

March 20 Update: City Council to Hold Virtual Meeting on Tuesday, March 24

Due to the evolving impact of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19), the Woburn City Council is utilizing the Governor's Emergency Executive Order which suspends certain provisions of the Open Meeting Law. Although the notice above indicates a location at City Hall, 10 Common Street, the meeting will be held as a virtual online meeting and not at City Hall.

The City Council will hold this meeting as a virtual meeting on Tuesday, March 24, 2020 at 7:00 pm. To view this meeting on computer, laptop, tablet or smartphone with speakers and microphone, use this link at the above date and time:

<https://zoom.us/j/805728950?pwd=eIBBdEszLzVTdnRJNTQvR0lSZkV3QT09>

at the prompt enter the Password 161505;

By telephone dial 1-646-558-8656, at the prompt enter Meeting ID 805 728 950, at the next prompt enter Password 161505.

March 20 Update: Planning Department Operations and Meetings Plan

Planning Department: Personnel will be staffing the Planning Board/ WRA office at City Hall under present limitations. Forms and instructions for filing subdivisions, subdivision approval not required (ANR) plans and special permit applications are available here: <https://www.woburnma.gov/government/planning-board/>. Information and applications for sign grants and façade loans are available on the WRA's webpage: <https://www.woburnma.gov/government/woburn-redevelopment-authority/storefront-improvement-program-2/>.

Planning Board and WRA Meetings: The meetings of the Planning Board and WRA scheduled for next week (Tuesday March 24, 2020) have been cancelled. The next meeting of the Planning Board is scheduled for Tuesday, April 14, 2020 and for the WRA, April 28, 2020.

March 19 Update: Inspectional Services Operations Plan while City Hall is closed to the Public:

Permit Process Procedures:

1. Residents and Contractors are directed to download permit applications from the City's website: <https://www.woburnma.gov/government/inspectional-services/>
2. Residents and Contractors can forward completed applications and plans electronically (e-mail to tcquinn@cityofwoburn.com) or by depositing in the drop box located at the rear entrance of City Hall, or sending by regular U.S. mail.

3. Plan review and required signatures on permit applications, Inspectional Services Department (ISD) will facilitate coordination with other City Departments involved in review process via e-mail.

4. Applicant will be contacted by ISD Staff and advised of any items that need to be addressed during review; once review is complete, applicant will be notified of approval and fee due.

5. Approved Permit will be sent electronically or regular mail, if unable to receive electronically.

Inspection Process while City Hall is closed to the Public:

1. Resident or Contractor should contact office at 781-897-5840. Staff will direct to proper inspector to discuss type of inspection they are requesting.

2. Inspector will discuss with Resident or Contractor protocols in place to ensure social distancing at the inspection location and if the inspection is time sensitive, if it is determined that it is not time sensitive or unsafe to complete inspection will be postponed.

The Inspectional Services Department recognizes the necessary closure of City Hall to the public is an inconvenience, but it is necessary at this time in the best interest of public health and safety. All City processes and business will be monitored and updated as circumstances change.

We also ask kindly that you wait to request any inspections that are not time sensitive, or inspections in which social distancing cannot be maintained.

Thank you for your continued cooperation as we all work together in the best interest of everyone.

March 19 Update: Local Utility and Cable/Internet Service and Information Roundup

In an effort to provide residents and businesses with updated information about essential services, the following is a working roundup from Eversource, National Grid, Comcast, and Verizon. We are working to provide this type of critical service information as we receive it. Check with your local companies for information specific to your individual account.

EVERSOURCE:

Message from Eversource about service, billing, resources and information:

We recognize that many customers will be facing challenges in the days and weeks ahead, so we have taken the following steps:

- To decrease any financial hardship our customers are facing due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we have postponed disconnections for nonpayment for residential and business customers across our electric, natural gas, and water operations. Our customer service team is available to help customers with financial programs we offer, such as setting up a payment plan.
- We have online and mobile tools to help customers conduct business with us as usual, including customer service agents to speak with by phone. Our mobile app, available in the App Store and Google Play, allows customers to easily check their account, pay their bill and more at their convenience.
- The COVID-19 outbreak has led to an increase in scam activity. We have posted information on our website, eversource.com, reminding customers to be wary of any unsolicited calls that threaten to disconnect their utility service and that demand payment by unusual means. Eversource will never ask a customer for personal information over the phone in this manner and does not accept payments via gift cards or other common tools used by scammers. Also, customers should be aware that – as previously mentioned – we have suspended disconnections for nonpayment across our utility operations.
- Please visit our website, www.eversource.com for the latest COVID-19 customer information. Customers are also encouraged to call and speak with a customer service representative.
- Eastern Massachusetts, Call 800-592-2000

NATIONAL GRID MASSACHUSETTS:

Current Conditions – Services Continuing

- Emergency response – As always, our customers should contact us for all gas and electricity-related emergencies, such as outages, downed power lines and gas leaks.
- Electricity and gas service — We do not anticipate any service disruption to our customers at this time. We have a comprehensive emergency response plan in place to keep the lights on and the gas flowing for customers.

