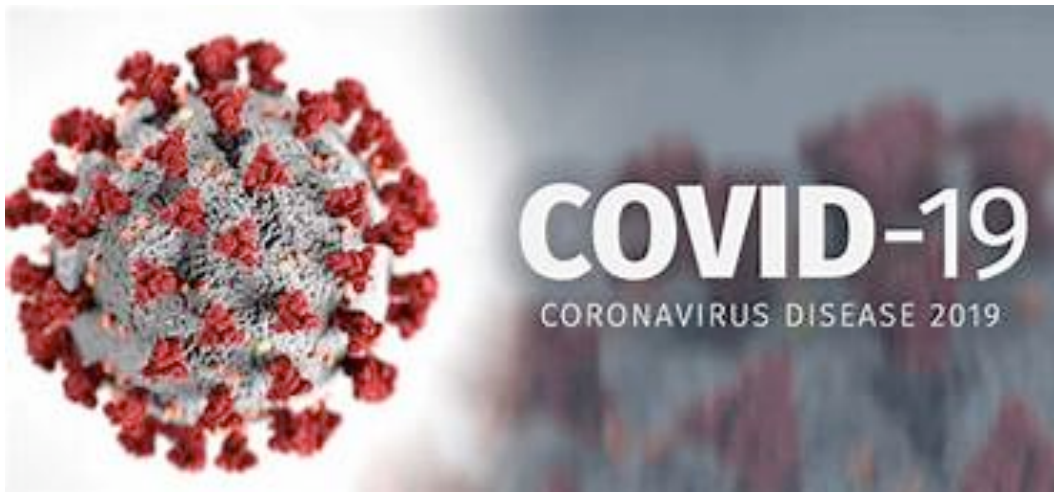


# *Connecticut Association of Assessing Officers*

*Assessors Meet the Challenge of COVID-19*



*CAAO Research / Historian Committee*

*June 2020 Initial publication*

*August 2020 Update*

## Is History Repeating Itself?



Policemen in Seattle, Washington, wearing masks made by the Red Cross, during the influenza pandemic, December 1918 [National Archives](#)

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## Dedication

This publication is dedicated to those front line workers who have tirelessly worked to save lives, cared for patients, fed the masses, protected us, delivered the goods during this pandemic. They include doctors, hospital staff, nurses, first responders, pharmacy staff, police, fire fighters, EMT's, delivery drivers, restaurant workers, grocery employees, and truck drivers. Without their dedication during these uncertain times who knows where we would be.



## Pandemic Vocabulary

The COVID-19 pandemic has created a new set of vocabulary used by the medical community, news media and those on the front line. Some of the words include: new normal, shelter in place, stay home order, stay safe, stay healthy, stay caring, stay involved, we live in uncertain times, we are all into this together, social distancing, wash your hands, work from home, wear your masks, food bank, telecommunications, virtual town meetings, webinar, video conferencing, fever meter, one shopper per family, avoid touching your eye, nose and face, virus apex, first responders, hero's work here, contact tracing, flatten the curve, asymptomatic, caregivers, personal protective equipment (PPE), N95 Masks, respirators, medical ventilators, antibodies, distance learning, touch-less payments, plastic dividers, one-way aisles, six foot markings.

## Connecticut Assessors Meet the Challenge of COVID-19 Crisis

This has been an historic period not only for CAAO but also for the entire world. The coronavirus has turned our world upside down in few months. It is a worldwide pandemic of epic proportions comparable only to the Spanish Flu also known as the influenza pandemic of 1918. These are unpredictable times for all while the pandemic is gripping the nation.

