

Message from First Selectman Bindelglass



Update for 3/5/2021

Good afternoon,

As the days are getting longer and the sun is feeling warmer, I am happy to report that we have made good progress on the COVID-19 front. For the two-week period ending Feb. 27, the per 100,000 rate in Easton is 9.5, one of the best rates in the state.

Connecticut, in general, is starting to open back up. Our Senior Center services are expanding. Our schools continue to function well. We will increase the number of in-person meetings and the services that can be provided in Town Hall by appointment. Yesterday, we had our second vaccination (second shot only) clinic at the Easton Library, run by the Westport Weston Health District.

We continue to assist our residents in signing up for vaccine appointments as they become eligible. The town website has information on the many ways to sign up. The system uploads new venues and new appointments daily, so if you are trying to get an appointment and can't, be persistent and keep on trying! Remember, if you have already received your vaccination shot or shots, you are not 100% protected. You must still be

vigilant about had washing, mask wearing and social distancing.

This is the time of year when town government is focused on developing next year's budget. The Board of Finance has been meeting to review all of the town's budgets, including the Easton Board of Education's budget next week. The Public Hearing on the budget will be March 22 at 7 p.m. Last night at the Board of Selectmen's meeting we set the agenda for the Special Town Meeting on March 23 at 7 p.m. at Samuel Staples Elementary School.

This c will be adjourned to a machine vote on the issues presented on that agenda on March 30 from 6 a.m. to 8 p.m. With the relaxation of the state restrictions, we will be able to have the meetings in-person, although the number of attendees will be restricted by Governor's Orders. The number of attendees may be fluid based on how restrictions are rolled back.

Keep in mind that there were always limitations on the size of the meeting by fire code restrictions in the space. The meeting is being held now because some of the issues are time sensitive, budget related and should be voted on to finalize the budget submitted to the town. We will publish the agenda next week. A notice will be sent to residents by postcard and by electronic notification.

We have noticed a number of unleashed dogs on the Morehouse Park and Samuel Staples Elementary School properties leaving behind canine excrement. Kids play on the property, so please, as a courtesy to your neighbors, pick up after your dogs.

Don't forget the Virtual New Residents Welcome Program next Thursday, March 11 at 7 p.m. We look forward to welcoming the many folks who have recently moved to Easton. If you are an organization in town that would like to be included in the presentation, please send one or two slides for a Power Point Presentation to my office in care of Janet Haller at jhaller@eastonct.gov.

Be safe and have a happy weekend!

Dave Bindelglass

Between Three Chairs: Superintendent Updates ER9 Board Chairs on Covid Vaccines for School Staff



This is the first installment published in the Easton Courier of Behind Three Chairs, virtual video conferencing between ER9 Superintendent Dr. Rydell Harrison and the Easton, Redding and Region 9 boards of education chairmen. The Covid-19 pandemic thwarted in-person meetings to communicate information and updates to the three school boards and the Easton and Redding communities. It led to improved virtual video conferencing, including Zoom meetings. In this video, Dr. Harrison explains the process for vaccinating ER9 teachers and staff to Jon Stinson, Easton Board of Education; Christopher Parkin, Redding Board of Education, and Todd Johnston, Region 9 Board of Education.

Between Three Chairs, Feb. 26, 2021.

Message from First Selectman Bindelglass



Update for 2/26/2021

Good evening,

We continue to see improvements in the COVID-19 numbers. While three more Eastonites were diagnosed with the virus for the week ending February 20, the rate per 100,000 fell to 14.3 for the two weeks ending that day. We continue to vaccinate more people across the state. More people will soon become eligible including in short order our teachers. This is good news and points towards more normalcies in all of our lives.

Should you need access to Town Hall, we are making appointments in most departments. Please call ahead to arrange, as we still have restrictions in place. The Tax Department remains open to walk-ins daily with the exception of 1 p.m. – 2 p.m. daily. We plan to gradually phase in more activities over the next few weeks.