- Customer-requested service – We will continue to respond as usual to essential customer needs, such as turning on or off gas or electric services (i.e. for a customer move), subject to municipal permitting and work restrictions.
- Regular billing and ability to make payments – Our regular billing process will continue. Customers are encouraged to manage their National Grid accounts online. We offer a variety of payment and billing options designed to make transactions easy and convenient. Our call center representatives remain at the ready to assist customers, but those calling in may experience longer than usual wait times.
- Payment assistance – We encourage customers who are struggling to pay their National Grid bill to contact us as soon as possible for assistance. Customers needing assistance, can click here for more information or call to speak with one of our Customer Advocates. Note: Call wait times may be longer than usual.

Current Conditions – Services Temporarily Paused

- Collections activities & disconnections – We have temporarily suspended collections-related activities, including service disconnections, to lessen any financial hardship caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. These policies will remain in effect at least until the end of April, when we will evaluate their continued need. Customers looking for more information on payment assistance programs in general can click here.
- Non-essential planned electric outages – We know many individuals are working from home and children are home from school. We are limiting planned service interruptions during this time.
-  Non-essential electric & gas related services – Planned maintenance and services such as manual meter reads, oil-to-gas conversions, gas service upgrades, and meter changes, may decrease the ability to keep social distance. Therefore, they will be paused. In the case of manual meter reads, this could result in estimated bills for some customers.
- Energy efficiency on-premise services – We are temporarily suspending all energy efficiency service activities, provided by our valued partners, that require home or business visits, such as energy audits.

For more updates and more information go to: www.nationalgridus.com/COVID-19

VERIZON/FIOS:

From Verizon: Verizon's fiber optic and wireless networks have been able to meet the shifting demands of customers and continue to perform well.

- Due to economic circumstances related to the coronavirus and to keep customers connected during this economic and global crisis; Verizon waives late fees for residential and small business customers impacted by COVID-19, offers free international calling to CDC level 3 countries.
- Investing in our economy by increasing our capital guidance range from \$17 – \$18 billion to \$17.5 – \$18.5 billion in 2020.

- Expanding work-from-home policy to include reduction of retail locations and hours across the country; fewer employees working at stores; limiting the number of customers in our stores at one time.
- Created a coronavirus hub page, <https://news.yahoo.com/coronavirus/>, across the Yahoo ecosystem that aggregates trusted and reliable news and content about the pandemic in the U.S. and across the globe.
- Partnering with those on the front lines of the Covid-19 emergency response, first responders, federal agencies, state and local governments, and public health agencies, to deliver on critical missions during crisis.

COMCAST:

Comcast is taking steps to implement the following new policies for the next 60 days, and other important initiatives:

- **Xfinity WiFi Free For Everyone:** Xfinity WiFi hotspots across the country will be available to anyone who needs them for free – including non-Xfinity Internet subscribers. For a map of Xfinity WiFi hotspots, visit www.xfinity.com/wifi. Once at a hotspot, consumers should select the “xfinitywifi” network name in the list of available hotspots and then launch a browser.
- **Pausing Our Data Plan:** With so many people working and educating from home, we want our customers to access the internet without thinking about data plans. While the vast majority of our customers do not come close to using 1TB of data in a month, we are pausing our data plans for 60 days giving all customers Unlimited data for no additional charge.
- **No Disconnects or Late Fees:** We will not disconnect a customer’s internet service or assess late fees if they contact us and let us know that they can’t pay their bills during this period. Our care teams will be available to offer flexible payment options and can help find other solutions.
- **Internet Essentials Free to New Customers:** As announced yesterday, it’s even easier for low-income families who live in a Comcast service area to sign-up for Internet Essentials, the nation’s largest and most comprehensive broadband adoption program. New customers will receive 60 days of complimentary Internet Essentials service, which is normally available to all qualified low-income households for \$9.95/month. Additionally, for all new and existing Internet Essentials customers, the speed of the program’s Internet service was increased to 25 Mbps downstream and 3 Mbps upstream. That increase will go into effect for no additional fee and it will become the new base speed for the program going forward.
- **News, Information and Educational Content on X1:** For those with school-age students at home, we’ve created new educational collections for all grade levels in partnership with Common Sense Media. Just say “education” into your X1 or Flex voice remote. To help keep customers informed, we also have created a collection of the most current news and information on Coronavirus. Just say “Coronavirus” into your X1 or Flex voice remote.
- **24x7 Network Monitoring:** Underpinning all of these efforts, Comcast’s technology and engineering teams will continue to work tirelessly to support our

