

# POTTSTOWN CITIZENS FOR Enlightened LEADERSHIP

## Borough fully functional

Schools are closed. Only a handful of businesses and retail stores are still operating.

People are sheltering in place.

But the essential functions of borough government continue, although some employees have been furloughed.

Borough Manager Justin Keller has divided all borough departments into two teams who work alternate hours.

That reduces the number of employees working in borough hall at any one time and ensures that if one team is infected, the other team can keep working.

Anticipating the crisis, Keller bought laptops and cell phones several weeks ago to enable employees to work from home. The borough expects to be reimbursed through the recently passed federal CARES Act.

### Potable Water

Pottstown withdraws and purifies 4.5 million gallons of water daily from the Schuylkill River at its water treatment plant and pumps it through 115 miles of underground pipes to customers in Pottstown, the Pottsgroves and North Coventry.

The plant must be staffed 24 hours a day, seven days a week. One team is on location at the plant and the other is working from home. They rotate between home and the plant every few days.

### Sanitary sewers

Pottstown's wastewater treatment plant, like the water plant, is staffed 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Teams rotate between home and the plant.

### Police Department

The Pottstown Police Department is fully staffed with 45 officers and operating normally.

Four squads patrol the borough in 12-hour shifts. The detective division has added a night shift to lower the number of officers in borough hall at any one time.

Officers are issued gloves and masks, although it's up to the officers' discretion whether to use them. Normally, they don't, said Police Chief Mick Markovich.

Because so many businesses are closed, police officers have increased the number of security checks.

"We have more people out at night," he said. "We need a police presence to calm people down."

The police are not attempting to enforce social distancing. There appear to be more domestic disturbance calls, the chief said.

### Fire, EMS Protection

The borough's four fire companies and Goodwill Ambulance are operating normally, although access to the fire houses is restricted to firefighters and officers.

### Sanitation

Weekly trash and recycling pickup is continuing normally by J.P. Mascaro Co.

### Council meeting

Pottstown Council will have its first "virtual" meeting 7 p.m. Wednesday using a platform called GoToMeeting.

Council members, the mayor, solicitor and other officials will conduct the meeting remotely from their home computers. As many as 250 citizens can view the meeting as it happens.

The borough will post a link on its website that people can use to watch the meeting, or they can call a posted phone number to listen in.

Citizen comments will be accepted via email. Instructions can be found on the borough website.

### Furloughs

Some employees in licensing and inspections, public works, and parks are being furloughed until April 24, when the borough will reassess the situation. Furloughed employees qualify for special unemployment payments through the federal CARES Act.

### Bus service

Bus service is now free. Non-handicapped riders are asked to enter and exit from the rear of the bus.

### Revenues

The borough's 2% discount on 2020 real estate taxes, sent out March 1, has been extended to May 31. January and February receipts have been normal. The borough will get an idea of March receipts next week.

The borough has enough reserves to keep operating for several months.



Commentary by  
Tom Hylton



BOROUGH OF

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