



Vershire Town Newsletter

TOWN OFFICER'S NOTES AND NEWS

Vershire Website

<https://www.vershirevt.org>

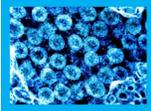
IMPORTANT DATES:

- July 4
Independence Day!
- July 7
Selectboard Mtg.
- July 8
Planning Comm. Mtg.
- July 21
Selectboard Mtg.
- August 4
Selectboard Mtg.
- August 11
Vermont Primary
- August 12
Planning Comm. Mtg.

For the Calendar:

<https://www.vershirevt.org>

Join the Vershire Email List!
To subscribe go to:
<https://lists.vitalcommunities.org/lists/info/vershire>
then click on Subscribe in the left hand column!



From the Vershire Health Officer

COVID-19 UPDATE: IN THE 'MIDDLE' OF THE PANDEMIC MARATHON: A marathon is 26.2 miles long, but marathoners say that once they've reached the 22 mile mark, mentally, physically, and emotionally they feel like the race is only half over and the toughest part is finishing the last four miles. That's where we are 4 months into this pandemic.

WE CONTINUE TO DO WELL BUT THE PICTURE COULD CHANGE: Orange county has had only 9 cases and no deaths since the beginning of the pandemic, and Vershire has reported no confirmed cases of COVID-19. But the picture can change. With the data presented, and expanded testing and tracing capacity, the Governor has decided to open up the state little by little to more visitors from some other states without requiring a quarantine, and to allow more businesses to open their doors to soften the blow of the economic slump that everyone feels. There will be people coming to our area from other states where the infection rate has been higher than Vermont. They are certainly welcome. But social distancing and face coverings remain a requirement for all of us.

THE PANDEMIC ISN'T OVER. Experience from across the country shows a sudden rebound in cases as people interpret reopening as a signal that the problem is over. The virus is still there: as contagious and as dangerous as ever. So in those places where the reopening has led to less social distancing and a casual and intermittent use of face coverings, cases have surged, and people are being locked down

(Continued on page 2)

FOOD SCRAP COLLECTION BEGINS



Food Scraps can be brought to Durgin Hill Recycling Saturdays!

Starting July 4th, the Town of Vershire will be accepting food scraps on Saturdays. Bob Sandberg in Corinth will add the scraps to his composting operation. See Mike and/or Sande for more information.

Dog Licenses

are overdue as of May 30 (grace period during the pandemic)! You can still license your dog without a penalty if you do it before July 15. After July 15, late penalties will be assessed.

Animal Control

Erica Thurston is the Vershire Animal Control Officer. If you find a stray cat or dog, or if a stray finds you, page Erica at (802) 240-0402 and she will help you find its keeper.



RISD Budget Passed

The revised Rivendell School budget passed 583 to 538 on June 30, 2020. 201 Vershire Residents voted—what a great voter turnout!

Food Friday!

Vershire Town Center Building, 27 Vershire Center Road
Pantry Open
10:00—12:00

VERSHIRE NOTES AND NEWS, CON'T

(Continued from page 1)

again. This constant back and forth between opening and forced closures is the most damaging to the economy, not to mention the public's health. The COVID-19 pandemic is our marathon, and we're just entering the most demanding part of the race.

WHAT TO DO TO STAY SAFE AND MAINTAIN OUR GOOD RECORD. Everyone is tired of social distancing, and certainly tired of wearing masks (particularly in the hot weather). But the only way to break the cycle of openings and closings is to stay the course (until a vaccine or some other treatment is available to all Vermonters):

ALWAYS keep physically distanced 6-feet apart indoors or outdoors when around non-family members;

ALWAYS wear a face covering inside any store or gathering place where other people get together, and wear it outdoors if social distancing isn't possible.

Newly opened store owners might consider posting a sign suggested by a friend of mine: **No Shoes, No Shirts, No Masks, No Service!** I guess that makes it clear.

Social Distancing and Face Coverings are now a part of our lives for the foreseeable future. As someone wrote recently, you wouldn't 'shed all your winter clothes when walking through the snow because they've kept you warm so far.' (David Brooks, Concord Monitor, 6/28/2020)

Now is not the time to take away the protection for ourselves, our loved ones, community members and neighbors. The resurgence across the country shows us plainly what we all have to do and why it's so important to do it

Dr. Steve Atwood, MD, Vershire Town Health Officer

Notes from Marc McKee, June 2020

Many years ago, when I was in college, I took a course reading the works of the Russian novelist, Fyodor Dostoyevsky. One book in particular comes to mind at the moment: "Notes from the Underground." I think my prevailing sense of isolation brought this about: I feel that I'm living in some underground place, social distancing in the extreme.

