CITY OF PORTSMOUTH

City Newsletter

Happy TWOs-day: Tuesday, February 22, 2022

ENGINEERS WEEK, FEB 20-26 -- Thank you to all the engineers working in the Department of Public Works! Learn more about careers in Engineering at DiscoverE.org

TONIGHT! CITY COUNCIL MEETING at 7 PM – In person in City Hall Council Chambers and via Zoom. For the Agenda and Zoom registration, click here: https://tinyurl.com/muk4b39d

Celebrating Black History Month

Portsmouth is a Racial Justice Municipality. Read more about what that means, here: https://tinyurl.com/2p89mvy2

Questions about a City Department, program or issue? Suggestion? Email your comment to hotline@cityofportsmouth.com **and you'll receive an immediate response, or we'll find the right person who can answer your question.**



SAFE WATER ADVISORY GROUP RESUMES WED FEB 23 AT 6:30 PM – In person in City Hall Conference Room A and via Zoom. For the agenda and Zoom registration, click here: https://tinyurl.com/2awhaw26

PUBLIC HEALTH DIRECTIVE ON FACE COVERINGS RESCINDED due to the drop in test positivity rates in Portsmouth and declines in area hospitalizations. However, the Public Health Officer urges residents to continue to follow the guidance of the NH Department of Health and Human Services and the CDC in implementing the layered "package" of mitigation measures that are known to reduce the risks associated with COVID-19. **The City Manager still strongly encourages the use of masks indoors in City facilities.** Please note that masks are still required in the Portsmouth Public Library. **The free N95 masks supplied by the Federal government are now available at the following local pharmacies:**

- CVS, 674 Islington St. at checkout, not pharmacy
- Rite-Aid, 800 Islington St., at checkout, not pharmacy
- Rite-Aid, 1303 Woodbury Ave., at pharmacy
- Walmart, 2460 Lafayette Rd., at doors and Service Desk

SUZANNE WOODLAND NAMED DEPUTY CITY MANAGER/DEPUTY CITY ATTORNEY -- City Manager Karen Conard is pleased to announce that after serving as Acting Deputy City Manager since August 2021, Suzanne Woodland is confirmed as Deputy City Manager as well as continuing to serve as Deputy City Attorney.

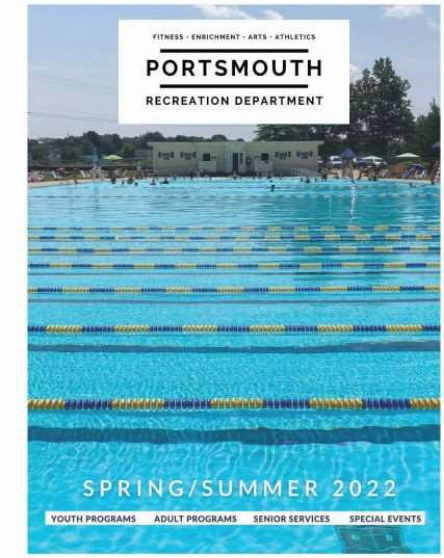
PORTSMOUTH COMMUNITY SCHOLARSHIPS OPEN TO ALL ELIGIBLE PORTSMOUTH RESIDENTS -- – Scholarship application season is now underway, with a deadline of March 11, 2022 at 3:30 pm for all applications to be submitted. The Trustees of the Trust Funds who administer the funding for many scholarships take this opportunity to remind residents that while many of the scholarships are awarded only to graduating Portsmouth High School seniors, **some -- including the five Portsmouth Community Scholarships are open to any Portsmouth resident who is a graduating senior**. Eligible Portsmouth students attending private schools and homeschool programs are eligible to apply, as well as Portsmouth residents attending Portsmouth High School.

