PUBLIC HEALTH NOTICE

To: Residents of the Putney Community  
From: Laura Chapman, Chair; Josh Laughlin, Vice Chair; David Babbitt, Clerk  
Date: March 15, 2020

“There is no doubt these are difficult steps that, for a few weeks or possibly months, will change what we do in our daily lives and I also need you to know more may be necessary, but the compassion and commitment of our people and communities will see us through. We have to rise above frustrations and fear. We can’t focus on how this may set us back because what it’s really about is who we are as Vermonters, and how we’re going to lead our state forward.” Governor Scott

The United States Government and the State of Vermont are operating under State of Emergency declarations issued by President Trump and Governor Scott. The Town of Putney is currently implementing and is planning to scale-up local emergency actions, as necessary relative to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) threat.

The Town of Putney Selectboard acknowledges the threat and health risk of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) to our community. We are concerned for our entire community especially our aging population as well as those with a compromised health condition who are at higher risk of getting very sick from this illness. With the announcement today from Governor Scott’s office to close the schools there is an extra layer of complexity. Town officials are coordinating with various community organizations relative to emerging community needs that extend beyond the scope of our normal Town government services. We can collectively assure our citizens that various planning actions are actively taking place regarding the following aspects:

1) Ensuring to the best possible degree the health, safety, and well-being of all our citizens, and more specifically, our most vulnerable citizens;

2) Assessing the possible needs for, and establishing the appropriate mechanisms for emergent medication supplies, provisions, and delivery to vulnerable citizens;

3) Assessing the possible needs for, and establishing the appropriate mechanisms for food delivery to vulnerable citizens;

4) Establishing in-home health screenings and care for vulnerable citizens;

5) Establishing regular in-home “welfare checks” for vulnerable citizens;  
As a municipality our focus is to flatten the curve by slowing the spread of the virus, ultimately preventing emergency services from being overwhelmed and reducing mortality rates.

The following are some of the actions we have already implemented.
EMERGENCY SERVICES:

Tom Goddard, Fire Chief is also the Emergency Management Director (EMD) and the point of contact;
- The Fire Station is on lockdown. Access to the building is strictly by First Responders or by appointment only;
- A hotline will be established at the Fire Station: 387.4372 for reporting concerns for hyper vulnerable citizens and screening medical calls in case a resident feels ill with flu like systems;
- If anyone experiences an emergency and can’t get through to the Fire Station, they are to call 911;
- First Responders will respond and handle potential COVID-19 patients;
- Tom Goddard, EMD has plans in place for how additional special procedures will be implemented if our area experiences increased impacts from COVID-19;
- Contingency planning includes coordination with other emergency service providers such as Rescue, Sheriff's Department and other Fire Departments in our region for mutual aid coverage of essential services, as needed;

NON-EMERGENCY AND ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT SERVICES

- The Town Manager, Karen Astley is the point of contact at 387.5862 extension 11
- The Town Hall is on lockdown. Access to this building is by appointment only.
- Small gatherings are discouraged at this time. This includes Boards and Committee meetings
- If possible, meetings will be held via telephone, Zoom or GoToMeeting
- All non-essential meetings will be postponed to a later date. If you have a scheduled meeting contact the office.
- Open Meeting Law still applies to meetings that are held outside of a gathering.
- All departments will implement best practices for more rigorous than normal cleaning of facilities and office equipment.
- We encourage residents to make payments over the telephone with a credit card or mail them.
- Outgoing business will continue via telephone and computer.
- If you have a question about whether a particular transaction or interaction with Town staff can be accomplished this way, please call or email the appropriate department.
- The Putney Public Library is closed to the public until further notice.
- The Selectboard will hold emergency meetings if as necessary to take immediate action if this virus should progress rapidly.

IMPORTANT TIPS TO REMEMBER:

- Wash hand frequently and for at least 20 seconds
- Cover your cough
- If you feel ill, have a cough, fever or respiratory difficulty consult your physician
- Practice social distancing (6 feet from one another)
- If you are in known contact of someone who may have tested positive for the virus seek medical attention immediately

As our planning processes continue, we would respectfully request that all Putney residents understand municipal governors and we are in daily contact with various state and regional agencies and services, and various local services, as well as social service agencies within Putney and the region.
In accordance with guidance received from the Vermont Department of Health, we would respectfully request that all citizens remain calm, and refrain from engaging in “best practice” activities that are not arranged, coordinated, or approved by the Town of Putney. Such activities may in fact endanger those that we all want to most desperately assist.

As planning functions transition to actual “boots on the ground” operations, we will certainly be requesting assistance from community members and regional emergency services agencies; but we need to make certain that everyone is safe, everyone involved is operating in concert, and our operations are efficient and effective.

More information and guidance will follow, as frequently as necessary. To report concerns or ask questions contact Tom Goddard, E.M.D. at 387.4372 or chief@putneyvt.org; as a second contact you may reach Karen Astley, Town Manager at 387.5862 x11 or manager@putneyvt.org

Additional resources for accurate information about the Coronavirus go to:

Town of Putney Website: www.putneyvt.org
Vermont Health Department: https://www.healthvermont.gov/
Center for Disease Control and Prevention: https://www.cdc.gov/
Or Contact 2-1-1