So, I found the book and looked at it again, probably for the first time since 1970. And with all that's going on in the year 2020, I feel myself more and more like the man in that story. If anyone told me,

back in January, that things would turn out the way they are presently, I wouldn't have believed them. And can someone tell me why the NHL and the NBA feel that they must resume some sort of ridiculous playoff scenario, as if anybody wants to watch hockey in August? (And I love hockey!) As a result of all this, I think I'm turning into a version of George Carlin, complaining about so many things, in so many angry ways that I can't print the words in this text, but you can get the picture. It may be hard to imagine, but I'm having some difficulty getting excited about summer. Summer! We live through a slog of cold, wet, muddy weather because the summers here are the most glorious anywhere: 80's, gentle breezes, occasional thunderstorms, gardens growing, and, in previous years, baseball. But I haven't found the excitement this year. A recent map in the New York Times showed Vermont as one of many states with a recent rise in corona infections. I thought we were pretty much in the clear, doing better than that, but it seems that we're not out of danger yet. Please keep wearing the masks, keep observing social distancing, and stay home as much as possible.

Through all this mess, I am reminded of another book, this one by Ernest Hemingway. The title comes from a line in the Bible: "The sun goeth down, and the sun also riseth." By all means, stay safe, and stick around. Someday this will be over, one way or another.

From the Listers

The State of VT and the Department of Property Valuation and Review (PVR) extended the timeline for filing the required annual homestead form until July 15th. PVR has also extended the timeframe for the Listers to lodge the annual Grand List, your property assessed values as of April 1st, 2020, until August 15th. We were able to lodge the Vershire Grand List on time in June.

The tax and Homestead filing deadline of July 15 is looming but if you still need assistance with your Homestead Values for your 2019 tax filing, Listers are usually in the town office on Thursdays from 1-4:30 accepting calls and emails only (no in person visits). We return calls or emails on Thursdays.

Phone number: 802-685-2224,

email: listers@vershirevt.org.



(Continued on page 3)

NOTES AND NEWS FROM THE VERSHIRE TOWN OFFICERS

(Continued from page 2)

From the Town Clerk

Novel Coronavirus, COVID-19, and Office Closure.

So far, Vermont (and Vershire) has done admirably well in adhering to the Stay Home, Stay Safe, orders from Governor Phil Scott and our infection rate is still very low.

However, in the U.S., the virus is clearly not likely going to go away anytime soon – we set a new daily record this past Monday reporting more than 48,000 confirmed cases—our highest single-day increase since all of this began.

As I write, I am listening to Governor Scott giving his weekly press conference on the Pandemic in Vermont and it is very clear - things are not going to suddenly spring back to what they were before COVID-19 came on the scene. The Vershire Town office is still closed to all non-essential foot traffic. There are no events (public or private) being scheduled in the Vershire Town Center Building for the foreseeable future and Vershire Day and Vershire Summer Camp are canceled. For official guidance on how to stay safe in the next months, please depend on the CDC's website (<https://www.cdc.gov/>), the VT Department of Health (<https://www.healthvermont.gov/>), as well as the VT Emergency Management (<https://vem.vermont.gov/>) for the most current information.

Reference Links:

<https://www.nih.gov/health-information/coronavirus>

Although the office is closed it is usually staffed during regular business hours and available by both phone and email. I am trying to keep up with all the calls and emails but please be patient with turnaround times and if you don't get through the first time, wait and try again. Wait times for return calls and emails may even be two or three days. The number is (802) 685-2227 and email is clerk-treasurer@vershirevt.org

We are finding ways to work with you and for you and hope, like you do, for an end to this virus sooner rather than later. However, we must all continue doubling down to keep up the downward pressure on community transmission and to limit the possibility of exposure to it. Relaxing and letting down our guard at this point would not be prudent. Please try to stay home and stay safe.

