



Vice Mayor Doug Hopson | Alderwoman Kathy Bullen

In The Beautiful Buffalo Valley

Alderman Jeff Linville | Alderwoman Wanda Radford

Debbie Kessler, City Recorder
Ashley Shelton, Communications & Programs Director

Mayor Johnny Lynch

Tina Wilcox, Office Manager/Court Clerk
Lee Manning, Mountain Harvest Kitchen Director

COVID-19 STATEMENT - MARCH 25, 2020

At the March Board of Mayor and Aldermen meeting, at the invitation of Mayor Lynch, the Director of the Unicoi County Health Department Michelle Ramsey presented information concerning the current COVID-19 situation, local and online resources, as well as matters of which our citizens and town staff should be aware. The Town of Unicoi administration continues to be in regular contact with state leaders and health officials and continues to monitor the COVID-19 pandemic and respond as appropriate. The safety and welfare of the citizens is the highest priority for the administration and all decisions are intended to protect the well-being of both residents and visitors.

Taking into account Governor Bill Lee's recent announcement regarding business closures, group meeting sizes and precautionary measures, as well as the fact that cases of COVID-19 have now been reported in counties surrounding Unicoi, the town administration announces the following:

These measures will be in effect immediately and through April 30 at 5 p.m. These measures, and others, may be in effect for extended periods as recommended by the Center for Disease Control, Governor Bill Lee and the federal government:

- Town Hall Open with Limited Access
 - Town Hall is staffed and open. All residents are encouraged to refrain from visiting the facility except for essential business. Residents will not be allowed to make copies or receive faxes at Town Hall.
 - Please call prior to visiting Town Hall to inquire if your business may be handled online or through email.
 - Normal business hours will be limited to 2 - 5 p.m. Visitors will not be in Town Hall outside of these hours without a specific appointment.
 - Anyone visiting Town Hall will be asked screening questions prior to entering the building and are asked to utilize the hand sanitizer provided at the entrance upon arrival and departure.
 - A new secure dropbox is being installed at Town Hall so the public can make payments and drop off items at additional times.
 - The court proceedings originally scheduled for April 7, 2020, will be rescheduled to the May 5, 2020, docket.

- Closing of the Unicoi Tourist Information Center
 - Following the lead of State of Tennessee Welcome Centers, the Tourist Information Center is now closed to all guests, meetings and events.
 - Signage has been placed to direct visitors to the restroom facilities that are accessible from outside, as well as the outdoor brochure kiosk.

- Closing of the Bogart-Bowman Cabin
 - All events, including the weekly Pick'n on the Porch have been cancelled.
 - The facility will not be available for private parties during this time.

- Electronic Public Meetings
 - Governor Lee has suspended certain open meetings requirements and the state comptroller's office has provided town administration with guidelines regarding appropriate meeting options.
 - The Town of Unicoi Planning Commission meeting, scheduled for April 13, 2020, and the Board of Mayor and Aldermen meeting, scheduled for April 20, 2020, will conduct essential business electronically in order to protect the health, safety, and welfare of Tennesseans. Town communications staff are working and making reasonable efforts to set up a meeting platform that will allow for both video and audio access.
 - Subject to the uncertainties of technology, the proceedings will be accessible to the public via electronic means. Public notice of the meeting and agendas will provide further information as to methods of access either online, by telephone or otherwise as developed.
 - All meeting materials will be available prior to the session and recordings will be available within two business days after the meeting.
 - The mayor, city recorder, city attorney and communications director will facilitate the meeting from Town Hall. Board members will participate electronically or by other means. Speakers will be located outside the building so the proceedings will be audible at the meeting location. In accordance with Governor Lee's directives concerning limitation on group meetings, there will not be public admission to the meeting.

Informational fliers regarding the COVID-19 virus are available at Town Hall, the Tourist Information Center and the town's website, UnicoiTN.net, as well as the town's Facebook page.

Contacts:

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