Town Manager’s Office

Human Resources

During the COVID-19 shutdown, many Departments are still using the Work From Home Program. Employees are updating their plans on a weekly basis for review and signature by their Department Head and then sent to the Town Manager for final signature.

Assessor

COVID-19 STATUS - The Assessor’s office is splitting time working from home and the office by alternating shifts in order to provide full time coverage. Although we are reliant on many of the files in our office, a lot of work has been completed from home during this crisis. Staff has brought home numerous paper files and field work to update, sort and file so we can be up to date when this pandemic has passed. Staff has been able to answer all phone calls and return messages from taxpayers. State required reports have been filed electronically and executive orders have been deciphered. I believe it was a great decision to close the town to the public and allow those who can, to work from home. In order to help stop the spread and flatten the curve this was a huge first step. Thank You Mike Rosen and the Council for making a great decision and keeping the employees safe. Great leadership comes from those who can see beyond what is in front of them and take the lead.

Board of Education

For a Board of Education COVID-19 update, please visit the link below:
https://sites.google.com/tolland.k12.ct.us/tollandpublicschoolcoronavirus/home

Collector of Revenue

Collections are down slightly; the collection rate as of April 30, 2019 was 98.56% and as of April 30, 2020, the collection rate was 98.27%. Most payments are made online with some being mailed and placed in the drop box. Our office continues to send out monthly Delinquent Statements.

For Taxpayers that need immediate DMV clearance, we ask that they pay online or place a certified check in the drop box. If necessary, we will meet the taxpayer outside for a cash payment using the recommended precautions.

We have received and downloaded the update from Quality Data Service to code accounts that have submitted applications for the Deferment Program. This will delay the grace period to October 1, 2020.
and interest will not apply until October 2, 2020. As of May 5, 2020, we have received one application for the Deferment Program.

**Human Services**

The following assistance programs are available through the Human Services Department:

- Tolland Human Services is grateful for the outpouring of community support in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, and staff is providing assistance to those residents struggling due to the impact of the pandemic.
- Connecticut Energy Assistance Program (CEAP/CHAP) – **Applications taken thru June 1, 2020** (no in-person appointments; information and documents transmitted via phone, mail, email, fax); applicants approved from May 1st to June 1st will receive reimbursement (in the form of a credit to their utility or deliverable fuel vendor) in the amount of their Basic Benefit by providing invoices/statements dated between 11/13/19-4/30/20.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2019/2020 Income Guidelines for Connecticut Energy Assistance Program</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>For each Household Size below, Annual Household Income based on 52 weeks actual income OR a calculated income based on the latest 4 weeks at the time of the application; must be less than:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$36,171 $47,300 $58,430 $69,559 $80,688 $91,818 $93,905</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*See Town website for additional program details/requirements.

- Tolland Food Bank is operational; residents are encouraged to contact Human Services at 860-871-3648 if they are in need of assistance. Donations of non-perishable food items collected at the Tolland Fire Training Station on Merrow Road
- FoodShare Mobile Food Pantry is operating - **distribution dates May 21, June 4 & 18 - 10-10:30 AM**

The following information and ongoing programs/services are also available through the Human Services Department:

- Crisis counseling and Case management- **ongoing, remotely**
- Local Prevention Council (formerly North Central Regional Mental Health Board, Inc/ ERASE)- all previously scheduled programs re suicide prevention, drug abuse and mental health wellness are **postponed until further notice**.
- Review of residents’ Medicare eligibility/options- **ongoing, remotely**
- Housing Rehab Program & Fair Housing – Town contact is Beverly Bellody

The Human Services Director is currently working on the Birch Grove Building Committee and is liaison to the Water Commission.
• Renter’s Rebate
  Applications accepted thru October 1, 2020 - in-person appointments are suspended until further notice (applicants are asked to hold onto their documents for submission at a later date)
  This income-based program provides a one-time payment to renters based on the rent and utilities paid in 2019; proof of income and rent/utility expenses for 2019 must be provided.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Household Income Guidelines (2019)</th>
<th>Under $37,000</th>
<th>Under $45,100</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Single/widowed applicants</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married applicants</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*see Town website for additional program details/requirements

For further information on the above or other Human Services information/services, residents may contact Human Services at 860-871-3648; your message will be forwarded to the appropriate staff member.