What is the COVID-19? COVID-19 is a respiratory condition caused by a coronavirus. In the early days of the outbreak, the media, medical experts and health professional were referring to the coronavirus as a catch-all term to discuss the outbreak of the illness. But a coronavirus is a type of virus, rather than the virus or disease it causes. To alleviate the confusion the World Health Organization has named the new disease COVID-19 (COronaVIrus Disease 2019). Having a name matters to prevent the use of other names that can be inaccurate.<sup>1</sup> The disease was first identified in Wuhan, China, an industrial city of 11 million, in December 2019. The first laboratory-confirmed case in the United States was January 21, 2020 in the state of Washington.<sup>2</sup> Connecticut's first positive case for COVID-19 was announced on March 8, 2020. As a result of this virus it has been reported that about 718,334 people around the world, as of August 8, 2020, have died from this disease. There were some 159,926 deaths in the United States and 4,441 Connecticut. The first fatality in Connecticut was March 17, 2020.

Due to an increase of the COVID-19 cases in Connecticut, Governor Ned Lamont issued an Executive Order on March 10, 2020 that stated, "I issued declaration of public health and civil preparedness emergencies, proclaiming a state of emergency throughout the State of Connecticut as a result of the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) outbreak in the United States and confirmed spread in Connecticut." Over the next couple of weeks, Governor Lamont issued a number of Executive Orders that include prohibiting gathering of 5 people or more for social and recreational activities, restrict entrance into nursing homes and similar facilities to protect people who are most vulnerable to COVID-19. On March 15, 2020 he issued an Executive Order cancelling classes in public schools. On March 16, 2020 he issued an Executive Order closing all bars and restaurants to all service except food and non-alcoholic beverages takeout and delivery, closing gyms, fitness centers and movie theaters. On May 5, 2020 Governor Lamont announced that all public schools would remain closed for the rest of this academic year.

The Executive Order that had the greatest effect on the economy was the Governor Lamont's order of March 20, 2020. This was his "Stay Safe, Stay Home" order directing all non-essential businesses and not-for-profit entities in Connecticut to reduce their in person workforces at any workplace location by 100% not later than Monday, March 23, 2020 at 8:00 p.m. Public health experts recommended physical distancing and avoiding all non-essential travel. A national emergency had also been declared in the United States.

With town halls and restaurants closed and the order for people to physical distance from each other CAAO meetings and seminars started to be canceled in the early party of March 2020. The

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<sup>1</sup> Information from an article written by the World Health Organization (WHO).

<sup>2</sup> He was a 35 year old male who had returned to the United States five days earlier from Wuhan, China

major changes for CAAO was the postponement of the CAAO Spring meeting from May 5, 2020 to June 23, 2020. In an update on the CAAO Hot Line on May 15, 2020 the June 23<sup>rd</sup> Annual Spring Meeting has been cancelled. The annual Assessors' School was postponed from May 31, 2020 to August 9, 2020 and then finally cancelled on the UConn campus for 2020 entirely. This was the first time that the school was not held at the UConn campus since the school started in 1944.

As a result of a national emergency being declared March 20<sup>th</sup> in the United States with only essential businesses open, the unemployment rate in the United States began to swell to the highest level since a period in the Great Depression in 1933. The unemployment rate in 1933 was 24.9%. It was reported in May that there were some 40 million people filing for unemployment claims in the United States.

The CAAO Research/Historian Committee wanted to record the events for future generations. We have asked Connecticut assessors to record their own experiences in running their assessors office during these critical times. Listed below are the comments from Connecticut assessors. The Research/Historian Committee sent out a flyer on the CAAO Hot Line April 21<sup>st</sup> and had it on the front page of the May 2020 *Assessoreporter*. There were 14 questions. Not all of the questions had to be answered. The listing of the town represents the comments from the assessor of that town.

#### Kudos to Assessors

As you digest the comments of Connecticut assessors on the following pages, you have to be overwhelmed by the accomplishments they have made in a short period of time. Being transferred from a person-to-person contact with the taxpayer to the world of electronic magic. The exceptional accomplishments of these assessors during these uncertain times will go down in CAAO history as one of the most challenging periods of all times.

