



TOWN OF DOUGLAS

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Public Notice #6 2020 Coronavirus Response

The Municipal Center will be closed to the public effective Thursday, March 19, 2020. There is no date certain for ending the closure, but residents should look to federal and state guidance regarding bans or limits on group gatherings as the indicator of when we will most likely reopen the Center for regular business.

What does it mean that the Municipal Center is “closed to the public?”

- The doors of the Municipal Center will be locked; only employees and elected officials will be able to open the doors.
- Employees will still report to work every day, with one exception. Employees who are members of high risk groups are asked not to put themselves into a compromised position, and therefore, may stay home as involuntary dismissals for purposes of Section 4.8 of the Town’s Personnel Policy. These employees will work from home on their existing tasks and additional tasks as assigned.
- Since Town staff will still be working, they are accessible through email and phone calls, as well as traditional hard copy mail through the Postal System and hand delivery to our lock box outside the main entrance to the building.
- There are a limited number of transactions, especially, for example, payroll change notices and direct deposit authorization or changes, which must occur in person. In that case, residents and/or employees are asked to make an appointment with the relevant staff person for a time certain and entry will be granted.
- Boards and Committees with posted meetings must postpone them, unless there are time sensitive matters that must be resolved to protect a person’s rights. The following policies are in place:
 - The Board of Selectmen have approved a remote participation policy (for the duration of this emergency ONLY) that will allow boards and committees to use a conferencing platform to conduct meetings, however:
 - The technology has to work, and it has to meet requirements for live public participation set by the Board. We have yet to choose and fully test our solution and train people on its use. Therefore, until the technology platform is available, committees that must meet will still conduct public meetings in accordance with the Open Meetings Act and the building will be open for the duration of the meeting in question. Staff will clean the space before it is used again.
 - Committee chairs should note there is a significant difference between a public “meeting” and a public “hearing.” The public must have access to a public hearing for the duration of the hearing. A public meeting has

always been able to restrict public participation to citizens' forum or acceptance of feedback on specific agenda items. If Chairs have questions about these laws, they may obtain legal advice by contacting the Town Administrator to ask Town Counsel for detailed guidance.

- If meeting attendance exceeds the group limits set by the CDC (10 people), Chairs may use their discretion to allow for people to participate in turns, etc. Remote participation for people who are not members of the public body has always been allowed under Open Meetings, provided that the identity of the person calling or video conferencing into the meeting is adequately established and the link is functioning fully.