

JANUARY 29, 2021

FREDERICK COUNTY COUNCIL NEWSLETTER



A LOOK BACK AT 2020

Virtual Council Meetings

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Council began meeting virtually in March of 2020 and has continued to work remotely, passing legislation and fulfilling other responsibilities of their job. Despite operating almost entirely virtually this past year, the Council was able to successfully approve the Budget which enabled the County to continue to operate, as well as 17 bills (two additional bills still pending into 2021), and quite a number of ordinances and resolutions. The Council successfully handled several rezoning applications which by law have additional requirements the Council must meet during the approval process, including providing a public process allowing the public to be actively engaged in the procedures. Although it was a challenging year in many respects, the Council was able to continue to operate, continue to provide methods for the public to be engaged in the decision making processes and was able to successfully meet the responsibilities of their role as the legislative branch of the Frederick County Government. Please check the Council website for additional information on the various bills, ordinances and resolutions which were considered by the Council in 2020:

<https://www.frederickcountymd.gov/591/County-Council>. Although remote meetings may be considered by some to be less than ideal, they have allowed the public to participate safely from their homes via phone and/or email, and will continue until further notice.

STAYING SAFE DURING COVID-19

All Council meetings will be held virtually until further notice.

OPT-IN FOR UPDATES ABOUT COVID-19

You can sign up to get updates by texting FredCoVID19 to 888777



FREDERICK COUNTY'S RESPONSE TO COVID-19

Beginning last spring, Governor Larry Hogan issued a Stay at Home Executive Order, asking everyone to work from home and not travel unless performing essential activities, to slow the spread of COVID-19 and reduce the threat to our most vulnerable neighbors. Throughout the pandemic, Frederick County has gone through multiple phases of reopening, adhering to Governor Hogan's guidelines and following the restrictions set by County Executive Gardner in collaboration with the Frederick County Health Department. For updated information please visit: www.frederickcountymd.gov/Coronavirus.

In accordance with State Superintendent Dr. Karen B. Salmon's directive, all Maryland public schools including Frederick County public schools closed in March of 2020 and remained closed through the end of the 2019-2020 academic year. Since the beginning of the 2020-2021 school year, students have been learning virtually in Frederick County. However, recently Dr. Salmon and Governor Hogan issued a directive that all schools must reopen for at least in school hybrid learning by March 1. To comply with that directive, FCPS reopened for teachers and staff January 27, preparing for possible return of some students as early as mid-February. FCPS posts regular updates on their website: www.fcps.org/update.

In June, Mayor O'Connor announced new efforts to support City restaurants adversely impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic: "Pop Up Dining" in downtown Frederick. The City's priorities for this initiative included: pedestrian and diner safety, ADA regulations, the necessary work of the Department of Public Works, and the planning for potential extreme weather. With these in mind, the City developed a multi-faceted plan to provide safe outdoor dining across the City. Evidence of the City's efforts are visible traveling through downtown Frederick, particularly on weekends, with some road closures and the narrowing of traffic lanes to allow outdoor dining.

For the latest information about COVID-19 in Frederick County, please visit www.frederickcountymd.gov/JIC

The Frederick County Office of Economic Development (OED) announced the highly successful Jump Start grants designed to assist small businesses and nonprofit organizations experiencing financial loss due to COVID-19. OED has also created a tool to help businesses navigate federal and state programs such as the Emergency Relief Manufacturing Fund, SBA Economic Injury Disaster Loan, CARES Act Paycheck Protection Program Loan, and more. This tool will allow businesses to more easily compare business grants and loans and stay up to date on what is currently being offered. The Frederick County Business Financial Tool can be downloaded at <http://www.discoverfrederickmd.com/covid-19>.

TESTING FOR COVID-19 IS AVAILABLE AT MULTIPLE LOCATIONS. FOR THE MOST UP TO DATE TESTING INFORMATION, PLEASE VISIT:
[https://health.frederickcountymd.gov/614/Novel-Coronavirus-COVID-19.](https://health.frederickcountymd.gov/614/Novel-Coronavirus-COVID-19)

FREDERICK COUNTY'S RESPONSE TO COVID-19

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County Executive Gardner announced the COVID-19 Emergency Rental Assistance Program, a partnership between Frederick County, the City of Frederick, and the nonprofit Religious Coalition for Emergency Human Needs. To apply, visit www.RCEHN.org/covid-emergency-rental-assistance.

Frederick County Workforce Services has published information addressing concerns of the business community regarding COVID-19: <https://www.frederickworks.com/everything-workforce/2020/4/7/5-most-frequently-asked-questions-from-businesses>.

Early during the pandemic, the Frederick County Health Department and Frederick County Emergency Management experienced a shortage of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). However, reliable supply chains have returned and the County has been able to restock necessary PPE in anticipation of future needs. In September, the Council approved the purchase of a 40,000 sq. ft. warehouse, to store PPE as well as other county emergency supplies. This warehouse serves as a central location for storage and distribution of PPE throughout Frederick County.

Frederick County Public Libraries (FCPL) have gone digital. They have a weekly lineup of virtual programming for children, families, and adults that can be viewed on their Facebook channel at [@FredCoLibrary](https://www.facebook.com/FredCoLibrary). They also have a wide variety of digital, downloadable, and streamable content available for the Frederick Community.

Although Governor Hogan has stated that groups 1A, 1B and 1C are eligible for COVID-19 vaccine, he has also requested that counties continue to prioritize senior residents. Vaccine is still in limited supply, so while groups 1A, 1B, and 1C are eligible in the state, Frederick County is currently vaccinating groups 1A and people who are 75 years and older who live or work in Frederick County first. Frederick is also working on how best to prioritize our educators and child care providers.

Nursing home and assisted living facilities are being vaccinated by CVS and Walgreens. The health department's clinics will also start vaccinating workers in Urgent Care and Dialysis facilities soon.

Please stay up to date by following the information posted to the Council's website with links to all the relevant sites in Frederick County: <https://www.frederickcountymd.gov/8178/COVID-Information>.

Connect With Us

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