Scholarships are awarded based on specific criteria. The Portsmouth Community Scholarships include:

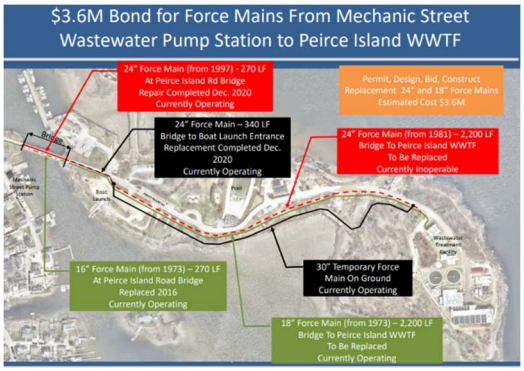
- Study in the fields of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM)
- Study in the Arts
- Study in Career Technology (Trades)
- Study in Higher Education, generally

- In recognition of athletic accomplishment

All applicants should review the criteria in the 2022 Scholarship Booklet: https://tinyurl.com/2p89744j and follow the instructions for the online application process outlined here: https://tinyurl.com/2escyvz7



REC DEPT SPRING/SUMMER PROGRAM AND CAMP INFORMATION! -- Spring/Summer info NOW AVAILABLE on the Rec Dept webpage: https://www.cityofportsmouth.com/recreation Printed copies of the program guide also available at City Hall, the library and at all Recreation facilities. **SPRING PROGRAM REGISTRATION now open! Summer Program/Camp Registration opens TODAY for residents** and Mon Mar 7 for non-residents. **INDOOR POOL SPRING SWIM LESSON REGISTRATION now open for residents.** Opens Mon Feb 28 for non-residents.



PEIRCE ISLAND ROAD WORK FOR SEWER FORCE MAINS PROJECT -- Work continues on the project to replace the force mains to the Peirce Island Wastewater Treatment Facility. https://www.cityofportsmouth.com/publicworks/peirce-island-sewer-force-mains-project That work requires closing Peirce Island Road, parking and trail access beyond the Outdoor Pool, on a daily basis, 7 am to 4 pm. The public is advised that access is obstructed in the area past the pool.



PLOWABLE SNOW EXPECTED BY FRI FEB 25. SIGN UP TO RECEIVE SNOW PARKING BAN ALERTS -- Sign up for text and/or email notices in advance, when a snow parking ban is declared, and when it is lifted. Click here: https://tinyurl.com/2p8zrup7 Snow Phone Hotline: 603.766.7669 Snow parking bans are initiated when 3+ inches of snow are expected, so that DPW plows can operate effectively. The City tries to alert residents of a parking ban in advance to allow them time to move their vehicles to the City garages (flat resident rate of $3 in Foundry and $5 in Hanover) while accommodating normal business hours. **Once the parking ban is lifted, residents have TWO HOURS grace period to move their cars out of the garages before normal rates resume.** DPW crews also work to clear sidewalks as quickly and effectively as possible, with priority given to routes to schools.

AARP TAX PREP ASSISTANCE AVAILABLE AARP Tax Prep is drop-off only this year. Envelopes are available at the Senior Activity Center and Portsmouth Public Library, and drop-offs should be made at the Senior Center ONLY, February 1 – April 10, during the following times:

- Sundays, 11 am – 12 noon
- Tuesdays, 4-5 pm

For detailed instructions on what you need for filing, click here: https://tinyurl.com/2p87ee45 As the 2021 Tax Year filing period opens, the IRS is encouraging taxpayers to file electronically. They estimate that refunds on electronic filings without errors will be processed in 21 days, but caution the IRS still has a backlog of 6 million unprocessed returns.



NH DHHS REVISES HOURS FOR DAILY WALK-IN VACCINATION & BOOSTER CLINICS – Rochester, Spaulding Commons, 306 N. Main Street. NEW HOURS: Mon-Sat, 12 noon- 7pm, closed on Sundays. For additional local pharmacies and same-day sites, click here: https://tinyurl.com/kbvemrbk
NH Dept of Public Health expects to keep this fixed site in place through March 2022.

A NOTE ON NH DHHS DATA TRACKING -- On February 10, NH DHHS reported they are in the process of reworking how they report COVID-19 infection incidence and are currently working through a backlog, so **their NH Dashboard** is not fully up-to-date. NH DHHS expects to have a better sense of how to present data and community transmission "in a couple of weeks" but recommends watching the trends rather than individual data points.

