

From the Supervisor's Desk

For the past two years the forsythia in our yard did not bloom. The branches went from buds in early spring, to full leaves. This year the rambling branches are covered with flowers, bright yellow in the sunshine. Kind of a consolation in these strange, hard times.

Last night for the first time, we conducted a monthly Town Board meeting via Zoom. It may be the first of many such meetings - that is impossible to know.

In the midst of all this, we are doing everything we can to keep Town government up and running, and responsive.

Although Town Hall has been closed to the public since Thursday, March 19, essential employees have continued to work in Town Hall as necessary but also remotely. Both Lee Heim - our Code Enforcement Officer, and Lynn Hotaling, our Assessor, have kept in touch with the public through emails and telephone. Lynn has also been planning Grievance Day, which will be May 27. Last night the Town Board agreed that Grievance Day will be conducted via video conference. Details will be available soon on the [Town website](#).

We are especially indebted to our Town Clerk Lynn Connolly. She has been in Town Hall available to issue licenses, answer questions, and console callers. If you need her assistance you can reach her by telephone or email. You can also send her documents through the mail or by leaving them in the drop box outside Town Hall. It is checked six days a week.

Highway Superintendent William Gregory has been foresighted in confronting the impact of the virus on his crew. Understanding that the illness of one member of the crew could result in the quarantine of his entire crew, Bill proposed a plan where his crew would be divided into two teams which would work on alternating schedules. One team works while the other team is "on call." The Town Board approved this approach, and it has worked well.

New York State has prohibited most construction, and our ZBA and Planning Board have cancelled their meetings until further notice. We will continue to reassess whether and how these Boards may meet in the weeks to come.

I have been attending meetings of the Columbia County Board of Supervisors through conference calls and video-conferencing. We are meeting this Thursday to discuss the financial and budget impact of this crisis on local government. It is projected that sales tax revenue will decrease dramatically. Although CHIPs (highway assistance) was included in the 2020 state budget those funds will not be released without approval by the State Budget Director. As I know more about how our Town will be impacted I will report back to you.

The Chairman of the Board, Matt Murell is making daily press releases to the public, many of which I have reposted on Facebook or in the special editions of the Copake Connection. The County has been frustrated with the lack of PPE available. In a recent press release the chairman wrote: "It's concerning that our state and federal leaders are saying that there's plenty of PPE for everyone, when clearly there is not. There's a disconnect going on somewhere."

Every afternoon the Columbia County Department of Health has issued daily statistics on their Facebook page.

As of yesterday at 2:30 pm the Department of Health announced the following: In Columbia County 9 community members have died. There are 97 positive cases. 40 of the 97 cases have recovered. 10 of the positive cases are hospitalized with 4 of them in the ICU. 726 residents have been tested. 101 residents are in mandatory quarantine and 23 under precautionary quarantine. There are 9 residents with suspected, not tested cases. On Fridays the Board of Supervisors shares statistics as to each Town. As of last Friday, there were 4 positive cases in Copake.

As these numbers grow, the heartache and loss must soon or later become personal. Four weeks ago, when the Town Board met in Town Hall we thought that washing our hands was enough. Now we know that washing hands is just the beginning. We must leave six feet between us. The CDC has recommended we wear a mask when we go out in public. As of April 12, the Governor mandated that all essential employees must wear masks if they work with the public.

Ultimately the best advice is that we each stay at home.

A month ago when the Town Board last met, it was impossible to imagine what life would be like just 30 days later. Now we meet no longer shoulder to shoulder, but still united in purpose.

We ended our meeting last night with a moment of silence for the nine residents of Columbia County who are no longer with us.

I am available by phone- 518-329-1234 Ext 1. Or send an email to CopakeSupervisor@Fairpoint.net

Stay well.

Jeanne E. Mettler
Supervisor