### **Assessors Questions and Answers to COVID-19 Pandemic**

**All responses were prior to May 14, 2020  
Some answers overlap with other questions.**

#### **How are assessors dealing with the running of their offices?**

*BETHLEHEM: Part time office – Assessor and one staff member*

*BRISTOL: Bristol is staggering staff coverage office functions as City Hall is completely closed to the public. 50% of the daily work is accomplished by staff at home with remote access to the city server via vpn connection. Permit work is being completed through CAMA cloud data software iPad technology, and office coverage is handling the main office telephone line while individual staff phone coverage is routed from the city phone extension to their personal cell phones. 2 employees have health concerns so they are permanently working from home while remaining 4 staff members cover City hall office functions*

*BROOKFIELD: I am the one working in the office 10-3 the town is open, but not to the public*

*COLCHESTER: The entire Town Hall is closed to the public. The Assessor's office has three full time employees including the Assessor. We are currently only allowing one employee in the office at a time. Currently, I am coming into the office each day.*

*EAST HARTFORD: As the Assessor I have been working from the office.*

*EAST WINDSOR: In the East Windsor Office: We are typically a 3-person office. The supervisors only are reporting into the office and managing phones, emails, mail, fax etc. as an attempt to stay on top of tasks. However, with other departments within the town hall not running at their normal workload, our normal daily activities are less than usual.*

*FAIRFIELD: We have split the office – and half work every other day in the office and the other from home. All have laptops that can connect to their office desktop so they have full functionality.*

*GROTON: Groton is still up & running full speed ahead*

*MERIDEN: City Hall is closed to the public except by appointment. Although we are taking anyone who has made the trip to city hall and are allowing them one at a time in the office. The city has provided a plexiglass screen for interaction with the public.*

*MIDDLETOWN: Middletown City Hall has been closed to the public since March 16, 2020. It is currently scheduled to remain closed until May 24, 2020. In the first two weeks staff generally continued to work in the office, and some choose to work from home. There were still meetings scheduled with the Board of Assessment Appeals at City Hall. One of those meetings, held on the 16th, went on as planned, as there was no direct cancellation issued through the Mayor's office. While there were no issues arising from this meeting, all future meetings were cancelled and rescheduled as teleconference meetings. This presented its own set of issues as the appellants had to be notified on the number to call, meeting code, and procedure. Each Board member was given a separate line to hear appeals. In short this was a logistic nightmare. Some people did not want to use the phone or could not get through, while others had no issue. As a result many had to be rescheduled on more than one occasion. We did not finish the last of the appeals until April 4th.*

*NEW BRITAIN: New Britain's Assessor's Office has continually been asked to report to work during the Coronavirus pandemic. On March 15<sup>th</sup>, City Hall shut down access to the public except for the 1<sup>st</sup> floor of the building. A designated empty office with a separating glass partition on the first floor was staffed on a revolving basis by Assessor staff to answer questions or issues. More than a week later, our office purchased and installed protective glass and microphone systems in our own office to protect our staff from the public. On April 7<sup>th</sup>, City Hall closed to the public. The expected re-opening date to the public is May 12<sup>th</sup> whereby the public will only have access to the first floor of City Hall where protective glass has been installed in all offices to more safely handle transactions.*

*NEW MILFORD: I come into the office everyday. Office is open 9-Noon by appointment only. Initially staff was working from home for 4 weeks via a VPN connection to their computer. I*

*assigned work to staff, mostly clerical activities and responding to inquiries from the public via phone or e-mail.*

*ROXBURY: Part time office – Assessor being the only staff until recently ...the new staff person is not coming back until the office is open to the public*

*SALISBURY: Offices are closed to the public, we are still working in person but staggering staffing.*

*STAMFORD: The Assessors staff has been working remotely from home since March 16th; going into the Office once a week to pick up/drop off work. The Assessors Office is closed to the public. We hold weekly staff meetings using Zoom.*

*VERNON: We are on a modified work hour schedule split into two teams. Team “A” works Monday, Tuesday and every other Wednesday. Team “B” works Thursday, Friday and every other Wednesday.*

*There is a supervisor on each team to oversee daily activities. The Assessor is in daily contact with the office staff by phone.*

*WARREN: Part time office – Assessor is the only staff*

*WEST HAVEN: City Hall is closed to the public with employees working a modified schedule until further notice. The modified schedule is Monday through Thursday 9-5 with no lunch. City Hall is closed every Friday for cleaning. We are working 32 hours and getting paid for 35 hours.*

