



Message from First Selectman Bindelglass

Update for 2/19/2021

Good afternoon,

Ah, winter in Easton. While we are all getting a little tired of it, there is no denying that the recent snowfalls highlight the true beauty of our town. As winter has its grip on us and COVID has us all fatigued, it is very important to remember and acknowledge our anxiety and fear. With the limited in-person support of family and friends, it is normal to feel isolated. **REACH OUT CONNECTICUT** is a free support line for those in Connecticut who are struggling with sleepless nights, money worries or perhaps a scratchy throat or cough that could indicate COVID. You are not alone in this. If you or a family member or a friend is struggling, please reach out 1-844-TALK-4CT (1-844-825-5428). This is a free emotional-support line and is available seven days a week. Attached to my message today is a flyer with more important information about this valuable service.

As we are vaccinating more and more of our older residents, the COVID-19 numbers continue to decline across the state, although there was a small uptick in Easton for the rate per 100,000. It is clear that the virus will still be with us for months, however, the state is moving toward opening up further. I have met with all of the departments in town to do the same. I am particularly proud that our Senior Center has navigated the pandemic in a way that for our seniors, we have continued to provide valuable assistance and opportunities for social interaction safely. You will be hearing from Park and Recreation and the Library soon with more programming and activities. I have been discussing how to make Town Hall functions more normal as well.

Last night at the Board of Selectmen meeting, we discussed holding a Special Town Meeting on March 15. The town meeting is the legislative body of Easton and without it, it is difficult for us to function. There are several items that need a timely resolution. Some are sensitive to our budget. The tentative plan is to hold a virtual meeting, as Redding did last night. However, I want to insure that every citizen has the right to voice their opinions on the matters at hand. Given a virtual or even a hybrid format, I do not think that we can do that at the town meeting by itself. I cannot guarantee the fairness of a vote conducted virtually.

Therefore, all questions will be adjourned to a machine vote. This is the fairest way that we can assure that all Eastonites have the ability to participate in these decisions. The format will be finalized and the agenda will be set at the next Board of Selectmen meeting on March 4. Items that will be considered are joining the Westport Weston Health District, providing Senior Tax Relief, appropriating funds for our Police Department body and dash cameras, and approving an ordinance change to increase the stipend paid to our volunteer Fire and EMS workers. Other items may be added which will be discussed at our next meeting. Information on all agenda items will be posted on

the town website.

March 11, is the presentation for newcomers. It will begin virtually at 7:30 p.m. We will try and provide all the information we can and to include at least contact information for every organization in town. Please contact me if you have information for your group or organization that you want to share. I do not want to make this a three-hour session but want to be as inclusive as possible. I apologize in advance if we leave anybody out but we will post the presentation and we can add to it at any time.

We are accepting bids and will decide on a contractor for the “one-lane bridge” on South Park Avenue. Bids are due in on March 10 and will be reviewed by the state prior to acceptance. It is our plan to begin construction in the spring so that the bridge can be finished before winter. My being involved from start to finish, my hope is to have a smoother process. Unfortunately, we are going to arbitration next week for the final settlement on the recently completed South Park Avenue Bridge.

It has been brought to my attention multiple times that the tree removal service hired by UI is seen to be quite unproductive. There are numerous complaints that they are often seen sitting in their truck and not making much progress in tree removal. I will address that with UI. Rest assured that they are not being paid by the town, so it is not your tax dollars being wasted, but they still cause inconveniences and I hope to be able to improve that.

Launa Riley, our Assistant Assessor is leaving us and we wish her well and thank her for

her service. Special thanks to Terry Calgreen for keeping the area around town hall and the Library safe and clear of snow, and of course to our Department of Public Works again for their seemingly endless efforts for snow removal.

Have a great weekend.

Dave Bindelglass

https://www.eastonct.gov/sites/g/files/vyhlf3071/f/news/reach_out_connecticut_0.pdf