



BOROUGH OF CLOSTER

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~Closter Borough Council~

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MAYOR'S NEWSLETTER



August 31, 2020

Dear Friends and Neighbors:

As we enter into September, I am pleased to let you know the Borough is holding steady with keeping the curve flat and limiting the number of new cases. We all must remain diligent and exercise consistent practices of wearing a mask and social distancing. Covid-19 information is on the last page of this newsletter.

Blanch Avenue Bridge

Many of you are aware the Blanch Avenue Bridge was closed in the later part of January for utility repair work. Subsequent to the work completed, a very large structural compromise was later revealed creating the immediate closure of the bridge to all traffic and pedestrians. The Boroughs of Closter and Norwood are working cooperatively to address the needs of reconstructing this bridge and roadway. Borough engineers are reviewing plans and D.E.P. permit applications as we begin to move forward on the reconstruction of this area. We all realize the compromise of this important thoroughfare is significant to our communities and are hopeful the combined effort to rebuild the bridge will be swift to address everyone's needs.

Message from Superintendent Vincent McHale – Closter Public Schools

“Our plan will use a phase-in approach so that there will be set times, one in October and one in November, at which we will reassess our capacity. Phase I will be from **September 8, 2020**, through October 16, 2020. We will assess if we can increase classroom occupancy or the length of the instructional day for phase II, which is from October 19, 2020, through November 25, 2020. Phase III will be from November 30, 2020, through January 15, 2021. For each new phase we will reassess and determine any changes that we can implement.

For phase I, students will return for a single-session day (four hours) on a A/B day schedule. This will allow teachers time to collaboratively plan instruction for both in-person and at-home learning so that there is consistency across the grade level. When students are at-home on the alternating day, the school day will be for four hours also, with some live, synchronous instruction and some work to complete that is assigned and explained by the teachers on the days students are in the classroom.

We will ensure that children in the same family will attend in-person learning on the same day, whether at Hillside Elementary School or Tenakill Middle School”.

September 11th Memorial Service ~ A Live Stream Service~

In remembrance of September 11th, please find a moment to view a live stream of the 9/11 Memorial Service beginning at 9:00 a.m. on Friday, September 11th, Patriots Day. Unfortunately, Covid-19 has created the need to redesign the memorial service this year and create a live stream event. The public is asked not to attend as we are following Covid-19 restrictions.

Representatives from the Closter Fire Department, Closter Volunteer Ambulance Corps and Closter Police Department will be honoring our commitment to “never forget”, as tribute is paid to all those lost during the attacks on America. Covid-19 may have created the need to restructure the manner in which the September 11th Remembrance Service is being held, but Covid-19 will not take away our commitment to honor our fellow Americans. The live stream will be shown on the homepage of the Borough’s website, www.closternj.us.

Closter’s 9/11 Memorial, located in Remembrance Park, was built in 2004 by dedicated volunteers to pay tribute to all of the Americans whose lives were so profoundly affected and homage to all persons whose sacrifices have provided our cherished freedom and liberty. “Let each of us simply perform one act of kindness and give a little more of ourselves through volunteering, as we “never forget”.

Closter Volunteer Fire Department

Please consider supporting this all important volunteer agency. Our Fire Department works around the clock to meet the needs of our citizens and businesses. It is a 100% all-volunteer department that has served the community for 127 years. Always available - 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year through storms, holidays and pandemics. Most residents and businesses have received the department’s annual letter for donations. The annual letter is a legitimate request from the Closter Fire Department for a donation.

In the event you didn’t receive a donation request letter, the link is: www.closterfd.org/donate. Please consider the important work this dedicated volunteer service provides to keeping us safe and responding to us during times of need.

Closter Volunteer Ambulance & Rescue Corps

The volunteers of Closter Volunteer Ambulance & Rescue Corps have answered 327 calls since COVID-19 was declared a pandemic on March 13th, and continue to do so. July produced the 2nd highest call volume in CVARC’s 84 year history. A plan outlining specific PPE to be worn and ambulance disinfection had immediately been put in place in order to keep our volunteers, as well as the patients, safe. The past six months have been exhausting, frightening and a true measure of strength. Please support these dedicated men and women as we move forward.

Closter Police Department

Closter’s schools are scheduled to have students return to classes beginning Tuesday, September 8th. To keep our pedestrians safe, the Closter Police Department is urging *everyone* to STOP for pedestrians in marked crosswalks (it is NJ State Law), observe speed signs, and put down the cell phone while driving. These infractions all come with heavy penalties, ranging from points on a driver’s license to fines and or community service.

