



MEMORANDUM
TOWN OF CHESHIRE
84 SOUTH MAIN STREET, CHESHIRE, CONNECTICUT 06410
Telephone (203) 271-6660 FAX (203) 271-6639

TO: Town Council
FROM: Sean M. Kimball, Town Manager
SUBJECT: Town Manager's Report – August 2020
DATE: August 18, 2020

Tropical Storm Isaias

Tropical Storm Isaias made landfall in Connecticut in the afternoon of Tuesday, August 4th. By the evening Eversource was reporting 11,090 Cheshire customers, or 96%, were without power. Three days later, on Friday there were still 65% without power. The majority of these residents were restored late Friday or on Saturday, but there were still 1,000 customers out of power by Sunday, and some who were not restored until Tuesday, August 11th.

Last week, Town staff held an Emergency Operations Center debrief session to review our response performance and discuss opportunities for improvements. Overall, I was pleased with the Town's response, communication messages and our efforts to push Eversource for more in-town resources.

A few quick facts and notes of appreciation:

- CPD Police dispatchers answered 640 9-1-1 calls in just 10 hours Tuesday night. This does not include many routine line calls. For perspective, this is about the same number received in the entire month of July (654). For a time, all 9-1-1 calls from Southington, Bristol and part of Plainville were coming to our dispatch center due to an AT&T system failure.
- Public Works crews responded to over 42 roads impacted by trees down on wires and over 60 roads blocked in total.
- The Cheshire Volunteer Fire Department responded to 113 calls for service.
- The Human Services Department created a Charging/Wifi/Cooling Center at Highland School within 24 hours of the storm arriving. Over 600 residents visited the center over the week. A special thank you to our town employees who truly went above and beyond to staff this center including Michelle Piccerillo, Fatima Yusuf, Vickie Pagan, Stephen Skibicki, and Fire Chief Jack Casner. An additional thank you to the Cheshire Public Schools staff including Vin Masciana, Rich Clavet, Mike Papa and Bob Quinn and the other BOE maintenance staff for their assistance in getting the center ready and available so rapidly and with a variety of unique COVID-19 considerations.

I want to thank all of our town employees who assisted in our storm response; in particular our Police, Fire, DPW, Board of Ed, and Human Services teams. They are an incredible group of dedicated individuals and we are fortunate to have them working for the Town of Cheshire.

Storm Debris Collection and Drop-Off Locations

Following Town Council approval last week, DPW crews began curbside brush collection yesterday as part of our ongoing town wide cleanup efforts. Crews are beginning in the south part of town and will make one pass though town working their way north. Brush and branches of 8” diameter or less will be collected. Leaves, grass clippings, bulky waste, bags, and trash will not be picked up. All material must be placed curbside on a Town or state road. Crews cannot enter private driveways or condominium complexes.

The Town also opened self-service disposal areas for residential drop-offs only; disposals by contractors are prohibited. The following locations will be open Monday through Saturday, beginning August 13, 2020 to August 29, 2020 from 7:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.:

- Quinnipiac Park overflow parking area, 1325 Cheshire Street
- Bartlem Park millings parking lot, 520 South Main Street
- Old Transfer Station, 1304 Waterbury Road

Larger diameter logs can be taken to the Old Transfer Station location but must be transported and unloaded via self-service.

The entire collection is anticipated to take about 4-6 weeks. We cannot give specific street or neighborhood collection dates as the pace is fully dependent upon the amount of debris placed at the curb.

Tax Bills

Tax bills were mailed at the end of June and residents are reminded that the Town Council approved and adopted a 60-day extension per the option made available by the Governor’s executive order. The deadline for tax bills to be considered late is now October 1, 2020.

Taxpayers are encouraged to pay online, by mail, or use the drive-up payment box located in the circle of the Town Hall parking lot to help with social distancing.

Updates on Cheshire’s COVID-19 Expansion of Services Plan

Town Hall:

- Town Hall continues to be open and available to the public during regular business hours
- A staff person is located at a table just inside the main door to admit visitors in order to manage traffic and receive tax payments not requiring a receipt
- Representatives from town offices are called down to greet visitors and assist in the department office as needed
- Limited to one visitor per office at a time, but visitors are permitted to wait in the lobby

Cheshire Public Library:

- Grab 'n Go pick up of physical books began on June 23rd, including evening hours Mondays and Wednesdays, and Saturday mornings. This service also includes black and white printing options and tax documents. To date there have been 5,070 items checked out through this service.
- Orders can be made through the library's online catalog system
- The main drop box on the parking lot side was reopened June 19th, all materials are quarantined for 7 days before being recirculated. So far 9,303 items have been returned since reopening the drop box. No fines are accruing for late materials
- CPL has held 177 virtual programs with 2,944 attendees.
- A date to allow the public to enter the building is still fluid but will be based on meeting the public health guidelines for staff and patron safety.
- Plans for this reopening phase have been developed and reviewed with Chesprocott. Necessary safety items have been acquired or are on order. Once all protocols are in place, the Library will self-certify with the State before initiating this phase of public service.

Playgrounds/Courts/Mixville:

- All playgrounds and courts have been reopened. Signs advise anyone with COVID symptoms not to use and warn that playgrounds are not sanitized and should be used cautiously
- The Mixville Park Pass system has been working well overall. We increased the available permits by 50% based on actual usage duration times. Our analysis indicates that 30%-50% of reservations are followed through with a visit on average. Park users have reported they are happy with the condition of the park and visitors are being respectful of the rules.

New Household Hazardous Waste Drop off - July 1, 2020 – October 31, 2020

The Town of Cheshire is contracting with the Regional Water Authority to dispose of unwanted household hazardous waste at **90 Sargent Drive, New Haven**. The 2020 Season begins July 1, 2020 and runs through October. The facility will be open Saturdays from 9 a.m. to noon. Proof of residency, online pre-registration, and COVID-19 protocols are required.

Cheshire Town Historian Request for Pandemic Stories/Photos/Messages

Town Historian Jeanné Chesanow is requesting that residents send observations, stories, photos, drawings, poems, videos, texts, tweets, memos, posters, etc. from this unique time period we are living in. This is an effort to enable future generations to better understand what was experienced here in Cheshire at this time of uncertainty. Submissions can be made to:

cheshirehistorian@gmail.com. Contributions will be shared with the Cheshire Library and the Cheshire Historical Society only with permission.

Upcoming Town Council & Sub-Committee Meetings

Town Council Regular Meeting
September 8, 2020 – 7:00 pm.

School Modernization Committee
August 19, 2020 – 7:00 pm.