

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE TO THE RESIDENTS OF GORHAM, NH TOWN HALL
CLOSED TO THE PUBLIC BEGINNING WEDNESDAY, MARCH 18, 2020
(UNTIL APRIL 6TH)**

Governor Sununu issued a state of emergency for the State of New Hampshire on Friday evening due to COVID-19. The Governor also directed all schools to close and work toward a virtual environment at least until April 6th. Officials for the Town of Gorham met this morning to discuss our plans moving forward through this crisis. We continue to actively monitor the COVID-19 situation, which is rapidly evolving. The Town is committed to the continued health and optimal safety of our residents as well as our employees, and we intend to do our part to “flatten the curve” of the COVID-19 pandemic. To that end, in consultation with our Emergency Management Director, we have decided that effective Wednesday, March 18, 2020, Town Hall will be closed to the public until April 6, 2020. However, we will still be working to serve the residents of Gorham. We intend to do our best to operate as a “VIRTUAL TOWN HALL.” In today’s world, most of the transactions for our residents can be done online or arranged via phone, email, or drop box. Resident questions can and will be answered via phone or email. And as a last resort, you may schedule an appointment in Town Hall with the appropriate Town personnel to complete your transaction. Our Town Hall employees will be working both remotely and on-site (in very limited numbers as necessary)—but we will continue to be at your service.

PUBLIC SAFETY & EMERGENCY SERVICES: Of course, the dedicated personnel of our Police, Fire and Ambulance Departments will continue to serve the residents of our Town through this crisis. That said, while these departments will generally be proceeding with a “business as usual” approach, we needed to make some modifications to our typical operating procedures to ensure the safety of our first responders as well. Along these lines, we ask that you please keep all non-emergency calls to a minimum so that our emergency services personnel may devote their time to those residents in need of emergency services. If you have non-emergency COVID-19 related questions, please call 2-1-1 (a state hotline manned 24/7 specifically for such questions). Additional information regarding certain services customarily performed by the Gorham Police Department that are temporarily being suspended can be online at <https://www.gorhamnh.org/police-department>.

PUBLIC LIBRARY: The Gorham Public Library will be closed to the public until April 3rd. The Public Library is offering curb-side book pick up for card-holding patrons beginning March 18th. Please call 466-2525 for more information. We will be extending due dates until April 6th. The Trustees of the Gorham Public Library appreciate your understanding at this time.

PARKS & RECREATION DEPARTMENT: The Recreation Department building is closed to the public. The director will be working during normal business hours preparing for all the Spring and Summer programs, events and activities. The director can be contacted by email at jstewart@gorhamnh.org, phone 603-466-2101, Facebook, etc. Please do not hesitate to contact him. Senior Program trips and activities for March have been canceled. April programs will be reevaluated as the date gets closer.

PUBLIC MEETINGS: Non-essential Board and Committee meetings in March will be canceled and more information will be forthcoming about meetings in April and beyond. Essential meetings of the Board of Selectmen, Planning Board, Zoning Board of Adjustment and Conservation Commission will be held as scheduled. The Governor’s Office has also issued formal guidance to NH municipalities making it clear that, given the emergency declaration, boards and committees have the ability to expand their use of

teleconferencing to limit interpersonal exposure. We are continuing to work through the logistical details. Live video streaming of meetings from the Public Meeting Room and conference calls that will enable a meeting to more efficiently accommodate remote participation among its members. Please check out the Town's website for an up-to-date calendar of meetings that will be taking place.

MUNICIPAL FACILITIES – EVENTS CANCELED We will be reaching out to all groups who will be affected by the following changes: **Medallion Opera House:** Due to the need to protect our citizens from undue exposure to the coronavirus and our inability to thoroughly disinfect the Medallion Opera House, and other municipal spaces, in between uses, all public and private functions scheduled at the MOH/Gorham Town Hall are canceled until April 6, 2020. We will review the situation again at that time. No new reservations or applications will be accepted until that time. If you have rented the Medallion Opera House for a date after April 6th and wish to cancel your event, please contact the Town at 603-466-3322.

HOW TO" COMPLETE TOWN HALL TRANSACTIONS

WEBSITE: The Town website address is www.gorhamnh.org, and we encourage you to visit the website frequently for new information and updates.

TOWN HALL MAILING ADDRESS: Should you need to mail anything to Town Hall, the address is as follows: Town of Gorham, 20 Park Street, Gorham, NH 03581.

DROP BOX: Just inside the main entrance to Town Hall there is a secure, drop box where you may drop off checks (NO CASH) or other paperwork. Should your paperwork not fit, please call the Town Hall at 603-466-3322 to make arrangements.

TOWN HALL GENERAL TELEPHONE NUMBER: (603) 466-3322, please listen for department extensions.