*WINDSOR: Remotely and in-office*

**What is happening with the office staff?**

*BROOKFIELD: The town bought laptops for everyone and they are working from home*

*COLCHESTER: The clerical assistant is working from home. All phones are sent to her (and she immediately texts me my messages), and she is performing data entry on transfers, elderly (they don't have to file this year due to COVID-19 and get a one year free pass but you still need to enter the data for billing and some people did file new applications and their percentages changed), she is also working on pro-rates for motor vehicles, updating new addresses, responding to general inquiries via email/phone, etc.*

*EAST HARTFORD: The staff has been working from home and coming in to the office periodically.*

*EAST WINDSOR: The Assessor is expected to report to the office for normal business hours – maintaining the office as well as possible. The Assistant Assessor and Assessor Clerk are working from home as best they can. They are doing webinars and free classes that pertain to the assessing industry and customer service. These classes are very limited. There is really no way for them to perform normal assessing duties other than answering emails, due to the need of*

*papers/programs/files that are available only in the office, confidentiality issues of some files and again, the amount of work from other departments that the Assessing office works off of.*

*GROTON: One staff member is out with a medical note; three others are alternating working from home.*

*MANCHESTER: We began rotating staff between working from home and working at the office after March 16, 2020. We had all three part-time staff members in our office (two in Assessment, one in Collection) stop working then as well (temporarily, while still with pay). The Town Hall began being locked then, and closed to the public. The Town issued laptops to our entire full-time staff (9 people) for remote access to Town servers and all applications used by staff. On a typical day, four or five full-time staff are at Town Hall, and the other four or five are working from home. We check-in with the entire staff daily, several times. We are working via phones, email, fax, and our exterior drop box. We have discretion to let customers in if warranted (we occasionally do so). All fieldwork is postponed due to the pandemic, except in emergencies.*

*MERIDEN: The City of Meriden has implemented what is called Platooning. Staff members are working 2.5 days per work to maintain social distancing. I currently have a staff of 5. One member of the staff has chosen to take a leave of absence in order to protect his family. The remaining for staff members are working shifts that allow for 2 people to be scheduled daily. This allows us to stay operational to the public, answer phones and catch up on work.*

*MIDDLETOWN: Under Direction of the Mayor all non-essential staff is on paid leave. Due to the required meetings of the Board of Assessment Appeals, applications for elderly homeowners, tax issues, etc. our office was deemed "essential". At the start of the 2nd week the office switched into teams with "A" team working in the office one week and the "B" team working the next. In the off week staff was expected to maintain contact and productivity working at home by preparing letters to appellants from the Board of Appeals, responding to emails, or processing other paperwork for Elderly Homeowners or motor vehicle adjustments. Although the (actual) working hours, both in office and at home has dropped, this is the policy currently in place.*

*NEW BRITAIN: My office is a staff of 8, including myself. We have been deemed essential by the Mayor and continue to report to work daily.*

*NEW MILFORD: Office staff is back in the office.*

*SALISBURY: Still working, just 1/2 the hours.*

*SEYMOUR: We have an office of 2. Me and my assistant.*

*STAMFORD: Currently, the professional staff is working from home. There are a couple clerks who work 1/2 days in the office twice a week.*

*VERNON: Each staff member receives a full weeks pay and are assigned daily tasks to maintain work flow. The general public is not allowed into the building. We communicate via phone, email and by fax.*



*WEST HAVEN: I have five staff members (6 including me) Five of us are coming to work every day, however starting Monday May 11<sup>th</sup> one employee is taking time off until the kids are done with home schooling. One employee started working modified hours when this pandemic started and then took off time to care for elderly parent who recently passed. I am not sure what the plan is for her in the coming weeks. She has children school age at home as well.*

*WINDSOR: Clerk is off; Assessor and Assistant are rotating days in the office*

**Is everyone still coming into the office to work?**

*BETHLEHEM: The Town Hall is closed to the public. The Assessor goes into the office one day a week and staff member goes in when no one else is there only if necessary.*

