

March 23, 2020



AN IMPORTANT MESSAGE TO OUR TOWN RESIDENTS REGARDING THE TOWN OF VERNON'S RESPONSE TO COVID-19

As a municipality we want to keep everyone as informed as possible throughout this difficult situation. However, we also cannot emphasize enough the need to support one another, come together in the spirit of community, and remain calm and measured as we all do our part to combat and slow the onset of COVID-19. The situation is constantly evolving, and we want to encourage our residents to continue to take proactive steps to slow down the COVID-19 virus. Please stay home and follow the health and safety protocols outlined by the Center for Disease Control (CDC), State, and County Health Departments.

We also want to assure you that we are actively monitoring the CDC, State, and County Health Departments' websites, information, and directives. In addition, we are working with our community partners and surrounding municipalities to ensure proper planning and preparation in response to the COVID-19 virus pandemic. The health and well-being of our residents and staff is vitally important. We are committed to comply with all Federal (CDC), State, and County executive orders. We are implementing mitigation strategies that we hope will slow the transmission of COVID-19 and minimize risk and exposure in our community.

As of the writing of this message, there are thirty positive cases in Waukesha County. This does not mean you should become complacent. The Wisconsin Department of Health Services has determined Waukesha County to have community transmission of COVID-19. The virus is infecting Waukesha County residents and now is the time to take more proactive measures to slow the rate of infection down. Failure to do so will mean our health care system will be overrun with people infected with the virus, causing a shortage of hospital beds and respirators, personal protective equipment and supplies, and health care workers (as they become sick), resulting in many more deaths.

We are fully aware that area public schools will be closed indefinitely. This too is a positive step in slowing the spread of the virus and further protecting our community.

We are taking precautions in all our municipal facilities. This includes closing our facilities to the public except for essential activities, and thorough and regular cleaning of our facilities, offices, and public spaces. We encourage you to do the same at home. We are also exploring alternative ways of conducting business so that we can continue supporting you, our valued residents.

Law Enforcement, Fire and EMS emergency services will continue and follow Federal, State, and County health and safety guidelines. Waukesha County 9-1-1 has implemented new procedures to accommodate the expected COVID-19 emergency response.

Town Hall and the Clerk/Treasurer's office remains open but will close if required. Please do not visit Town Hall unless absolutely essential to do so.

The Department of Public Works services will be limited/prioritized as necessary.

Effective immediately, all Town events, programs, meetings, and public use of facilities are postponed or cancelled until further notice.

The Town has implemented the following actions (all of which are subject to change):

- Chairman Carl Fortner has proclaimed a State of Emergency for the Town of Vernon. This allows the emergency purchase of goods and services and may be helpful in requesting state and federal grant money without Town Board approval. This is important because the Town Board may be unable or not permitted to meet for weeks or months because of the COVID-19 virus.
- We anticipate that the April 21 Annual Meeting will be postponed and rescheduled for late-May 2020.
- ALL Town Board, Plan Commission, and Committee meetings are cancelled until further notice.
- **At this time, the 2020 Spring Election is still scheduled to take place on April 7; however, we strongly encourage residents to absentee vote by mail. In-person absentee voting at the Clerk/Treasurer's office is currently available (subject to Federal, State, and County executive orders) Monday thru Friday (March 23rd to April 2nd) from 8:00am-4:00pm and Friday April 3rd 8:00am to 5:00pm, Saturday March 28th from 8:00am to 4:00pm, Sunday March 29th from 9:00am to Noon, OR by appointment. These hours and times may be restricted and/or cancelled in the future pending Federal, State, or County executive order. If you are unsure if the Town Hall is open, please call ahead – 262.662.2039. You may request a ballot at www.myvote.wi.gov. Please be sure to pay close attention to strict requirements and deadlines. You will be asked to upload your photo ID (e.g., driver's license). If you have any questions or concerns, please call 262-662-2039.**

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- For those voting in person on Election Day, Tuesday April 7, 2020 Spring Election, ALL WARDS will be RELOCATED to polling locations at the VERNON TOWN HALL at W249S8910 Center Drive. Fire Station #1 will be closed to the public. Per strict CDC guidelines, the Town Hall polling location will be limited to serve three (3) voters at one time. Due to these strict guidelines, extensive wait times are expected. Voters in line will need to be at least 6 feet apart. We ask that only voters report to the polling location and that they please refrain from bringing extended family members or non-voters with them. Again, you are strongly urged to vote absentee.
- All recreation programs are postponed indefinitely as it coincides with school closure decisions. A reevaluation of recreation programs will be made in the coming weeks.
- All types of building and fire inspections will continue to be scheduled at the present time. Additionally, all residential building inspections will require confirmation that everyone in the home is in good health.
- Effective Monday March 23, 2020 **Advanced Disposal** will not collect any trash/refuse or recycling that is not containerized. ALL trash/refuse and recycling must be placed in the carts. **Loose or bagged items placed outside the cart WILL NOT be collected. ALL bulky item pickup/collection is suspended until further notice.**
- **Spring Brush Pick-Up** will be **SUSPENDED** indefinitely.
- DPW services will be operating at a limited and prioritized capacity.
- The public is encouraged to utilize the Town's Facebook page and website at www.townofvernon.org not only for updated information on COVID-19, but also a way to interact with our offices from a distance.
- As always, requests for any Town service can also be made by calling 262-662-2039 or emailing clerk@townofvernon.org.

There are many scams taking advantage of residents during this public health emergency. The Town of Vernon will never email or call you asking for your personal information (except in response to *your request* for an absentee ballot).

Excellent resources for the most up to date information on COVID-19 can be found at [Waukesha County Public Health](http://Waukesha County Public Health website at www.waukeshacounty.gov/HealthAndHumanServices/PublicHealth) website at www.waukeshacounty.gov/HealthAndHumanServices/PublicHealth; the Wisconsin Department of Health Services website at www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/covid-19/ and The Center for Disease Control website at www.cdc.gov.

While we continue to make these tough decisions and see our daily routines disrupted, we implore our residents to stay home and take advantage of the time with your immediate family. Do not encourage or take part in large gatherings or other activities that compromise the most important principles of social distancing. The only way to combat the spread of the COVID-19 virus is to take a united and committed approach to slowing its progression. Adhere to social distancing practices, washing hands regularly with soap and water, avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth, cover your coughs and sneezes and following all the recommended guidelines as posted on the above-mentioned health center websites. If you are quarantined, respect the quarantine, stay home without exception.

Please continue to check in on the vulnerable people in your own life and in your neighborhood if possible. Look out for and help one another. We are proud to be a part of this community and know that we will uphold the very definition of community by continuing to do what is in the best interest of everyone in the Town of Vernon. We are confident that our family, friends, neighbors, and residents will do their part in helping slow down this virus. On behalf of ourselves and the entire Town we are committed to the health, safety, and welfare of each and every one of our residents.

**** Stay Home**** **** Stay Safe**** **** Stay Healthy****

Thank you,



Carl Fortner, Town of Vernon Chairman



Karen L. Schuh, Town of Vernon Clerk/Treasurer