TRANSACTIONS: The following is a list of the transactions most often performed for our residents in Town Hall, and directions as to how each may be accomplished until the COVID-19 crisis passes and we can safely re-open our doors:

- **Notary Services:** The Gorham Town Office has suspended Notary Services until April 6th.
- **Renewal of car registrations:** Should be done online via our website portal: <https://www.gorhamnh.org/online-payments>
- **Registration and title transfers of a newly purchased vehicle:** We are working on preparations for NEW registrations, titles and transfers to be done in person by appointment. We will make information regarding the logistics for this process available later this week.
- **Copies of vital records (birth or death certificates):** Can be requested online at <https://www.gorhamnh.org/online-payments>
- **Dog licensing:** Renewals can be done online at <https://www.gorhamnh.org/online-payments>;
- **Registration of new dogs** will be by appointment only. Contact Town Clerk Carol Porter at cporter@gorhamnh.org or 603-466-3322.
- **Boat Registrations:** Registrations can be done by mail or left in the drop box just inside the main entrance at Town Hall. More information can be found on the NH DMV website at <https://www.nh.gov/safety/divisions/dmv/registration/boat.htm>
- **Voter Registration:** Contact Town Clerk Carol Porter at cporter@gorhamnh.org or 603-466-3322. Questions about vehicle registrations, vital records, dog licensing, boat registrations, or marriage licenses should be directed to Town Clerk Carol Porter, cporter@gorhamnh.org or 603-466-3322
- **Property Tax Payments:** Can be made in one of two ways: (1) via mail (checks ONLY and postmark dates will be honored as the date of payment); or (2) via dropping your check in the

Drop box (just inside the main entrance to the Town Hall (again, no cash). Contact Tax Collector Carol Porter with questions, cporter@gorhamnh.org or 603-466-3322.

- **Property Assessment Records, Deeds and Tax Maps:** Can be viewed online at <https://www.gorhamnh.org/assessing>. Some documents, including septic plans, building permits and sales data are not available online but most documents can be scanned and emailed. Contact Assessing Clerk, Michelle Lutz at mlutz@gorhamnh.org or 603-466-3322.
- **Filing for and renewals of Exemptions and Credits, etc.:** Information for verification or renewal can be sent by mail or dropped off in the drop box; questions can be directed to Michelle Lutz at mlutz@gorhamnh.org or 603-466-3322. The following forms are available online for your convenience at <https://www.gorhamnh.org/assessing/pages/forms-documents>: Form Deadline to File Elderly Exemptions- June 1; Veteran's Tax Credits- June 1; Tax Deferrals- June 1; Current Use Applications- June 1; Exempt Property Applications (Charitable, Religious, Educational)- June 1; Timber Intents, None; Gravel Intents, None.
- **Building Permits:** Permit applications are available on the Town website <https://www.gorhamnh.org/building-code-enforcement/pages/forms-applications> and will be accepted via email, mail or drop box just inside the main entrance to Town Hall. Payments are to be made by check only. Should you need to drop off plans or applications which will not fit in the drop box, please call Michelle Lutz at 603-466-3322.
- **Building plan reviews:** Will be accepted via email, mail or drop box just inside the main entrance to Town Hall. If necessary, we will meet individuals by appointment only to go over plan questions; please contact 603-466-3322.
- **Burial plot sales or Internments:** contact David Rich at Public Works 603-466-5025 to arrange.
- **Burn permits:** Contact the Fire Chief, Phil Cloutier, at 603-466-2549 or pcloutier@gorhamnh.org. Burn permits may be obtained online: <https://nhdfweb.sovsportsnet.net/>. Please continue to monitor the department's website at: <https://www.gorhamnh.org/fire-department>

Road complaints, Snow Plowing, Roadway drainage: Contact Public Works Director Austin (Buddy) Holmes at aholmes@gorhamnh.org or 603-466-5025.

Trash and Recycling general questions: Contact Lisa White at lwhite@gorhamnh.org or 603-466-5025. During this time the Transfer Station will remain open, but we ask people to use curbside rubbish and recycling collection if at all possible. Not only does this limit personal contact, but saves tax dollars. Additionally, please use discretion discarding bulky waste at the Transfer Station and wait to discard items requiring a disposal fee, such as televisions or computers, until the situation abates.

To file land use board submissions (including Planning Board and Zoning Board of Adjustment) or to review site plans, subdivision plans, etc. please contact Michelle Lutz at mlutz@gorhamnh.org or 603-466-3322 to arrange an appointment.

All Other Services: Please do not hesitate to reach out to the Town Manager's Office at 603-466-3322 or email the individual you wish to contact for assistance with any other Town Office Services.

Municipal Water & Sewer Questions: Effective Wednesday, March 18, 2020, Gorham Water & Sewer Department will be closed to the public until April 6, 2020. However, we will still be working to serve the residents of Gorham and you can contact Administrative Assistant Jessica Jacques at jessicaj@ne.rr.com or 603-466-3302 with any questions.

If you need to make a payment, we urge that you go to our website at www.gorhamnh.org to make that payment using your credit/debit cards or checking information. If you would prefer to bring your

payment to the office located at 8 Main Street, there will be a secure location at the office where a drop box will be located to do so.

COVID-19 Updates: Please continue to check the Town's website at <https://www.gorhamnh.org/covid-19-info> for current developments and information.

The public should know that there has been a lot of inter-agency communication taking place over the last couple of weeks as we have developed our response to this health challenge. Agencies include but are not limited to Homeland Security, Governor Sununu's office, NHDHHS, NHDES, CCFHS and AVH, Gorham and Berlin Schools, the Chamber of Commerce, volunteer organizations, United Way, the Town of Gorham and the City of Berlin. These agencies will continue to communicate and publish information online and in the paper as needed.

If we work through this together as a community, we will be all the stronger for it! Remember to act with compassion and kindness.