Improving COVID-19 numbers allow us to plan for a Special Town Meeting to discuss some time sensitive items that will need to go to referendum. We will hold a Public

Hearing by ZOOM on March 4 to discuss joining the Westport Weston Health District. All of the information regarding the Health District was shown at two public presentations and has been posted for the last year on the Health Department page on our website. This will be the official Public Hearing.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82433065195?pwd=MUC5djRzNjdWenk4ampZZnA1M2RIUT09>

Meeting ID 824 3306 5195

Password 06612

The Special Town Meeting will be held on March 15 at 7 p.m., subject to final approval at the March 4 Board of Selectmen meeting. There are strong feelings in town about both in-person and virtual meetings. Therefore, we have decided that this meeting will be held virtually and in-person in a hybrid format. I am not confident that we can fairly count votes in this hybrid fashion. All agenda items addressed at the meeting will be decided by a machine vote (referendum) on March 23 from 6 a.m. - 8 p.m. at Samuel Staples Elementary School. I believe that this will be the fairest way to conduct Town Meeting business which insures its role as the legislative body of Easton.

If you go back and look historically, any Special Town Meeting and Annual Town Meeting consisted of all eligible voters in town coming to a meeting and voting on the issues of the day. I believe this is as close as we can come to achieving what was intended for the town meetings when our forefathers envisioned them. The agenda will be finalized at the next Board of Selectmen meeting on March 4 at 7:30 p.m. The following are the likely issues:

1. Approval of an appropriation to purchase body and dash cams for Easton Police Department as mandated by state law.
2. Approval of an ordinance revision increasing the stipend for our volunteer Fire Fighters and EMS volunteers.
3. Approval of the town to join the Westport Weston Health District.

4. A revision regarding Senior Tax Relief for the Elderly Ordinance.
5. Approval of an appropriation to fund Easton's portion of the cost of a multiuse walkway along Sport Hill Road, to supplement the grant of federal funding. The project was vetted extensively at a design charrette in November of 2019, and recommended by the Board of Finance.
6. Approval of the sale of approximately 19 acres at 22 South Park Avenue to the Aspetuck Land Trust.
7. An opinion regarding the town's position on the Board of Selectmen Resolution declaring racism to be a public health emergency.

Please understand that more information will be forthcoming on all of these matters shortly. This is not intending to be a detailed presentation of these issues. The final details of the format of the Special Town Meeting and Annual Town Meeting will be made public as well.

Our appointed attorney, Public Works Director and Deputy Director and I participated in a mediation proceeding this week to close out the South Park Avenue Bridge Replacement Project. I believe the settlement which is being finalized is favorable to the town.

For all of our new neighbors, I will continue to remind you about our VIRTUAL New Resident Presentation on March 11, at 7:30 p.m.

You may access the ZOOM presentation here:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85171107487?pwd=M0ZGWnU0bCsr dm02ckVkMnFLaXRlUT09>

Meeting ID: 851 7110 7487

Passcode: 06612

I wish you all a wonderful weekend!

Dave Bindelglass

Message from First Selectman Bindelglass



Update for 12/12/2021

Good afternoon,

It has been a snowy week with more to come!

The focus in Town Hall has shifted to the annual town budget. I have been meeting with all of the departments to review their respective budgets. The Board of Education has begun their budget review as well.

The budget referendum process will begin with a Board of Finance meeting March 2, with subsequent public hearing, followed by the Annual Town Meeting and ultimately a machine vote on the budget. The agendas for all meetings and their ZOOM links can be found on the town website.

The Board of Education has special meetings to review the budget, and they can be watched or viewed after being recorded on the Easton, Redding and Region 9 website.

The Board of Finance meetings can be followed live or seen recorded on our website and on Gov. Channel 79. Ultimately, the budget is voted on by the town. It is all of our responsibilities to be informed and to vote!

People ages 65 and older are **now** eligible to get the COVID-19 vaccine. Instructions for signing up are on the **website**. The current count of people who have tested positive in Easton is 313. For the two weeks ending Feb. 6, the per 100,000 rate was 19. Our schools, library and Senior Center remain open.