NOTE ON INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL – Unlike CDC, NH DHHS does NOT recommend a 5-day quarantine following international travel or for those who are exposed to COVID-19. Quarantine is recommended ONLY if the infected person is part of your household and all are unvaccinated.

FREE TEST KITS BY MAIL -- Order free at-home COVID-19 tests from the Federal government website: https://www.covidtests.gov/ which also offers 'how to test' instructions.

NH SOURCES FOR FREE AT-HOME TESTING KITS – To order a free kit, visit: https://learn.vaulthealth.com/nh/
For a list provided by NH DHHS of FDA-Emergency Use Authorized at-home antigen test kits, click here: https://tinyurl.com/ymzjbj2r

FREE COVID-19 TESTING SITE AT FOX RUN MALL IN NEWINGTON–Note: This site is closed when school is closed because of weather. Open 7 days a week, 9 am to 3 pm in the parking lot behind the JC Penney store. 48-hour results. For other free testing centers, click here: https://www.cityofportsmouth.com/city/testing-faqs

BOOSTERS FOR HOMEBOUND INDIVIDUALS –Call On-Site Medical Services, the company contracted by NH to provide homebound boosters, at 603-338-9292 or book an appointment online at the On-Site Medical website: https://www.on-sitemedservices.com/

WEEKLY FREE LUNCH REMINDERS:

- **Middle Street Baptist Church –** Seacoast Community Lunch brown bag lunches from the parking lot (18 Court St..), 12 noon to 1 pm on Wednesdays. For more information call 603-436-2337 or email lunch@middle.st
- **St. John's Church --** Common Table bag lunch pickup in the St. John's parking lot (100 Chapel St.) Thurs, 12 noon to 1 pm.

GATHER COMMUNITY MARKET, FRIDAYS, 10 am – 1 pm – A FREE market for all. No paperwork. No ID. No one is ever turned away. Located at the NH National Guard building, 801 McGee Drive in Portsmouth.

GRANTS FOR ARTISTS! The NH Council on the Arts reminds artists of two grant programs currently accepting applications:
NH CARES Artist-Led Project Grants
Grants to individual artists for specific, definable projects that connect artists and organizations to local initiatives. This program will support employment opportunities for artists impacted by COVID-19 by building new structures and partnerships that will help to sustain New Hampshire's creative sector. **Deadline: March 4, 2022.**
Artist Entrepreneurial Grant

WORK FOR THE CITY OF PORTSMOUTH! To review job postings and benefits, click here. *For example, one of the current job openings is: Water/Sewer Laborer*.
The City offers a generous compensation and benefits package that includes retirement, generous paid time off including vacation, holidays, medical & dental insurance, flexible spending account, professional development, career growth, longevity incentives, and more! For details and to apply, click here: https://www.cityofportsmouth.com/hr/work

PORTSMOUTH NH 400 ACCEPTING OFFICIAL PROGRAM PARTNER APPLICATIONS – Organizations, groups and anymore planning a Portsmouth NH 400 celebration program, project or event is invited to submit an Official Program Partner Application.
https://tinyurl.com/mw5664bm
The goals of the Application Process are:

- To help Portsmouth NH 400 Management Team keep track of events, projects and programs (including any fund-raising efforts in 2022)
- To maintain a central calendar on the PortsmouthNH400.org website

- To connect organizations and artists who seem to be working on similar themes and ideas
- To coordinate fund-, fun- and friend-raising efforts
- To coordinate marketing efforts

Learn more, get involved, volunteer, donate! For more details, visit:
https://www.PortsmouthNH400.org

EMERGENCY RENTAL & UTILITIES ASSISTANCE – The **NH Emergency Rental Assistance Program** (NHERAP) provides funds to renters who cannot pay their rent and utilities during the pandemic. The program works with tenants and landlords. Program changes as of October 1, 2021:

- Households may qualify for assistance for past-due and future rent and utility payments for a period not to exceed 18 months.
- At least one person in the household must have qualified for unemployment benefits, had their income reduced, had significant costs, or had other financial hardship during the pandemic. Certain income requirements must be met.