• Dial-A-Ride (for senior/disabled residents)
  HVCC transportation program is still operational, as follows:
  • Dial-A-Ride is suspending transporting multiple passengers at a time until further notice.
  • Transportation to medical appointments continues to be a priority.
  • Grocery shopping trips will be provided on an individual basis to Tolland Big Y, starting at 6:30 AM. Tolland Big Y is open from 7 AM to 8 AM daily for customers age 60+ and those with compromised immune systems.
  • Call Dial-A-Ride @ 860-870-7940 for transportation appointments.

**Youth Programming**

The following programs serving youth/families are available through the Human Services Department:
• TYSCT Coffee House- the feasibility of a virtual May Coffee House is being reviewed
• TYSCT Summer Musical schedule is on hold
• Juvenile Review Board – remote intake & case management until further notice

For information about programs and services for Tolland youth and families, residents may contact Nancy Dunn, (860) 871-3612, email nancydunn@tolland.org, or visit www.tolland.org

**Senior Center Programs**

The Senior Center is closed to the public and all programs cancelled until further notice.
• AARP Tax Aide- program has been temporarily suspended nationally, and is expected to resume prior to current July 15, 2020 tax filing deadline.

For information about Senior Center programs and services, please call the Senior Center at 860-870-3725 or 860-870-3730, or visit www.tolland.org
Library

- Made with 3-D printer and delivered 60 frames for face masks requested by UCONN Health
- Continued working with 3-D printer on other COVID related objects
- Deselection in Adult, Young Adult and Children’s areas
- Gave patrons deselected paperbacks
- Answering patrons’ phone calls and emails
- Training on new web-based circulation system
- Ordered more downloadables
- Sexual harassment training
- COVID-19 webinars
- Zoom meetings with Department Heads, Bibliomation staff, Eastern CT Directors, State of CT Library staff
- Phone interviews with 5 prospective Reference Librarians
- General cleaning
- Wellness calls with patrons
- Discussions with staff on reopening

Planning & Development

- Land use applications may be submitted via email or by leaving paper copies in a dropbox outside of town hall. While the lack of face-to-face interaction with applicants can pose some inconveniences, thus far we are still able to accept and process land use applications.
- Staff has relaxed enforcement of temporary sign regulations unless we receive a complaint that a sign is blocking the view of drivers, in which case we would ask the business to move the sign.
- All boards and commissions staffed by this department are holding meetings. All public hearings were delayed by at least one meeting, but staff and the boards and commissions are now comfortable holding meetings and hearings using remote technology.
- Otherwise, staff is able to continue working on short and long term projects and continues to answer inquiries from residents, businesses and landowners.
- Current and recent applications for the Planning and Zoning Commission, Zoning Board of Appeals, and Inland Wetlands Commission can be found under “Applications Pending” on each of their web pages.

Building Department

- Building permits can be taken out and paid for through many methods:
  - Our online permitting system
  - Downloading a blank form and remitting it with payment either in our dropbox outside the Town Hall, or through the mail
  - Using a fillable form from our website and emailing it to us
  - We take credit cards over the phone
Staff spends a considerable amount of time and effort talking customers through the permitting process over the phone and through emails.

- Many files and maps are scanned and emailed, to facilitate the process.
- Building permit turnaround remains generally less than one week for routine projects.
  - Permits for simple projects are often approved same day, as usual.
  - Projects that require approval at a Wetlands, Zoning or Zoning Board of Appeals meeting may be delayed due to modified meeting schedules.
- Most building permit inspections are still being conducted.
  - All exterior-only work and all crumbling foundation inspections are being done as usual.
  - New construction home inspections are being done as usual.
  - Inspections at the Birch Grove site as being done as usual.
  - Some interior inspections may be satisfied with pictures and/or video, depending on the specifics of the project.
  - Non-essential interior inspections of occupied homes are being put on a list and will be contacted to reschedule, when the situation returns to normal.
- Building permit volume is a little less than normal.
- Blight Ordinance enforcement has been impacted.
  - In the spirit of the Governor’s Executive Order, time deadlines for remediation and for due process actions have been paused.
  - Full enforcement will resume when the situation returns to normal.