The Westport Weston Health District will be vaccinating people on March 4 at the library for **second doses only**. (Only those who have already had a first dose and are waiting for their second may sign up.) Making an appointment for your second dose is the same as for the first dose through the VAMS system. You should not wait long after getting your first dose to arrange for an appointment for your second dose as these appointments fill up quickly. Again, instructions are available on the **town website**.

Remember that March 11 is the virtual program for all of our new residents. Mark your calendar. We will begin at 7:30 p.m. It should be very informative.

Amazingly, Monday, I will be attending my third 100th birthday party for an Eastonite. Happy Birthday Ann Fiyalka! Amelia Earhart would be proud!

More snow is expected in the next weekend. During our last storm, there was a collision between a town plow truck and a motorist at the intersection of Morehouse Road and Center Road. This underscores the need for all of us to be careful and to stay off the roads during storms so that our Department of Public Works crew can do their jobs. It is hard enough when the roads are empty. Please be careful and considerate. Stay safe, stay warm and have a great weekend.

Dave Bindelglass

Message from First Selectman Bindelglass



Update for 1/29/2021

Good afternoon,

It seems we are really settling into winter here in Easton. This week's snow led to another great effort with clean up by our Department of Public Works. In order to combat the dreariness of winter and to continue the celebration of our 175th birthday, there is a trivia bee tonight at 7 p.m. Please join us. For details, please click **here** for the Park and Rec website link.

Please check the forecast as it is supposed to be extremely cold this weekend. We are closely monitoring the situation and could open a warming center if necessary at the Senior Center and EMS headquarters. Please prepare, and also look out for your neighbors, especially seniors.

We continue to vaccinate our 75-and-over seniors, and I believe that we have aided most of our seniors who needed help to sign up for appointments. This represents a herculean effort by our Senior Center, providing outstanding support for our seniors in need.

As of today, there are 286 cases of Covid 19 in Easton since the start of the pandemic with 15 new cases in the week ending Jan. 23 for a per 100,000 rate of 34.2. This is great news — the curve is slowly bending in the direction we want. We still have a long way to go, so still please be careful. In terms of the vaccine. Supply is still not consistent, unfortunately, but we are diligently vaccinating as many people as we possibly can. If you would like to follow those numbers, you can do so at www.ct.gov.

There will be appointments available in Easton on Feb. 4 (currently full, but there may be cancellations) and March 4 at the Library through the health district. Unfortunately, there is no way to make these appointments specifically for our residents, so the key is to check frequently and try to schedule for these slots through the VAMS website, if that is how you signed up. (Many of you signed up through the Yale website, so this is not an option.) If we move to vaccinating the 65-75 age group, this may become an option when you are allowed to register.

I want to take this opportunity to again commend the Easton Senior Center for continuing to safely and carefully provide some activities for our seniors. Mental health and socialization are critical, particularly for our seniors with limited social options. It has been difficult to balance safety and the need to provide activities and services, but we have done just that. For our children, we continue with in-person learning, which is also key in our kid's growth, development and well being.

I continue to get complaints about noise, litter and the upkeep of neighboring properties. I, and my colleagues on the Board of Selectmen, believe that these situations are best managed by honest and open communication between neighbors. We hope that our citizens will take that to heart. Respect for each other is what makes us such a great community. We are also reaching out to our new Eastonites, and hope to have some welcome and educational events for them moving forward.

Finally, the annual audit of our town finances was presented to the Board of Finance this week by our new auditors PKF O'Connor Davies. They found no issues with our

accounting, so kudos to Director of Finance Christine Calvert. Our overall financial strength is good. Despite the pandemic, we were able to keep spending under budget, and collected more revenue than was predicted.

Heading into budget season, this is good news. For our new residents, the budget process is the single biggest undertaking in our town government, so I urge you to follow the Board of Finance agendas and minutes on the town website, Subscribe to News. You are also able to access links to attend their meetings via Zoom.

If you have children, follow the Board of Education meetings and their budget process, the Region 9 Board of Education, or any other town services that you feel strongly about. The decision to accept the town budget will ultimately be yours by referendum, so the more you know, the better the process. More about that to come.

Otherwise, stay warm and stay safe.

Dave Bindelglass