WHAT THE PROGRAM COVERS

- Past-due rent including reasonable late and legal fees.
- Three months of future rent payments if needed for housing stability.
- Utilities, such as electricity, home heating costs, water, sewer, trash.
- Other housing-related costs such as internet and relocation expenses (including rental application fees, utility hook-up fees, and security deposits).
- Households may qualify for utility assistance even if they do not receive or need rental assistance.

For more information on whether you qualify and how to apply for emergency funds available to renters in NH, click here: https://www.capnh.org/covid19 The Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB) has also launched a tool (click here: https://tinyurl.com/4hawaxf4) that allows renters and landlords to find rental assistance programs in their area. Applications are handled through NH Community Action Partnership (CAP).



RECENTLY UPDATED:

- **VACCINATION FAQs**, click here: https://tinyurl.com/4smxnjf7
- **TESTING FAQs,** click here: https://tinyurl.com/57vhfbhx
- **COVID-19 TREATMENT FAQs,** click here

KIDS AND COVID FAQs, click here

POST-VACCINATION FAQs – For the latest information on breakthrough infections, boosters and vaccine effectiveness against the Omicron variant, click here: https://tinyurl.com/uurbmrse

VACCINE DEVELOPMENT BACKGROUND – For more information on how the COVID-19 vaccines were developed, tested and approved, click here. https://tinyurl.com/3yhreymk

PROOF-OF-VACCINATIONS: What should you do if you discover your vaccination is not recorded properly in the NH DHHS database? Or if you need more than your vaccination card because some travel destinations require the full record? Contact NHIIS (NH Immunization Information System) at 603-271-4028, by email at nhiis.support@dhhs.nh.gov or click here for the NH DHHS website https://tinyurl.com/rva3tphc for the immunization information system (NHIIS). On this site, select the correction forms for your PCP to verify your vaccine card, DOB, etc. You will need to get the form notarized and before sending it back to NHIIS. Once your record is corrected, you can request an official vaccine and immunization record. For more answers to Frequently Asked Questions, click here**.**

I LOST MY PROOF-OF-VACCINATION CARD. NOW WHAT? All vaccination records are kept on file in the CDC National Health Interview Survey (NHIS) system. NH DHHS advises that you can replace a lost vaccination card in either of two ways:

1. Download and complete the vaccination card replacement request form here: https://tinyurl.com/4pj4chcz Note that the completed form MUST BE NOTARIZED before sending it back to NH DHHS.

2. If your healthcare provider has access to the NHIIS, ask him/her to print out the record directly from NHIIS.

3. **A NOTE ON COMMERCIAL TESTING CHARGES – If a** commercial urgent care center says that COVID tests are not going to be covered by insurance, NH DHHS advises that **patients may request the urgent care center submit a bill to the carrier under the code Z20.828.** This covers suspected exposure to viral communicable disease. Their advice is based on this CDC guidance: "If the provider documents 'suspected,' 'possible,' 'probable,' or 'inconclusive' COVID-19, do not assign code U07.1. Assign a code(s) explaining the reason for encounter (such as fever) or Z20.828, Contact with and (suspected) exposure to other viral communicable diseases." **Private health insurers are now required to cover up to eight home COVID-19 tests per month for people on their plans.** Under the new policy, Americans are able to either purchase home testing kits for free under their insurance or submit receipts for the tests for reimbursement, up to the monthly per-person limit.

For DHHS VACCINE FAQs, click here:
https://tinyurl.com/tkvaksnw

For Testing FAQs click here.
https://www.cityofportsmouth.com/city/testing-faqs

For Ventilation FAQs click here.
https://www.cityofportsmouth.com/city/ventilation-faqs

For more information, visit City's page on COVID-19: https://tinyurl.com/2ywcu6ab

CITY HALL FACEBOOK PAGE:
Like and follow us to get news as it's posted:
https://www.facebook.com/CityHallPortsmouthNH

Want to know more about what's happening in the City? Click on the QR code or link below to sign up for the City Newsletter and/or individual email lists for projects. https://tinyurl.com/y2p67par