

# Summary/outline of City response to “Ask the Mayor II”

The Bethlehem Gadfly City government, coronavirus, Uncategorized May 9, 2020

 *Latest in a series of posts on City Government* 

## **Mayor Donchez And Department Directors Answer Second Round Of Resident’s Questions**

Did you view the City’s second response to our questions yesterday? Or were you waiting for the Gadfly summary/outline?

Awww, Gadfly had a cluttered Friday afternoon. Here ’tis now.

### **Mayor Donchez:**

- wear masks, social distant, wash hands
- City Hall continues closed but that’s reviewed weekly
- Parking Authority is back enforcing but red-bagging areas for quick pick up, while furloughing 28 employees
- Governor has jurisdiction over businesses open/closed, essential non-essential (waivers), not City
- Awaiting policy from governor on large events: Musik-Fest, Blueberry, Celtic
- Awaiting governor policy on pools, construction on Memorial has begun again but unlikely opening this year
- Yard waste open, evaluating pick-up policy but closed for now
- Recycling Center closed, evaluating there too
- unlikely that overlay of Johnston Dr will take place this year (\$650,000-700,000 in a year when the budget deficit may be \$4m.)
- thanks to Wind Creek for payment and food contribution
- Fire Dept will not be doing birthday visits
- proud of City work force doing volunteer work
- Housing Authority and School District are separate entities

- Awaiting directive from the governor on library opening
- consult and sign on at City web site for updates
- thanks to all for cooperation
- revised yard waste pick-up schedule, consult City web site

**Kristen Wenrich, Health Bureau Director (min. 9:44):**

- 591 cases
- 25-49 age group == highest positivity, 43%
- 16.6% are long-term care residents
- 24 deaths, 54% associated with long-term care facilities
- 1.5-4% daily increase in cases, monitoring trend
- increase in deaths from people on ventilators at earlier counting and also increase in deaths in long-term care facilities
- see dashboard — updated daily — on City web site COVID-19 page for numbers
- need for more research on immunity of those who have developed antibodies
- we are still in “red” phase, with stay-at-home restriction
- outlined “yellow” phase and what will get us there
- wearing mask outside recommended when social distancing not possible
- outbreaks in 7 long-term care facilities
- State Dept of Health is looking at a testing program, only aware of one local site testing everybody
- we do not license local facilities, State does, so our role is guidance and liaison, working with state consultant ECRI on local infection-control practices
- tracking situations in workplaces and providing guidance there
- State Health Dept is working with food-production sites, Pa Dept of Agriculture and OSHA also involved in oversight of food-production facilities

- Working with New Bethany Ministries on homeless, working on post-pandemic plans for homeless too
- info on Hazard Control program, funding and scope

**Bob Novatnack, Emergency Management Services Director (min. 18:29):**

- equipment supply good
- Police, Fire, EMS strong: no positive cases
- quick turn-around time
- info on making non-emergency calls, best to call 911 as quickest way to get a response
- open burning info
- following CDC guidelines

**Alicia Karner, Director, Community and Economic Development (min. 22:28):**

- continuing in operation, issuing permits, developing Small Business Relief Fund
- info on building of home pools
- info on landlord/tenant, evictions

**Eric Evans, Business Administrator (min. 24:38):**

- cabinet is meeting twice a week
- length and depth of financial impact uncertain
- lots necessarily speculative
- major income sources: property taxes, earned income tax, casino host fee
- were ahead when slow down started, 2nd quarter will tell us more
- shortfall of several million for sure
- deferring capital projects (equipment, roads)
- staffing: freeze, some furloughs
- closures: recycling, etc.

- decisions of summer programs week of May 18
- saving \$1/2m in personnel
- fuel prices low
- health charges down
- can reduce \$1 1/2m
- good financial shape before: rainy day fund etc.
- Golf course: opened last week, improvements, well received, new policies

**Mayor Donchez (min. 35:24):**

- thanks to dept heads and public
- be safe

*tip o' the hat!*