official Programs Partners will be asked to sign the [Official Program Partner Agreement](#) to confirm that they will abide by a few simple criteria that revolve around the goals, values, and themes of the commemoration. The PNH400 Management Team will also require that Program Partners comply with [Brand Standards](#). **Learn more, get involved, volunteer, donate! For more details, visit:** <https://www.PortsmouthNH400.org>

EMERGENCY RENTAL & UTILITIES ASSISTANCE

– The [NH Emergency Rental Assistance Program](#) (NHERAP) provides funds to renters who cannot pay their rent and utilities during the pandemic. The program works with tenants and landlords. Program changes as of October 1, 2021:

- Households may qualify for assistance for past-due and future rent and utility payments for a period not to exceed 18 months.
- At least one person in the household must have qualified for unemployment benefits, had their income reduced, had significant costs, or had other financial hardship during the pandemic. Certain income requirements must be met.

WHAT THE PROGRAM COVERS

- Past-due rent including reasonable late and legal fees.
- Three months of future rent payments if needed for housing stability.
- Utilities, such as electricity, home heating costs, water, sewer, trash.
- Other housing-related costs such as internet and relocation expenses (including rental application fees, utility hook-up fees, and security deposits).
- Households may qualify for utility assistance even if they do not receive or need rental assistance.

For more information on whether you qualify and how to apply for emergency funds available to renters in NH, click here: <https://www.capnh.org/covid19>
The Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB) has also launched a tool (click here: <https://tinyurl.com/4hawaxf4>) that allows renters and landlords to find rental assistance programs in their area. Applications are handled through NH Community Action Partnership (CAP).



RECENTLY UPDATED:

- **VACCINATION FAQs**, click here: <https://tinyurl.com/4smxnjf7>
- **TESTING FAQs**, click here: <https://tinyurl.com/57vhfbhx>
- **COVID-19 TREATMENT FAQs**, [click here](#)

KIDS AND COVID FAQs, [click here](#)

POST-VACCINATION FAQs – For the latest information on breakthrough infections, boosters and vaccine effectiveness against the Omicron variant, click here: <https://tinyurl.com/uurbmrse>

VACCINE DEVELOPMENT BACKGROUND – For more information on how the COVID-19 vaccines were developed, tested and approved, click here. <https://tinyurl.com/3yhreymk>

PROOF-OF-VACCINATIONS: What should you do if you discover your vaccination is not recorded properly in the NH DHHS database? Or if you need more than your vaccination card because some travel destinations require the full record? Contact NHIIS (NH Immunization

Information System) at 603-271-4028, by email at nhiis.support@dhhs.nh.gov or click here for the NH DHHS website <https://tinyurl.com/rva3tphc> for the immunization information system (NHIIS). On this site, select the correction forms for your PCP to verify your vaccine card, DOB, etc. You will need to get the form notarized and before sending it back to NHIIS. Once your record is corrected, you can request an official vaccine and immunization record. For more answers to Frequently Asked Questions, [click here](#).

I LOST MY PROOF-OF-VACCINATION CARD. NOW WHAT? All vaccination records are kept on file in the CDC National Health Interview Survey (NHIS) system. NH DHHS advises that you can replace a lost vaccination card in either of two ways:

1. Download and complete the vaccination card replacement request form here: <https://tinyurl.com/4pj4chcz> Note that the completed form MUST BE NOTARIZED before sending it back to NH DHHS.
2. If your healthcare provider has access to the NHIIS, ask him/her to print out the record directly from NHIIS.
3. **A NOTE ON COMMERCIAL TESTING CHARGES** – If a commercial urgent care center says that COVID tests are not going to be covered by insurance, NH DHHS advises that **patients may request the urgent care center submit a bill to the carrier under the code Z20.828**. This covers suspected exposure to viral communicable disease. Their advice is based on this CDC guidance: "If the provider documents 'suspected,' 'possible,' 'probable,' or 'inconclusive' COVID-19, do not assign code U07.1. Assign a code(s) explaining the reason for encounter (such as fever) or Z20.828, Contact with and (suspected) exposure to other viral communicable diseases." **Private health insurers are now required to cover up to eight home COVID-19 tests per month for people on their plans.** Under the new policy, Americans are able to either purchase home testing kits for free under their insurance or submit receipts for the tests for reimbursement, up to the monthly per-person limit.

For DHHS VACCINE FAQs, click here: <https://tinyurl.com/tkvaksnw>

For Testing FAQs click here. <https://www.cityofportsmouth.com/city/testing-faqs>

For Ventilation FAQs click here. <https://www.cityofportsmouth.com/city/ventilation-faqs>

For more information, visit City's page on COVID-19: <https://tinyurl.com/2ywcu6ab>

CITY HALL FACEBOOK PAGE:

Like and follow us to get news as it's posted:
<https://www.facebook.com/CityHallPortsmouthNH>

Want to know more about what's happening in the City? Click on the QR code or link below to sign up for the City Newsletter and/or individual email lists for projects. <https://tinyurl.com/y2p67par>

