

## Mayor's Report - April 2020

Dear Neighbors,

We are experiencing a National Emergency as we fight an unprecedented pandemic that has stretched beyond anything we could have ever imagined. Extreme measures have been instituted by our Federal, State, and County authorities to overcome this crisis. I am confident that by each of us doing our part and working hard to prevent the spread of the COVID-19 virus, we will overcome this. We will then work just as hard to return to a sense of normalcy as soon as it is safe to do so. For most of you, staying at home and adhering to CDC guidelines is critical to win this battle we are facing.

While this has disrupted our daily routines and seemingly the world as we know it, we are discovering small silver linings as we establish our new “normal”. Most of the clutter has been removed from our lives, scientists can actually hear seismic activities much more clearly, our commutes have disappeared, and external duties have dissipated. We have all become closer to our families and had more family time. Many have the time to cook at home and share a family meal gathered around the dinner table. We may be reading more, meditating, pausing to take in nature, and crossing off house chores that have long awaited time and attention. In addition, I have seen town staff and members of our Emergency Response Team perform services they have never performed before like seasoned pros! We have a common enemy, COVID-19, and we have come together as families and as a community just as we will need to continue to do as the days turn into weeks and even months.

Below are the steps your local authorities have taken and keep taking and updating:

We formed an Emergency Response Team that has conference calls every other day to review all actions, progress, and next steps. This Team consists of myself, Council President Larry Hushour, Council Member Karl Munder, David Warrington, Holly McCleary, Chief Reitz, Gina Campanile, Ashley Collier, Charlene Singleton, Melissa Thorn, Colleen Reilly, Katie Moore and Doug Alexander (MAVFC member). We also have consultants with specialized experience: Tom McCarron – Town Attorney, Bill Butts - Senior Outreach, Dr. Rita Misra -Technical Consultant, Jim Stargel -Public Space monitor, David Pyatt – Bio-Tech Advisor monitoring health data and Pleasant View Nursing Home issues, and Bruce Curley - VP of Civil Defense.

We are deploying extensive public outreach initiatives in order to keep our residents and businesses informed of all the changes, resources (public/community assistance, food, mental health,etc) and closures. We are utilizing everything but courier pigeons! Direct mailers, social media, websites, newspapers, yard signs (even in Spanish for food resources), electronic messaging signs, local cable channels, town entry signs, zoom conferencing calls with our restaurants, PSA videos to our Chamber of Commerce to relay and assist with the many Federal State and County assistance programs and physical distribution of fliers are just some of the outreach channels we have used. Town staff has been nothing less than magnificent as they pull together volumes of new information and broadcast in our public outreach campaign to keep you safe and informed on a local level.

Town staff and Emergency Response Team members have delegated areas of dedicated responsibility to ensure a cohesive and comprehensive approach to responding to this crisis.

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Recognizing that the financial impacts of this pandemic are far reaching, we have relaxed signage standards for businesses to maximize permitted business operations, deferred water bills for residents impacted by reduced incomes, suspended water cutoffs, and reached out to Comcast to increase service. We attend daily conference calls with various Senators, Delegates, and our County Government partners. A senior outreach initiative has been launched by our civic groups that call and check-in with our seniors. Additionally, we are working tirelessly to get seniors all the resources and information they need.

For your safety and to promote the Governor's Executive Orders we have closed public buildings, playgrounds, playing courts and the dog park. The Parks remain open at this time but only for exercise. We ask that you keep moving, keep the recommended distance and adhere to the "10-person" order.

Several measures were implemented to ensure the health and safety of Town employees. For administrative town staff, we instituted maximum telework, forwarded phone operations, extended a liberal sick leave and a childcare policy. Field staff operations continue uninterrupted incorporating staggered shifts to ensure an exposure does not impact essential operations, such as those at the waste treatment plant. Extended sick leave and childcare policies also apply to all public works employees as the need arises.

The Police Department has increased patrol hours and have implemented staggering shifts to reduce the risk of a full department exposure. A decontamination unit is under procurement to be shared with essential staff and the MAVFC.

We continue to secure vital safety equipment for our essential staff and first responders, and assist with the state effort. We are amending our budget to allow for these expenses and are adjusting future budgets to account for the losses in revenue and increased expenses. The impact is not significant at this time. Essential services have not been impacted, including trash, recycling, yard waste pick up and bulk pick-ups. Please call Town Hall with any questions or concerns 301-829-1424 or go to the [Ask Your Mayor](#) tab on our Town Web-site. Please reference the new simplified Town website dedicated to COVID-19 updates at [www.ma-covid19.page](http://www.ma-covid19.page).

In closing, I leave you with the following quote, "We are all part of a great team. Team Mount Airy. Now is the time for us to do our part. For most of us that's Social distancing or isolating. Our actions, our civility, our concern for others, impact us all more than ever before."

Pat Rockinberg  
Mayor, Town of Mount Airy