**Public Safety**

**Animal Control**

- In the month of April, the Animal Control Department answered 59 calls/complaints during regular & after work hours.
- The Town of Tolland Animal Control Facebook Page has 3,992 “followers”.
- Officers continue to patrol parks and trail systems.
- All roaming and impounded dogs were returned to their owners.
- The owner of a Bulldog Mix that was impounded and advertised was never found. The dog was transferred to a Bulldog Rescue Organization in NY.
- Investigation continuing of a complaint of more dogs than allowed by zoning, importing dogs without proper registration with State of CT, unvaccinated, unlicensed dogs. The situation was shared with the appropriate town and state departments.
- An investigation into possible animal cruelty/neglect is being monitored after our department was called to assist the Fire Department and State Police who were at the residence for an unrelated matter.
- We are handling an increase in wildlife related calls. A coyote attacked a domestic dog, unfortunately the coyote was not found. The dog was rabies vaccinated and was administered a booster as a precaution.
- Officers are working along with the Public Safety Department/EOC in regards to the current COVID-19 Pandemic. PPE has been provided to both officers and an SOG has been written to ensure the safety of the officers when responding to calls to assist the Fire Department or State Police.
• The Department is in the process of conducting a modified annual Unlicensed Dog Survey. From March 15, 2020 through May 31, 2020, officers will randomly contact residents in search of unlicensed dogs being kept in Tolland.

• Due to the generosity of many people, the Department has been able to establish a Pet Food Pantry for residents who are unable to provide food for their dogs/cats. Residents in need of pet food assistance should call the Animal Control Office at 860-871-3676. Arrangements will be made for a “no contact” pick up. *THANK YOU to everyone who has generously donated pet food for their pet owning neighbors in need!!!

**Emergency Management**

• Emergency Management Director John Littell closely monitors all State WebEOC communications, information and weather-related advisories during the month. Advisory bulletins are redistributed to appropriate personnel.

• On the evening of March 12, 2020 a Public Health/Civil Preparedness Emergency was declared by Town Manager Michael Rosen for the Town of Tolland.

• On March 13, 2020 Tolland’s Emergency Operations Center (EOC) was status was changed to “Activated” in response to the Coronavirus pandemic and Public Health/Civil Preparedness Emergency declaration and continued throughout the months of March and April.

• Director Littell and Public Safety Admin staff has been working in the EOC throughout the month.

• During the month, the Director and staff have attended countless virtual meetings and conference calls with numerous local, state and federal authorities. Information gleaned from these meetings has been disseminated appropriately.

• Tolland’s C.E.R.T team received State approval to activate and has been supporting EOC operations.

• In conjunction with the Human Services Department, a non-perishable Food Drive was organized. Residents are able to drop off non-perishable food items at the Fire Training Center weekdays from 8:00 AM to 12 Noon to help stock Tolland’s Food Pantry.

• In an effort to strengthen communication among businesses in town an email address tollandbusinesses@tolland.org, was created for businesses to join to receive business specific information.

• The Department began soliciting the public for volunteers who would be willing to assist in the Town’s response to the pandemic if needed. Thank you to those who have offered a variety of skills, we will be in touch should assignments arise. To add your name to the list, email volunteer@tolland.org.

• The Department has reached out to those listed on the Fire Department’s Special Needs Registration list several times during the month to inquire on their well-being.

• On March 29, 2020, President Donald J. Trump approved a Major Disaster Declaration for the State of Connecticut. This Presidential Declaration enables the state, tribal and eligible local governments, and certain nonprofit organizations to apply for FEMA Federal funding on a cost-sharing basis. The Department continues to keep detailed records documenting all aspects of this crisis.

• During the month, several severe weather alerts were received from the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection and disseminated appropriately.

• On April 13, 2020, a strong windstorm wreaked havoc in town downing many trees and wires, which in some cases blocked roads. Emergency and Public Works crews worked throughout the
storm battling the driving rain and fierce winds to identify the destruction and barricade
obstructed roads. At the height of the storm, more than 30 roads were closed. Public Works
crews worked diligently to clean-up the debris and at approximately 5 PM on April 14, 2020, all
roads were deemed passable.