Residents are being urged to assist in protecting their property. Keep cars locked even when parked in driveways. Do not leave Key Fobs, Wallets, Cell Phone, I Pads, Handbags or any other items of value in vehicles. *Remember... see something, Say something!*

Closter Food & Assistance Board

The Closter Food & Assistance Board continues serve our residents in need. Until Borough Hall reopens to the public, the food pantry remains closed to food donations. We ARE still accepting financial donations, grocery store gift cards and restaurant gift certificates so that we can keep our shelves full and continue to deliver food to families who need it. Please consider restaurant give certificates as a viable donation. This type of donation not only assists our families in need, but supports our local restaurants.

If you know anyone in Closter who may be in need and is hesitant to come forward or just might not know how, please email us fabofcloster@gmail.com or call (201) 784-0600, extension 429. All inquiries are received in complete confidence. Financial donations can be sent to The Closter Food Pantry (CFP), Closter Borough Hall at 295 Closter Dock Rd., Closter, NJ.

WELCOME – Closter Farm – Grand Opening

It always gives me great pleasure to welcome new businesses to Closter. The most recent establishment is the new *Closter Farm* and *Farmstand* ! Located at 681 Closter Dock Road, the Farmstand is open on Wednesdays from 3-7pm and Sundays from 10am-2pm at [681 Closter Dock Road](#). Using organic, regenerative practices we are growing over 30 different heirloom vegetables and are proud to support small family-owned seed companies that promote biodiversity and resilience in our food chain.

As owner Jon Friedland stated, “flavor, nutrition and natural pest resistance are what drive our crop selection. You can see, smell and taste it in our Sun Gold Cherry and Brandywine Tomatoes, Fairytale Graffiti Eggplant, Mini-Love Watermelon, Bianchi di Maggio Bunching Onions, Badger Flame Beets, Astro Arugula, Tokyo Bekana Asian Greens and other vegetables and herbs. And we are always looking for more great varieties to add to our mix. Our organic chickens roam our pastures protected by their mobile chicken coop with ample space to forage on insects, crop residue, and supplemental organic feed. The result is that our chickens are lower in saturated fat, higher in omega 3 than fast growing commercial breeds and have an incredible flavor. Updates on the Farm can be found on its website (www.ClosterFarm.com). In Closter’s traditional welcome, “*hip hip horray*”.

Closter Public Library

The Closter Public Library’s reopening is off to a strong start. Covid-19 requires reduced capacity (in accordance with the Governor’s Executive Order). The library is open for inside browsing on Monday and Friday 2-4, Wednesday 2-4 and 5-7, Tuesday and Thursday 10-12 and Saturday 12-2. Outside pickup hours are Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday 10-4, Wednesday 10-7 and Saturday 11-2. It is imperative you stay at home if you are sick, properly wear a mask inside the library, sanitize your hands when you enter, limit your stay to 30 minutes, maintain a 6-foot Social Distance and following the directions from the Library Staff. Zoom links are available for a wide variety of activities, including the Short Story Club and Library from Home Book Club. Self-checkout, *meeScan*, is an app that you can download and use for contactless checking out of materials. Returns will only be accepted in the book drop. All items will quarantine for at least 72 hours before coming off your card. Please visit the library’s comprehensive website, www.closterpubliclibrary.org for up-to-date detailed information and to read the full policy.

COVID-19

We must all preserve in our commitment to keep the curve flat and exercise the proven practice of social distancing and wearing face coverings, especially in any public venues. These are the proven tools to control a rebound of the virus and allow a continued emergence “new-norm” activities. The Governor’s Executive Order states **face coverings must be worn in all retail operations and outdoor areas where social**

distancing of 6' cannot be maintained. I urge you to instill a sense of flexibility into daily routines while navigating the “new- norms” created by the Covid-19 situation.

- (1) **SOCIAL DISTANCING & FACE COVERINGS** – It is *imperative* the practice of social distancing and wearing face coverings any time in a public setting be practiced.
- (2) We are asking all of our residents to continue to reach out to neighbors, particularly our elderly neighbors, to see if they are in need of assistance. The Task Force has a list of residents willing to offer assistance by running errands or grocery shopping for those who may not be able to get to the store.
- (3) Testing sites are now open to all residents. Details and information on how and where to be tested are available on the Borough’s website under Covid-19.
- (4) The Closter Borough Hall building remains closed to the public. The Lewis St. Lobby has convenient drop boxes for several departments. There is a silver, wall mounted mailbox for Tax Payments. (This box is only for Tax Payments and donations to the Food Pantry). The Construction Office, Zoning/Planning Boards and Board of Health have their own drop boxes in the lobby.
- (5) The Borough’s website, www.closternj.us, has an array of Forms and Applications which can be downloaded, completed and returned to the Borough for review and processing applications.

The Borough is moving forward in many positive directions. The Mayor’s/OEM Task Force meets regularly to assess the situation. Follow the Borough’s website (www.closternj.us) for current information on Closter’s response during the Covid-19 pandemic. Cooperation, patience and tolerance are needed from all of us as we remain strong and diligent.

All the best,



Mayor
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