

Memorandum

To: Selectboard; Evan Teich, Unified Manager
Cc: Sarah Macy, Finance Director/Assistant Manager
From: Greg Duggan, Deputy Manager *GSD*
Re: Resolution regarding Essex COVID-19 response
Date: April 13, 2020

Issue

The issue is whether the Selectboard will approve a resolution regarding Essex's COVID-19 response.

Discussion

Winooski recently approved a resolution regarding its response to COVID-19, and is sending the resolution to state and federal elected officials. Town staff has adjusted the resolution for Essex (attached).

Cost

N/a

Recommendation

Staff recommends the Selectboard approve a resolution regarding Essex's COVID-19 response.

RESOLUTION

Essex COVID-19 Response

WHEREAS, on March 7, 2020, the first case of the novel coronavirus known as COVID-19 was confirmed in the State of Vermont and the second on March 11; and

WHEREAS, in early March, the governor activated the State Emergency Operations Center; and

WHEREAS, on March 11, the World Health Organization declared that COVID-19 was considered a pandemic; and

WHEREAS, on March 13, 2020, Governor Phil Scott declared a State of Emergency in Vermont because of the virus and issued an Executive Order under 20 V.S.A. Chapter 1, prohibiting, among other steps, social gatherings of more than 250 people; and

WHEREAS, since that time, the Governor has issued additional addenda and directives related to that Executive Order, including limiting gatherings to 10 people; issuing a Stay Home, Stay Safe Order; and most recently closing schools for in-person instruction through the rest of the school year; and

WHEREAS, the emergency measures in place have resulted in the closing of all non-essential business operations, mass layoffs of workers, workers staying home to care for children not attending school, and other impacts resulting in lost income for many residents; and

WHEREAS, it is not known how long emergency measures will remain in place; and

WHEREAS; the residents and small businesses that make our community vibrant are short on cashflow to keep paying bills and expenses; and

WHEREAS, we must support the long-term vibrancy of our community by protecting our residents, businesses, and essential Town services; and

WHEREAS, during a public health crisis, we must protect the public health by ensuring access to safe housing and basic needs such as food, water and heat; and

WHEREAS, the Town of Essex lacks the authority to change legislation that would provide meaningful relief to our community; and

WHEREAS, on March 27, 2020 the Federal Government signed into law a stimulus package allocating relief funds to the State of Vermont; now, therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Selectboard urges the State of Vermont to take measures including additional Executive Order addenda, the passing of legislation, and other efforts to provide meaningful relief that

- Prohibits the eviction of residential and commercial tenants;
- Prohibits foreclosure on properties residential and commercial;
- Prohibits the non-renewal of leases as a way to circumvent an eviction moratorium;
- Prohibits the suspension of healthcare coverage;
- Prohibits the suspension of any utility including municipal and private services;
- Suspends interest accrual on late payment of property taxes;
- Holds harmless municipal budgets for late payment of property and education tax when delaying payments to provide relief to local taxpayers;
- Addresses lost revenue in the State Education Fund while holding municipal budgets harmless;
- Leverages federal relief funds to reimburse municipal budgets for costs incurred during COVID-19 response
- Extends any such actions not less than 60 days beyond the end of the period of emergency to allow residents and businesses time to recover their financial footing.

Adopted this 14th day of April 2020 by the Essex Selectboard.

Town of Essex Selectboard

Elaine Haney, Chair

Annie Cooper

Patrick Murray, Vice Chair

Andrew J. Watts

Vincent Franco, Clerk