- In response to the Governor’s effort to distribute donated surgical masks to small businesses, the
Department was tasked with picking up, sorting and distributing the masks to local businesses
that placed orders through the CBIA website. Masks were picked up on Tuesday April 28, 2020,
sorted and packaged by business name according to the DEMHS order sheet. Registered
businesses were able to pick-up their orders on April 29, 2020, through a no-contact drive-thru
that was held at the Fire Department’s Training Center. Thirty-two businesses participated in
this program in which nearly 1000 surgical masks were distributed.

**Tolland Alert Emergency Notification System**

- There were no emergency alerts sent out during the month.

**Fire Marshal**

- Propane tank installation inspections.
- Review and approval of permits.
- Information sharing with insurance companies referencing fire suppression capabilities and
underground water supply capabilities.
- Investigated fires gas leaks, complaints and prepared reports as required.
- Completed assignments as directed by management.
- Inspected business sites in operation.
- Assist FD while short on staff.
- Investigated fires and alarms as required. Two structure fires one with serious damage.
- Answered several overnight off-hour phone calls for various problems including, Fire Alarms,
CO detection, Smoke detection, Fire Alarm issues for residents etc.
- Assisted Director of Public Safety as requested.
- Approved change of use occupancies.
- Continue site visits to Birch Grove demolition/ construction site.
- Reviewed plan review for TMS roof repair/installation.
- Reviewed plan review for change of occupancy local daycare expansion
- Assisted relocation potential for Day Care at vacant space on Hartford Tpk.
- Worked with a local business to repair N95 masks that were damaged and in need of elastic strap
replacement.
- Periodic review of status of business occupancies.
- The Open Burning Permit process was revamped to include an online application, in response to
the closure of the fire stations due to the pandemic.

**Fire Department**

- Due to the pandemic Fire Department training for the month included on-line learning through
our CIRMA portal.
- Due to the pandemic the Department has offered members to participate in Zoom lectures of
various topics that were organized by the Ellington Fire Department.
• The Department has received and disseminated information and protocols regarding the Coronavirus from the CDC.
• Our Infection Control Officer has provided daily PPE requirement updates in accordance with CDC guidelines.
• The Department has been reviewing and updating Standard Operating Guidelines (SOGs) to reflect the ever changing protocols of this pandemic.
• The Department was issued various supplies of PPE from State and Federal stockpiles. Most of the N-95 masks were deemed unusable due to the failure of the elastic ear loops. A local company was approached and was able to replace the broken ear loops with new elastic in order to make these N-95 masks a viable option for first responders.
• Staff, both career and volunteer, continues to provide exemplary services in these uncertain times, under particularly hazardous conditions.

**Explorer Post**

• Due to the pandemic all Explorer Post activities have been suspended until further notice.

**Public Works**

While we continue to perform all of our other Departmental duties, Tolland’s Department of Public Works, both the Parks & Facilities Division and the Highway Division have been doing their part to help prevent the spread of this terrible virus. Our crews have been taking the lead on the extra efforts that are being made to help keep our employees safe from COVID-19 by providing extra resources for wiping down all of the touch points in the Town Hall, Library, the Training Center, Senior Center and a variety of other facilities. With the basketball hoops all being removed as well as the tennis nets being taken down and having the gates into our Parks locked to help prevent groups of five people or more from congregating, we have noticed that a greater number of people are now using our walking trails. We are continuing to provide all of the Departments with cleaning materials for more frequent cleaning during the business day as well as trying to keep up with the needs of everyone’s hand sanitizer requests. As a precautionary measure, we are now purchasing Plexiglas “Germ Barriers” that will be placed or hung in the different areas where the public will have access once we reopen for regular business. Our Department remains open to assist the public via the phone or email during these very trying times. I would personally like to recognize the continued efforts of the entire Department of Public Works Department during these trying and stressful times as they continue to perform their daily functions as well as taking the extra steps to help provide the extra cleaning efforts within the buildings and the equipment. Thank you for your support and please be safe out there!

**Recreation**

The Recreation Department has been actively working on rescheduling activities and special events that have been scheduled for the spring and summer. We are currently working on an operational plan to be able to run summer camp.

We continue to offer free Yoga class on Facebook Live. The schedule for the classes can be found on the Tolland Recreation Department’s Facebook page.
Currently, the COVID 19 virus has had a major impact on our operations. We have halted all program registrations, rentals of fields, the recreation center, and the lodge. We have had to cancel all programs that have been currently in progress and place account credits to all those who were registered.

