Residents and Neighbors,

This afternoon department leaders along with the Board of Selectmen and Town Administrator, attended a statewide briefing to receive updates COVID-19 situation across the Commonwealth. The call was facilitated by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, where they shared the latest updates on COVID-19. Additionally, specific public health guidance to municipalities was provided regarding the preparation for this public health emergency. Key Department of Public Health officials that spoke on the call included:

- Catherine Brown, DVM, MSc, MPH—State Epidemiologist, Bureau of Infectious Disease and Laboratory Sciences
- Kerin Milesky—Director, Office of Preparedness and Emergency Management

We spent an hour together, in a very collaborative way, with many questions being asked and answered throughout the call.

Perhaps the biggest takeaway, is that it is now in the interest of public health and safety need to shift from attempts at containment to a focus on mitigation.

Methods that are critical to slowing down the speed with which this virus spreads include:

- Social Distancing - Refers to keeping 6’ away from people, especially those who are coughing/sneezing.
- Don’t congregate in large numbers, the State has banned gatherings of more than 250 people.
- Wash your hands frequently, and thoroughly with soap & water, for at least 20 seconds
- Cover your mouth when sneezing & coughing.
- Stay home if you’re sick or symptomatic.

As most of you are likely aware, the Belchertown Public School System, and the Clapp Memorial Library will be closed immediately, with a tentative return date of Monday, March 30. That date will be reassessed throughout the two-week closure period based on the evolving COVID-19.

Additionally, the Board of Selectmen will be meeting at Town Hall on Monday starting @ 7:15PM to go over a variety of topics related to this national emergency and, as always, invite you to join us.

This meeting will be broadcast, in real time on BCTV, and we will be offering an online method for attending as well.

Online details.
Belchertow Selectman's Meeting 3-16-2020
Mon, Mar 16, 2020 7:00 PM - 12:00 AM (EDT)

Please join my meeting from your computer, tablet or smartphone.
https://global.gotomeeting.com/join/487747997

You can also dial in using your phone.
United States: +1 (224) 501-3412

Access Code: 487-747-997

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https://global.gotomeeting.com/install/487747997

Pay attention to your email and phone for any additional information or updates, as they become available.

Be diligent, be safe and be well.

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For the latest official updates, please visit:
https://www.mass.gov/orgs/department-of-public-health

Some key facts:

As of March 10th in Massachusetts:

638 people have completed quarantine and are out of monitoring
445 people are currently in quarantine
6 confirmed positive cases
117 presumptive positive cases