



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Borough of Chambersburg

A full service municipality in Franklin County celebrating over 65 years of consumer owned natural gas service over 120 years of community electric and a regional wastewater, water, storm sewer and municipal solid waste utility

CHAMBERSBURG COUNCIL PRESIDENT AND MAYOR RELEASE STATEMENTS ON ONGOING HEALTH CRISIS IN BOROUGH (COVID-19)

Chambersburg, Pennsylvania – On Tuesday, May 12, 2020, Council President Alice Elia released the following statement to the citizens and businesses of the Borough of Chambersburg:

“Dear Borough Residents,

Franklin County remains under Red Phase Stay At Home orders. We have yet to meet key public health metrics for reopening, which include numbers of COVID-19 cases in the last two weeks as well as testing and contact tracing capacities. State health data show that zip code 17201, largely occupied by the Borough of Chambersburg, accounts for nearly half of the COVID-19 cases in Franklin County (health.pa.gov). The Governor’s task force reviews data regularly, so our status is subject to change, but, for now, we are under Stay At Home orders through June 4.

The Governor has recently clarified consequences for violating Red Phase Stay At Home orders. Small business owners who open prematurely might be subject to loss of insurance coverages as well as state licensures. The county itself, and possibly the municipalities and organizations within it, may lose discretionary funds from the CARES Act that would directly benefit our citizens and our economic recovery.

I understand from Mayor Walt Bietsch that the Chambersburg Police Department will continue its current practice of educating and informing business owners who operate in violation of current Stay At Home orders. I hope that you will join me in supporting this approach and continuing to believe in the goodwill of our neighbors and our Borough business owners. Borough residents and business owners have made many sacrifices to help slow the spread of COVID-19. The economic toll of this pandemic is unprecedented. However, we risk compromising our economic recovery if non-eligible businesses reopen in violation of state orders.

Moreover, the health of our families and friends, our neighbors, our coworkers, our Borough staff, our emergency services personnel and police officers, our health aides and caregivers, our nurses and doctors, continues to depend on our willingness to abide by Red Phase Stay At Home orders. Reopening before we are positioned to manage our local and county public health crisis jeopardizes the health of our community and risks overwhelming our health care resources.

Please follow public health recommendations for regular hand washing and wearing masks in public: protect yourself and others. Practice physical distancing, too. Together, we can continue our work as a community toward the recovery of our livelihoods, the protection of public health, and the dearly sought normalcy of our pre-pandemic lives.

Thank you,
Alice Elia
President, Chambersburg Borough Council”

President Elia represents Ward One for the Borough of Chambersburg and was selected by the other members of Council to serve as Council President, the Chief Elected Official of the Borough of Chambersburg.

On Tuesday, May 12, 2020, Mayor Walt Bietsch released the following statement to the citizens and businesses of the Borough of Chambersburg:



Borough of Chambersburg

Mayor Walt Bietsch

"This statement is to inform the Chambersburg business community about the nature of our handling of the Wolf Administration's COVID-19 Disaster Declaration Order, pertaining to the recent movement to re-open non-waivered businesses in our community. The current status of our community's standing is that we are in the Governor's "red" phase, which includes the original stay-at-home directive and non-waivered businesses remaining closed. While the appropriateness of the "red" phase designation is subject to debate, local elected officials do not have the authority to independently permit non-waivered businesses to open during this "red" phase. Non-waivered business owners/operators, who choose to open, do so at their own peril, considering the possible negative impacts that they may experience from the Wolf Administration, for violating the business closure order. I want to extend my deepest thanks to the business owners/operators in our borough for your cooperation during these trying times.

Our mission will be the continued education of our local businesses as to the unchanged business closure order, issued by Governor Wolf. When we make contact with non-waivered businesses that are not permitted to be open at this time, our approach will be that of educating and advising. We want businesses to possess accurate information regarding the Wolf Administration orders and the consequences threatened by him. We request that non-waivered businesses who have contact with Chambersburg police officers, maintain a level of civility, cooperation and respect for these officers who are tasked with a difficult mission in these difficult times.

Our officers will treat all with civility, respect, and will conduct themselves professionally. Non-waivered businesses that have not received a copy of the Governor's March 19th state-wide health emergency order will be provided with a copy, along with the Secretary of the Pa. Department of Health's order. Business owners/operators will be informed of the possible revocation by the state, of any license under which they operate. The Chambersburg Borough Police Department does not have authority to revoke state issued licenses."

The public can obtain a copy of these statements on the Borough website, www.chambersburgpa.gov, by clicking on the link for COVID-19 information. Alice Elia can be reached via email at aelia@chambersburgpa.gov. Mayor Bietsch can be reached via email at mayor@chambersburgpa.gov or by telephone at (717) 251-2492.

If you have any questions about this information, contact Borough Manager Jeffrey Stonehill at jstonehill@chambersburgpa.gov; due to emergency operations, calling and visiting may be challenging to schedule.

Chambersburg is a unique community. Chambersburg supplies more services than any other municipality in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. In addition to typical town functions, Chambersburg is Pennsylvania's only municipality supplying electric and gas. Chambersburg is 1 of 35 Boroughs to operate a municipal non-profit electric utility. Chambersburg is the largest municipal electric utility in the State, twice as large as the second largest, Ephrata, Lancaster County; and, the only one to operate generation stations. Chambersburg is 1 of 2 municipalities in PA to operate a natural gas utility. The other is Philadelphia, which does not operate an electric utility. Nationally, Chambersburg is 1 of 2,000 communities to have its own electric system and 1 of 800 communities to have a natural gas system but 1 of only about 50 to operate both. Chambersburg manages a regional water system, a regional sanitary sewer system (not through an independent Authority), and a new storm sewer utility; one of the first storm sewer utilities to form under the new Federal mandate to regulate stormwater. Chambersburg currently has 20,508 residents (2013).