During this time, our department is usually collecting revenue for our summer programming to help cover our expenditures for the recreation center, supplies, and other departmental needs (last year between mid-May and the beginning of the May we collected approximately $56,000.00). Due to the COVID 19 pandemic, we have instead refunded approximately $6,000.00 from the recreation fund.

Our preschool program has canceled for the remainder of the year. All participants have been refunded or credited monies owed back to them.

We have also refunded all May renters of the lodge. Pending the longevity of social distancing, we may be looking at canceling and refunding events at the lodge for the part/entire month of June.

Playgrounds, basketball courts, and tennis courts remain closed.

As of now, the plan is to open up spring/summer program registration on May 20, 2020. This is pending changes to any extensions to social distancing that may occur.

**Resident Troopers**

Statistics for February:

- Total Calls for Service 326
- M/V Accident Investigations 4
- M/V’s Stops 6
- Citations 1
- Written Warnings 5
- DUI Arrests 2
- Motorist Assists 1
- Case Investigations 16
- Trooper Initiated Activity 297

M/V stops for this month are down due to COVID 19.

**Town Clerk**

The Town Clerk’s office, consisting of the Town Clerk and Assistant Town Clerk, continues to provide all services possible during this shut down. Our priority is to balance the public need for services with protecting the health of the public as well as our staff.

**Land Records**: Land record recording are being accepted electronically through our four contracted e-Submitters as well as by USPS, priority mail, and our drop box. We are working with our title searchers
and attorneys to find creative ways to continue business as seamlessly as possible. Year-to-date revenues are up over $50,000 from last year mainly due to increased volume of land record recordings and increases in collections of conveyance taxes from property transfers.

**Elections:** The April 28, 2020 Presidential Preference Primaries that were delayed by the Governor until June 2, 2020 are now further delayed until August 11, 2020. Absentee ballot applications already received will be honored for the new August 11 date. Ballots for our military applicants as well as overseas voters have already been mailed. Absentee ballots will be available to the public beginning on July 21, 2020. The Connecticut Town Clerks Association, Registrar of Voters Association and Secretary of the State’s office are working with the Governor’s office to find solutions to protect the safety of voters and staff for the primaries. I anticipate our office will be significantly impacted by an increase in absentee ballot applications, as voters who are high risk as well as voters with pre-existing conditions will seek to avoid the polling places.

Timely endorsements for delegates to conventions were received from both political parties.

**Dog Licensing:** Our office is gearing up for dog licensing season. Dog license reminder postcards will be printed this month and mailed the last day of May. Dog licenses must be renewed in the month of June. If our office continues to be closed to the public, dog licenses can be renewed by mail, dropped off in our drop box at parking lot A, Old Post Road, and renewal licenses can be obtained online by clicking this link [https://dogs.egov.basgov.com/Dogs/Search?munirecid=84](https://dogs.egov.basgov.com/Dogs/Search?munirecid=84). Customers will need to enter the tag number, which is printed, on their reminder postcard as well as on their dog’s license and tag. Customers should check the rabies date on the reminder postcard. If it is expired, they will need to send an updated rabies certificate. Dog licenses are $8.00 for neutered animals and $19.00 for unneutered. There is an additional fee of $1.75 if you license online.

**Troop C Activity for Tolland**

*Monthly Police Services* – attached is the report for March 2020. The report represents statistics on accidents, criminal investigations, burglaries, larcenies, DUls, traffic citations, etc.

OTHER BUSINESS TO BE ANNOUNCED AS WARRANTED

MR/klk

*The Town of Tolland is an Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Employer*

[www.tolland.org](http://www.tolland.org)
**Monthly Report: March**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total Calls for Service</th>
<th>Total Calls This Year</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>745</td>
<td>2779</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>March</th>
<th>YTD</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accidents</td>
<td>13</td>
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<tr>
<td>Criminal Investigations</td>
<td>14</td>
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<tr>
<td>Burglaries</td>
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<tr>
<td>Larcenies</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Non Reportable Matters</td>
<td>575</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total Arrests</strong></td>
<td><strong>7</strong></td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Calls For Service:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>City</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ashford</td>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
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<tr>
<th>Motor Vehicle Enforcement:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Traffic Stops</td>
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