*BROOKFIELD: No. I have been dropping off work and picking up the finished product from the workers*

*EAST WINDSOR: No. Only the Assessor. The assistant assessor and assessing clerk are working from home.*

*GROTON: Every other day for staff; every day for assessor*

*MANCHESTER: Part-timers are not coming in at all, full-time staff is rotated between working at Town Hall and working from home.*

*NEW BRITAIN: Everyone is required to report to the office. The City of New Britain does not have a work from home policy.*

*NEW MILFORD: Yes.*

*SALISBURY: Yes.*

*SEYMOUR: The various offices stagger themselves of when we can be in town hall. Ie; the town clerk on Mondays. The collector on Tuesdays. Etc.*

*The assessor's office is in on Wednesday. My assistant is station at the front door with a laptop. Taxpayers are only allowed just inside the door with any documentations they may want to drop off. I am in the assessor's office.*

*VERNON: As stated, we member of the staff has their own responsibilities. Some maintain ownership changes to properties, others record death notices. GIS map work continues based on filings from the Town Clerk. Field inspections continue based on building permits, crumbling foundations and other changes discovered. We provide administration with a daily attendance sheet via email.*

*WARREN: The Town Clerk, First Selectman and his Administrative Assistant are the only other individuals in the Town Hall when the Assessor is there. We practice social distancing and use disinfectant wipes.*

**Does anyone work from home? How?**

*EAST HARTFORD: They work from home on a town issued computer*

*EAST WINDSOR: Yes. See above. Actual access to anything other than Word documents and emails is unavailable so actual assessment work being accomplished at home is limited.*

*GROTON: The town purchased a laptop for everyone who has work that can be processed from home.*

*MANCHESTER: About half the full-time staff works from home daily, via laptop with remote access.*

*MERIDEN: Yes. The assessor is the only one with access for remote working as the city requires access through a City issued device. On the 2.5 days the assessor is not in the office although not required to work remotely will do so where needed.*

*MIDDLETOWN: There are not enough available computers to provide to staff so the majority of work from home is done with a household computer, using a secure connection and remote desktop.*

*NEW BRITAIN: No.*

*NEW MILFORD: By VPN Connection*

*ROXBURY: The Town Hall is closed to the public. The Assessor is working from home*

*SALISBURY: No.*

*SEYMOUR: (See prior question on Seymour) The rest of the workweek, we work from home with a laptop.*

*STAMFORD: Yes. The professional staff has remote access to their computer at the office from home; as well as email. Phone calls to the office are forwarded to the employees home number.*

*VERNON: Only the Assessor works from home as needed, but not to the degree of full time.*

*WARREN: Although the Town Hall is closed to the public, work schedule is the same.... the Assessor goes into the office one day a week and works remotely from home*

*WEST HAVEN: No one in the Assessor's Office is working from home. I did a virtual budget meeting at home one evening with the city council using WebEx. (it went well) There are a few employees in other offices working from home. The Tax Collector is working from home. We have been communicating with phone calls and emails. It is working out fine.*

*WINDSOR: Assessor, remote log-in*

**Has anyone been laid off?**

*BRISTOL: No. The current budget allows all staffing to remain intact for the 2020-2021 fiscal cycle. Initial indicators note there to be a \$7.5mm deficit in the upcoming fiscal cycle related to expenditures and do not account for abnormal collection returns. So time will tell if we will experience layoffs even considering all the attrition experience over the past few years.*

*COLCHESTER: No one has been laid off and we are told no one will be.*

*MANCHESTER: Part-time staff is not working, but they are being paid through at least May 15, 2020.*

*SEYMOUR: No layoffs as of yet.*

*VERNON: No one has been laid off. We have a staff of four. Two teams of two.*

*WEST HAVEN: No layoffs that I am aware of.*

*THE FOLLOWING TOWNS RESPONDED THAT THERE ARE NO LAYOFFS: Brookfield, East Hartford, East Windsor, Fairfield, Groton, Meriden, Middletown, New Britain, New Milford, Salisbury, Stamford, Vernon, Windsor.*