Upcoming Elections – The State Primary is scheduled for August 11, 2020 and the polling station is still the Vershire Town Center Building. We will be learning from the Rivendell Interstate School District Budget vote process and may opt to hold the election outside, weather permitting. **You can, and are strongly encouraged to,**

request an early absentee mail-in ballot to vote in this election. There is an absentee ballot request form on the town website at <https://vershirevt.org/departments/town-clerk/> (click on the Elections Tab, on the right and below others). Please utilize this easy, safe and effective way of voting using mail-in balloting!

Ballots for the August Primary are available now (see page 4 of this newsletter for more information).

For the Presidential Election, the landscape will look different this year. The Vermont Secretary of State and the State legislature have worked out a plan that will send a ballot to all actively registered voters in Vermont. This means that if you are an active voter (not challenged by the BCA) then you will receive a ballot in the mail. If you have been challenged as a voter (BCA and Clerk have sent notice to you that they believe you are no longer living in Vershire and you didn't respond) you will not receive a ballot but will have to request it directly from the Clerk and at that time verify that you do, in fact, still live in Vershire. If your mailing address has changed recently, please check in with me to verify we do have your current mailing address.

Dog registrations are still required! For everyone who has a dog but haven't yet registered it this year, you will soon be receiving notice that it is overdue. Please try to take care of it as soon as you can.

Federal and State Income Tax Filing Reminder - the federal government and the State of Vermont has extended the deadline for FILING AND PAYING taxes due from April 15, 2020 to July 15, 2020.

Reference Links: <https://www.irs.gov/coronavirus> and <https://tax.vermont.gov/coronavirus>

Trash and Recycling Saturdays

Trash and recycling will be open on July 4. This will be the first Saturday after the July 1st deadline to stop including food scraps in trash. We are ready! If you have no other option for your food scraps, you can bring them to Durgin Hill - Mike and Sande will be collecting them and they will go to Bob Sandberg in Corinth. You can also include your meat scraps and bones, too! **However, please remove the plastic sticker/labels that come on the outside coverings of some fruits and vegetables before throwing them into the bin. These don't break down and Sandberg says they can cause problems in his equipment.**

Recycling and Trash Saturday's guidance - No more than three (3) vehicles will be allowed at a time. Facemasks or face coverings are required

(Continued on page 4)

(Town Officer News Continued from page 3)

when folks are outside of their vehicles unloading! Please plan to carry your own trash and recycling from your car to the bins and truck, if possible. If you need trash bags, a face mask, or if you have other questions, talk to Mike or Sande or call the Town Office—685-2227.

Town of Vershire Website:

The website is live and filling up with information as it grows. Stay tuned and add the site to your browser tabs! <https://www.vershirevt.org>

From the Road Crew—If you see something that needs our attention, like a tree down in the road, please call 685-7789 and let us know. If we are out, please leave a message. If it is during regular office hours you can also call the town office – the clerk can reach us by radio. We do not travel every road every day and need your help to be our eyes and ears and to alert us to down trees.



BEAR AWARENESS

As we encroach on the native Black bears' territory we must remember a few things to help keep them wild. To avoid habituating the bears in our area we need to follow these steps.

- Make trash inaccessible (i.e. in locked cans, inside, not on your back porch etc...)
- Enclose your compost pile
- Recycle wisely- store recyclables inside until you take them to the recycling center
- Keep your BBQ grill clean and empty the grease trap after every use
- Put bird feeders away during summer and fall. Birds have plenty of natural food sources during this time of year

Bears are extremely smart, have acute eyesight and hearing. Their sense of smell is seven times greater than a bloodhound's. They have the keen ability to detect pet food, garbage, cooking grills and bird feeders. And once they locate a food source, they remember where it is.

Bears who lose their fear of people are called "nuisance bears." These are often sub-adult males who have just dispersed from their mothers and are still learning how to find food. In many states nuisance bears are killed. BUT, most of the time this outcome wouldn't have been necessary if PEOPLE hadn't made food so easy to find in the yard or trash.

Stephen Herrero, Canadian professor emeritus of ecology at the University of Calgary who earned his Ph.D. from the University of California, Berkeley in animal behavior and ecology states: "There's no question that it's possible for people and bears to coexist without serious problems if we're willing to manage our food and garbage."

We live in bear country so be good stewards and keep your yards free of bear attractions.

Sarah McRae
Thrasher



IT'S PRIMARY SEASON!

