

Town Manager's Update for the Town of New Shoreham – May 12, 2020

Dear Residents, Businesses, and Community Partners:

This week, Governor Raimondo executed the first phase of the [State's framework](#) for re-opening Rhode Island's economy and the benchmarks that need to be met to continue through the next two phases. Along with opening some businesses and parks, the Governor has raised the stay-at-home order effective May 9th.

In addition, the Town of New Shoreham amended our Emergency Ordinance effective May 8th. As a result of the changes in the amendment, the Town has largely aligned with the State of Rhode Island executive orders and guidelines for re-opening in a gradual manner.

We anticipate that if the number of cases and hospitalizations remain stable or improve, lifting of existing restrictions will follow.

A brief summary of the changes resulting from the amendment to the TNS emergency ordinance of May 8th:

- The 14-day quarantine for visitors to the island has been lifted. *It is important to note, however that the 14-day quarantine for anyone coming to the island from out of state remains as a part of the Governor's state-wide executive order.*
- Residents of the island who leave the island are no longer required to quarantine upon their return.
- Workers from Rhode Island are permitted to come to the island to work in construction and related industries, provided they register with the building department. The restricted work categories are listed in the emergency ordinance available here: www.new-shoreham.com. Work crew size is limited to no more than 5 per the order of the Governor.
- Workers from out of state are permitted and are required to register with the building department and quarantine in their place of residence when not at work.
- Office workers are permitted as delineated by the Governor's executive order. [State's framework](#)
- Limited retail, as listed in the Governor's re-opening plan is allowed to open under the listed constraints. [State's framework](#)
- Short-term rentals are suspended until June 1st.

We are conducting the required minimum housing inspections in preparation of allowing boarding house licenses to be issued in the coming weeks.

Staying home, limiting our social interactions, keeping our distance, wearing masks and constantly washing our hands still remains the best protection against the virus.

FY2020 Budget:

In the coming weeks, we will be presenting options to the Town Council for ways to proceed with the Financial Town Meeting and the creation and adoption of the FY21 budget. First and foremost, we are committed to lessening the burden on our residents and local businesses. This will be a very difficult budget year, and we will have to get creative to continue to provide top-notch services for our residents. We are closely tracking the state budget process, still in progress, which will affect us locally.

We expect that our Financial Town Meeting will look different this year in light of COVID-19 and restrictions on gatherings. For the past month, we have been working with other communities, the League of Cities and Towns, and the Governor's Office to determine the best way to proceed while balancing the need for transparency and local decision making with health and safety.

Municipal Services:

Although Town Offices remain closed to the public, most services are available online. Visit the town's web site for more information: www.new-shoreham.com

Important COVID 19 Information:

If you are feeling sick and exhibiting COVID-19 symptoms, visit the Department of Health's [self checker](#) and schedule a test:

- Call the Block Island Medical Center: (401) 466-2974, for further instructions and assistance.

Keeping Each Other Safe:

- Stay at home, unless you are getting food, medicine, gas, or going to work.
- Social gatherings are limited to 5 people or less.
- Keep a log of the people you have come in contact with every day.
 - This will assist the Dept. of Health to trace your contacts in the event that you contract COVID-19.
- Wear a face covering in public. CDC guidance on face coverings, [here](#).
- Restaurants open for takeout and delivery only, this includes wine and beer.
- Public entertainment, recreation and close contact businesses must remain closed to customers (online, delivery or curbside pickup can be established).
- Domestic or international travel: people returning to R.I. for non-work purposes by any means of transportation must quarantine for 14 days.
- Telehealth must be extended under health insurance policies.

COVID-19 has affected all corners of our community in some way. There is assistance available for families, mental health needs, those unemployed, and businesses.

Individuals and Families:

- **Unemployment:**
 - Factsheet to help guide you and answer your questions ([English](#), [Spanish](#)).
 - Apply [here](#).
 - Gig economy workers, small business owners, workers for hire, self-employed individuals, apply [here](#).
- **Job openings:** [EmployRI](#).
- **Utilities and Evictions:** Utility shut-offs have been suspended until May 31st. Evictions have been suspended until May 17th.
- **Childcare:** Rhode Island partnered with [Care.com](#) to increase childcare access. In addition to providing 90 days of free, premium access to their website, Care.com has created portals specifically for frontline workers and caregivers in R.I.
- **Hotel rooms** are available at reduced costs for quarantine/isolation at [Visit RI Havens](#).
- **Mental Health:**
 - If you or a someone you love is going through a mental health or substance use crisis, there is help available: [401-414-LINK \(5465\)](#), <https://www.bhlink.org/>, Triage Center: 975 Waterman Ave., East Providence.
 - For mental health assistance for children under 18, please call [855-KID\(543\)-LINK\(5465\)](#).
- The R.I. United Way 211 hotline is available 24 hours, 7 days a week to answer questions and connect you with the supports you may need.

Businesses and Non-Profits:

- R.I. Small Business Hotline: (401) 521-HELP.
- SBA Economic Injury Disaster Loans and Loan Advances: [Questions](#) and [Application](#).
- SBA Paycheck Protection Program: [Questions](#) and [Application](#).
- Short-term bridge loans for restaurants and microbusinesses: R.I. restaurants and small businesses are eligible (businesses must have 1 to 10 employees; restaurants may have any number of employees). Applications [here](#).
- **Microenterprise Stabilization Grant Program:** R.I.'s microenterprise stabilization grant program will assist small businesses that have been impacted by COVID-19 and left out of federal stimulus programs to-date with grants of up to \$5,000. The program will provide to qualifying microenterprises. Funds may be used for working capital to cover business costs, such as rent, staffing, utilities. [Visit](#).
- [Tech Support for RI Businesses](#)
- R.I. nonprofit organizations at the forefront of COVID-19 response can apply for grants from the Rhode Island Foundation/United Way [here](#) or [here in Spanish](#).
- Rhode Island Superior Court [business protection program](#) for those that may have defaulted on their debts during this time.
- State and federal personal and business corporation tax filings have been extended until July 15th.

Voting:

As a reminder, Rhode Island's Presidential Primary has been moved to June 2nd, and voting will be done through mail ballot. The Secretary of State's Office will be sending mail ballots to voters. To make sure your information and address is up-to-date, visit:

<https://vote.sos.ri.gov/Voter/UpdateYourVoterRecord>

Please visit the [R.I. Dept. of Health website](#) for factual up-to-date information or call 401-222-8022.

It is our intent to consider all aspects of the health of the community as we go through the process of reopening and managing the financial difficulty that will affect many of us. Your understanding, flexibility and cooperation will be critical to that effort.

Sincerely,

James Kern
Interim Town Manager