**How do you deal with tasks that involve public contact?**

*BRISTOL: We have created seamless documents online to allow internet application processing for local senior relief, Homeowners and disabled credit programs and renters relief. The majority is handled through email and USPS service.*

*BROOKFIELD: We have none. If they need to drop off something they call first and leave it outside the door for me.*

*COLCHESTER: We have not yet been faced with any situations that could not be resolved over the phone or computer.*

*EAST HARTFORD: Public is not allowed in the building. All request and inquiries are done by phone or email.*

*EAST WINDSOR: We are phone, email or mail based only at this time. Town Hall has been closed to the public since mid-March*

*FAIRFIELD: We are currently closed to the public and will if needed see people by appointment. So far we have only needed to speak to the public in the lobby of our building.*

*GROTON: By appointment and we meet outside town hall front door with mask & gloves*

*MANCHESTER: Town Hall is locked; we have discretion to let customers in. We are working by phone, email, fax and our drop box. Fieldwork is only allowed in emergency situations.*

*MERIDEN: The public that comes into the building stands behind the screen. The governor's current executive order requires a mask in public. We find that most who have come in are wearing masks and gloves. We disinfect with Lysol after the taxpayer leaves and wiped down any of the pens devices they have touched. We have suspended property inspections at this time. However due the need for the property owner to close the sale I will be conducting and inspection of a property tomorrow. I am following the same procedures independent appraisers are following which are: Realtor or owners wait outside the property while I walk through the building. ( in this case I am comfortable because the property is vacant). I will measure the outside and answer any questions they may have while maintain social distancing. I will wear a mask and gloves for this inspection.*

*MIDDLETOWN: All work is required to be completed remotely. Documents are mailed, faxed, or emailed to the office. Because there is staffing in the office phone calls are answered during normal hours, and voicemails are responded to the following morning. The only "contact" has been with the Board of Assessment Appeals, who have either been allowed access to the building, or passed documents through the door.*

*NEW BRITAIN: The City has enhanced our website whereby taxpayers and the public as a whole are directed to deal with us either by email, phone, fax or mail.*

*NEW MILFORD: Almost all contact has been with elderly taxpayers filing for elderly benefits. They make an appointment and bring in their documents. Real estate activity has ground to a halt. Over the last 4 weeks we've been contacted by a couple of real estate appraisers and one title searcher.*

*ROXBURY: Tasks involving public contact are handled through email or telephone calls*

*SALISBURY: It hasn't come up yet, we've been doing everything by email, phone or mail.*

*STAMFORD: The office is closed to the public but we remain available to the public by phone and email. Physical inspections are temporarily on hold.*

*VERNON: We communicate by phone or email. Most of our data is online so folks can access information such as GIS maps or property records cards.*

*WARREN: Tasks involving public contact are handled through email or phone calls*

*WINDSOR: E-mail, regular mail and phone*

**Does anyone use protective equipment?**

*BRISTOL: Since very few employees are circulating within the city hall there is limited use at this time.*

*BROOKFIELD: Masks and gloves if you leave your office or for mail*

*COLCHESTER: While the Town Hall is closed to the public and working with less staff members in the building, we are required to wear face masks at all times unless in our offices alone. The door handles to all doors are being sprayed daily and the town has provided hand sanitizer.*

*EAST HARTFORD: We are mandated to use masks in public areas*

*EAST WINDSOR: Some employees wear masks that they have brought in when outside their own office. The Town supplied a strong cleaner to use on surfaces, as well as disinfectant wipes. Limited number of nitrile gloves available.*

*FAIRFIELD: We wear masks when moving around the building but not at our desks.*

*MANCHESTER: Yes, masks, gloves, and we are sanitizing regularly. The Town's cleaning vendor comes in twice daily to wipe down counters, doors and handles. We installed plexi-glass dividers at the Assessor's and Collectors counters (as well as other Town Departments) for when we re-open.*

*MERIDEN: The staff has been provided masks and should be wearing when engaging with the public.*