Ballots for the Vermont Primary Election (August 11, 2020) are available now and can be requested in several ways. If you are an active registered voter, you can request a mail-in absentee ballot be sent to you by going to the Vershire website (www.vershirevt.org). On the main menu, clicking the Government tab, then the Town Clerk tab, then scroll down and look for Elections. Click on this and download the Absentee Ballot request form. Fill this form out (must be signed) and either send it back via email or mail it to the town office. This procedure can also be performed on the Vermont Secretary of State's website. Or, you can contact the Vershire Town Office and we can help you. Once a request for a ballot is received, absentee/mail-in ballots will be sent to you via your mailing address of record.

Absentee/mail-in voting is strongly encouraged during the Covid-19 pandemic

(Continued on page 6)

NOVEL CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19): VERMONT STATE RESPONSE & RESOURCES ([HTTPS://GOVERNOR.VERMONT.GOV/COVID19RESPONSE](https://governor.vermont.gov/covid19response))

Overview

COVID-19 is the infectious disease caused by the most recently discovered coronavirus. According to the World Health Organization, "The most common symptoms of COVID-19 are fever, tiredness, and dry cough. Some patients may have aches and pains, nasal congestion, runny nose, sore throat or diarrhea. These symptoms are usually mild and begin gradually. Some people become infected but don't develop any symptoms and don't feel unwell. Most people (about 80%) recover from the disease without needing special treatment. Around 1 out of every 6 people who gets COVID-19 becomes seriously ill and develops difficulty breathing. Older people, and those with underlying medical problems like high blood pressure, heart problems or diabetes, are more likely to develop serious illness."

Governor Scott and public health officials have set a strategy to slow the spread in order to protect those at greatest risk, ensure capacity at healthcare facilities and minimize the risk to the public. The state is continually updating commu-

nity mitigation measures and guidance in close consultation with the Vermont Department of Health and based on new information from the CDC and WHO.

For the most current information on COVID-19 in Vermont, visit <https://www.healthvermont.gov/covid19>.

Community Mitigation Measures

Vermont is now experiencing community spread of COVID-19, which is why Governor Scott issued a Stay Home, Stay Safe order. All Vermonters should stay home whenever possible and practice social distancing (staying about 6 feet apart) and good hygiene with frequent hand washing and cleaning – all strategies to help slow the spread of the virus and protect our vulnerable populations. For more information about how Vermonters can help slow the spread of COVID-19, visit

<https://www.healthvermont.gov/covid19>.

Governor Phil Scott Expands Trusted Travel Policy

26 June 2020

Montpelier, Vt. – As state data and expanded testing and tracing capacity continue to support reopening, Governor Phil Scott today announced he will expand the number of states covered under Vermont's county-by-county quarantine-free travel policy, which allows direct travel from designated counties without a 14-day quarantine requirement.

In early June, the Governor, in close consultation with the Vermont Department of Health, opened up travel to and from counties in New England and New York with less than 400 active cases of COVID-19 per one million residents without a quarantine requirement. Effective July 1, this policy will be expanded to counties below this threshold in Delaware, Maryland, New Jersey, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Virginia and West Virginia, as well as the District of Columbia. [Quarantine requirements remain in place for those traveling to and from other regions.](#)

"Our hospitality sector and the thousands of jobs

it provides Vermonters has been one of the worst hit by this pandemic, and even as we've reopened, it hasn't been enough to help them make ends meet or put all of their employees back to work," said Governor Phil Scott. "With this data-based approach to determine low-risk counties, we can welcome more people to Vermont and support these jobs while continuing to limit spread of the virus in Vermont."

A map of the approved counties is posted on AC-CD's website and is updated weekly with the latest county designations. Vermonters planning to travel to other states should understand that each state may have its own quarantine policy and they should be familiar with, and respect, the quarantine policies of those states.

Visitors are strongly encouraged to register with [Sara Alert](#) for daily symptom reminders from the Vermont Department of Health and must [attest to meeting the travel requirements](#). Lodging occupancy limits remain at 50% or 25 total guests and staff, whichever is greater, and health, spacing, group size and hygiene requirements remain in place.

VERSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE NEWS

The Covid-19 pandemic has reached every nook and cranny of life in our sleepy town, and VF&R is no exception. Our emergency medical service (EMS) crew receives almost daily updates from the VT Dept of Health regarding changes in protocols for responding to emergency calls that might involve a patient with the disease. These protocols include more PPE than we normally use, and we are grateful to the state of Vermont in helping us obtain what we need.