network operations. We engineer our network capacity to handle spikes and shifts in usage patterns, and continuously test, monitor and enhance our systems and network to ensure they are ready to support customer usage. Our engineers and technicians staff our network operations centers 24/7 to ensure network performance and reliability. We are monitoring network usage and watching the load on the network both nationally and locally, and to date it is performing well.

Go to www.xfinity.com for the latest information.

March 17 Update: Lock Boxes on Loan From Santa to Provide Temporary Place for Residents to Drop Off Bill Payments and Paperwork

Drop Boxes at City Hall: There are two temporary Lock Boxes at the rear entrance of City Hall, near the handicap entrance: one for tax payments and one for all other payments, permit applications and other paperwork.

The red and green Christmas mail boxes are on loan from Santa Claus, who sent his well wishes from the North Pole and assurance to Woburn's children that he is very busy getting ready for Christmas this year. Thanks, Santa!

PLEASE NOTE: Do not drop cash payments or overdue bills in the drop box. These payments will be returned with applicable fees accrued until properly received. Please call the Treasurer/Collector's office at 781-897-5870 for the most updated amount for any overdue bills which can then be accepted in the form of check payment via mail or drop box.

Questions about Building Permits, please contact the Building Department at 781-897-5840, or click here for information: <https://www.woburnma.gov/government/inspectional-services/>

Questions about Birth Certificates, Marriage Licenses, Dog Licenses, etc., please contact the City Clerk's Office at 781-897-5850, or click her for information: <https://www.woburnma.gov/government/city-clerk/>

March 16 Update: Continuity Plans in Place, Mayor Provides Additional Guidance

Mayor Scott Galvin met with the City of Woburn's Emergency Management team to update the City's continuity plans to protect the health of employees while maintaining critical services for residents.

Woburn's first responders, including our Fire Department and Police Department, have emergency protocols in place and are trained, equipped and on standby to provide emergency assistance to our residents.

Now more than ever it is important to remember that ambulance service is for emergencies only. If you are not feeling well but it's not life-threatening, please contact your primary care physician first to discuss being seen.

When you call in an emergency, if you or anyone in your household or place of business are experiencing flu-like symptoms or under mandatory or self-imposed quarantine due to a confirmed or possible COVID-19 exposure, please notify the 911 dispatcher.

First responders have been given training on proper measures and equipment to protect them when responding.

Woburn City Hall and Woburn Public Library are closed to the public beginning Monday, March 16, for two weeks, through Friday, March 27.

City Departments are staffed and running, with all City employees required to maintain social distancing practices to protect themselves, their colleagues and their families. The ability to conduct business with the City of Woburn will continue. Please contact the City website <https://www.woburnma.gov/> or call 781-897-5800 to be directed.

Lock boxes have been set up at City Hall to allow residents to drop off payments, permit applications, and other paperwork. Mayor Galvin and departments are also working with our Technology Director to prepare to operate city business and conduct virtual meetings with the help of technology.

In accordance with Governor Baker's Executive Order, the following restrictions with local impact will go into effect on Tuesday, March 17, at 12 a.m.:

All bars, restaurants and social clubs are closed through April 6, 2020. Restaurants are allowed to offer food for delivery and takeout.

All gatherings over 25 people are banned, which applies to all community, civic, public, leisure and faith-based events, covering fitness clubs and gyms, private clubs and movie theaters.

In addition, Mayor Galvin, in conjunction with the Recreation Department, has prohibited organized sports on City fields until April 6, 2020. Parents are welcome to be outside with their children to use all of the City's fields.

Woburn Public Library is closed to the public for two weeks, through Friday, March 27. Like City Hall, the Library remains staffed and running, with employees required to maintain social distancing practices to protect themselves, their colleagues and their families. Call the Library at 781-933-0148 for information about programs and curbside book pickup, or visit the Library's website at <https://woburnpubliclibrary.org/> .

Woburn Public Schools will now be closed until Monday, April 6, 2020, per order of Governor Charlie Baker. Meanwhile, schools are serving lunch daily at the Altavesta Elementary School and Woburn Memorial High School, from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Superintendent Matt Crowley reports that beginning Wednesday, March 18, breakfast will be also be available, between the hours of 8 a.m. to 10 a.m. at the same locations. Families will have the option of picking up both breakfast and lunch at the same time.

March 15 Community Update: Woburn City Hall and Woburn Public Library Closed to Public for Two Weeks

Beginning Monday, March 16, 2020, Woburn City Hall and Woburn Public Library will be closed to the public for two weeks, through Friday, March 27, 2020. We are taking this step as an additional preventative action, and will post other updates and related information here.

In the midst of these unprecedented measures, let's remember the effect this environment is having on our oldest, and youngest, citizens and lead by example not just with diligence but also with calm, compassion and patience.

March 14, 2020, Community Health Update: Mayor Holds Conference Call with Local Houses of Worship; All Catholic Services Suspended

Mayor Scott Galvin held a conference call with the local houses of worship on Friday afternoon to discuss precautions they are implementing, and the City's recommendation on suspending services.

In light of Governor Baker's subsequent decision to ban gatherings over 250, the Catholic Church has suspended all services. Please check with your local house of service for information about plans and services. We will continue to post information and updates here.

March 13, 2020: Mayor Galvin, City of Woburn Take Action in Response to COVID-19

The City is working proactively on a number of fronts to help slow the spread of the novel Coronavirus, also known as COVID-19. We continue working with federal, state and City Departments and will take additional measures as recommended by health experts to mitigate the impacts of this rapidly changing situation.

We ask and strongly recommend everyone practices social distancing when out in public. This means staying at least 6 feet from other people; not shaking hands, or making bodily contact; and covering your mouth when you cough or sneeze. Avoid large public events and gatherings, as well.

At this writing, the City does not have any presumptive or confirmed cases of COVID-19. This is a rapidly changing environment, however, and we do expect to eventually experience positive cases in Woburn. We are working closely with our local and state health experts.

For Woburn Board of Health Updates, click here: <https://www.woburnma.gov/news/2020/03/coronavirus-covid-19/>

City Hall: City Hall remains open for business, but we are prepared to operate remotely, if the situation requires or circumstances change. We are urging residents to refrain from visiting City Hall in person, however, unless necessary. For the City of Woburn homepage, click here; <https://www.woburnma.gov/>. To pay bills, residents are encouraged to use the online bill pay system (link below).

Online Bill Pay Link: <https://www.woburnma.gov/pay/>

Woburn Public Schools: All schools will be closed effective Monday, March 16, through Friday, March 27. The decision was made to proactively support containment efforts. The City of Woburn and Woburn Public Schools will be announcing plans to support students and their families while schools are closed, including meal services. All Woburn School updates will be posted at <https://www.woburnpublicschools.com/>.

Woburn Senior Center: Beginning Monday, March 16, the Woburn Senior Center will be closed for two weeks. All services and programs will be cancelled during this time period. Meals on Wheels will continue to be delivered. Council on Aging staff will be available via telephone to provide assistance with any questions or concerns, at 781-897-5960. In addition, Council on Aging staff will be available to help with non-perishable food items, as available, or transportation to a local market. Senior Center online can be found here: <https://www.woburnma.gov/government/senior/>.

Woburn Recreation: The remaining basketball programs and winter programs have been suspended, as of Friday, March 13, 2020. We have also made the decision to suspend registration for some of our Spring 2020 programs until further notice. Please check our website for more updates on programs. <https://www.woburnma.gov/government/recreation/>.

Woburn Public Library: All library programs are suspended until further notice. Meanwhile, many library programs will be streamed online. The Woburn Public Library remains open during regular hours with social distancing practices in place. Click here to go the Library's main website: <https://woburnpubliclibrary.org/>

Woburn Boys and Girls Club: Closed, in line with Woburn schools, until Friday, March 27. Click here for the website: <https://bgcwoburn.org/>

O'Brien Ice Rink: Closed through Friday, March 27. Click here for rink's website: <https://www.woburnrec.com/info/facilities/details.aspx?FacilityID=14766>

Support, concern and respect for one another make a big difference. People across the City are making sacrifices and temporarily changing their habits for the benefit of everyone to help stop the spread of the Coronavirus. Check back for updates.

Thank you.

Scott D. Galvin

Mayor