If we have visited your home for an emergency in the past few months, you may have noticed that we always wear masks, and perhaps a gown and eye protection. These new protocols are in place to protect both you and us. We would ask that if you do call 911 for EMS help, please consider putting on your mask when we arrive, if possible.

The pandemic has also caused some trickle-down issues for VF&R. Our major fundraisers each year include the chicken barbeque on Vershire Day, and the two coin drops that coincide with the Chelsea Flea Market and Tunbridge Fair. As these events have all been cancelled, our fundraising budget has taken a hit.

Some good things have been happening as well. The quarantine this spring did not slow

down work at the station. Our renovations are complete, aside from some final details. Firefighters now have individual locker areas for their gear, and a special heavy-duty washing machine called an extractor to properly clean gear at the station. Our brand new bathroom has a shower, and our conference room has a fully functional kitchen. One final project that is in the works for this summer is repainting the outside of the station. We would welcome volunteers to help with this project, which is the perfect social distancing activity.

Other new additions to the agency include two new sets of firefighter gear and four sets of gear for our EMTs who are helping in potentially dangerous rescue situations. We are currently working on a grant to outfit the remaining firefighters with new gear, as this equipment must be updated every ten years or so, and one set costs \$2000-\$3000.

This year marks the 40th anniversary of the founding of the Vershire Fire Department. To celebrate that milestone, and our newly renovated station, the open house we were originally planning for August will take place in October. Details will be forthcoming closer to that time and will depend to some extent on the pandemic situation.



A portion of the crew during a recent clean-up day at the Fire Station



Giving the trucks and dry hydrants some exercise!

LEBANON LANDFILL FIRE LINKED TO A VERSHIRE CELLPHONE!

A few days ago, the City of Lebanon experienced a fire at their landfill. This is the landfill, our landfill, where Vershire's solid waste is taken after it leaves Vershire. The fire was determined to have been caused by a cellphone that had been thrown in the trash here, in Vershire. Because the staff at the landfill were able to quickly extinguish the fire, no one was hurt and no real damage incurred. Most importantly, though, is the fact the resulting fire could have caused injuries and been disastrous had it not been quickly extinguished.

Our town provides the means for each of you to take care of your old phones and batteries, at no cost to you. Old batteries and cellphones should be brought to Mike and Sande at Durgin Hill on Recycling Saturdays. They can help you make sure these potential fire starters are properly disposed of and can help us all be a little bit safer.

Town of Vershire

6894 Route 113
Vershire, VT 05079

PRSTD STD
US Postage Paid
Vershire, VT
05079
Permit No. 001

Postal Patron Vershire, VT 05079



Helping Hands is offering assistance to families in Vershire in the form of passes to Treasure Island. If you would like to take advantage of this, please contact VershireHelpingHands@gmail.com or call 685-0063.

If you are at higher risk or have symptoms: The following folks have agreed to be available by phone during daytime and early evening hours. They can link people up with volunteers who are available to pick up essential groceries, medications, and possibly assist with outside pet care.

If you can help your neighbors with the above tasks, please contact someone on the list below with your availability (days, time of day).

List of names:

- | | |
|--------------------------|----------|
| • Mike and Tonya Gunn | 685-0063 |
| • Laura Craft | 685-4640 |
| • Gene Craft, Town Clerk | 685-2227 |
| • Eileen Murphy | 685-3203 |
| • Aaron Hoopes | 685-4448 |
| • Liz Thames | 685-1001 |
| • Rita French | 333-9296 |
| • Dale Ricker | 685-4745 |

Other Numbers for quick reference:

- Questions about COVID-19: Dial 2-1-1

If you are returning to Vershire from out of state you must self-quarantine. Anyone on the list above can be counted on to help you get supplies, groceries or medications you need once you get here. After traveling, please self-quarantine—you never know if you were exposed while on your way here!

Check up on your neighbors and anyone you know that might need assistance, or reassurance. Self distancing and self-isolation can be so...isolating!

Helping Hands, through VerShare, (a local Non-Profit Organization), is organized and collecting donations for a local relief fund to help Vershire Residents who are hardest hit by the fallout from the novel Coronavirus and COVID-19 disease. For more information, : vershirehelpinghands@gmail.com or call Zanni at 685.4448 or Tonya 685-0063 You can also contribute financially by sending a check to: Helping Hands, 1152 North Rd Vershire, VT 05079. All donations are tax deductible.