*MIDDLETOWN: - Since the building is closed to the public there has been no need. However, in light of the scheduled opening, and under recommendations by the CDC, staff is now required to wear facemasks in common areas. Upon opening they will be required to use masks full-time. Our first request for additional protection such as partitions or sneeze guards was denied under the reason that "a Plexiglas barrier does not set the tone for customer service that we hope to have set when residents and others come to City Hall." And they "believe that we can do so with strategies that don't hamper our customer service." Given that 99% of all public spaces (grocery stores, pharmacy's, etc.) now include some form of barrier this is being reevaluated and we are told a policy will be in place for the reopening.*

*NEW BRITAIN: The City has issued employees protective masks to wear when social distancing guidelines cannot be adhered to such as in common spaces.*

*NEW MILFORD: No, although we have masks available. Plexiglass is being installed at the counter.*

*SALISBURY: When needed, yes.*

*SEYMOUR: No protective equipment required. They do expect the 6' distancing.*

*STAMFORD: Anyone entering the Government Center must wear a mask and gloves. Everyone's temperature is taken before being allowed into the building.*

*VERNON: As of April 21, 2020, we are required to wear face masks when in public or within six feet of fellow employees. Gloves are available as well as disinfectant and sanitary wipes.*

*WEST HAVEN: It is mandatory to wear a mask in the building. My staff does not keep the mask on when working in the office. Each city hall employee has their temperature taken at the door by the health department. As long as we don't have a temperature, we can enter and work. Yay!!*

*WINDSOR: No*

**How are assessors dealing with doing their fieldwork? (Permits and C of Os)**

*BETHLEHEM: Fieldwork will begin when all restrictions are lifted*

*BRISTOL: We are trying to establish a method of communicating with property owners that have permits we need to inspect without entering the property. Webex or Zoom internet links will be used with those property owners that have a computer, iPad, or cell phone with a camera that will allow us to view the improvements remotely. We also flew the City, by chance, with Eagleview pictometry sub 3" high resolution last November which has provided recent areal satellite imagery that is proving very beneficial.*

*BROOKFIELD: Doing the first one on Monday New Construction. I think in the future for minor things I will ask the homeowner to take a photo. If it is exterior I will call them to let them know I am coming so they stay indoors. If it is major I will go in and not touch anything and wear a mask, but not for a few more weeks.*

*COLCHESTER: The deputy assessor is out in the field performing inspections. He has a vehicle with the town seal on the doors, he wears a mask, and walks up to the door and hands them a piece of paper and then backs up six feet while they read it. It's pre-typed and fill in the blanks where the form letter states that we are following up on a permit they took out and we only need to inspect the property from the exterior, The form letter is only blank as to property location and what the permit was for. He takes that Intel off the permit, fills out the form, and goes up and rings the bell. If they are not home, he leaves the notice and completes the interior inspection while he was on site. Surprisingly, he has been well received by our property owners.*

*EAST HARTFORD: We have not started any fieldwork at this time.*

*EAST WINDSOR: At this time, per our Town Selectman, all fieldwork is on hold. I'm hoping to do exterior fieldwork beginning in May.*

*FAIRFIELD: Staff is still going out but inspecting from the street only.*

*GROTON: We will be using drive by site visit when applicable – otherwise will coordinate site visit with homeowner at their convenience and their preference*

*MANCHESTER: We are not doing fieldwork at this time, except in emergency situations. I had one house I visited because the re-fi was going to crash unless the finished basement was listed on the field card, and I put a mask and gloves on and went there for 7 minutes. We will start exterior, drive-by fieldwork only soon, and resume interior fieldwork when we re-open. We will just have to catch-up, we should have started fieldwork in mid-March, and we likely won't do interior inspections until late May.*

*MERIDEN: Inspections are currently suspended see above*

*MIDDLETOWN: Generally most field work was current as of the start of the pandemic, and the building department has limited their inspections as well, so the office has no pressing need for field review. Field checks that can be completed without interior inspections are done as needed.*

*NEW BRITAIN: Many field inspections have been pushed off. Those that do not need an interior inspection are still being performed. We continue to visit properties that are receiving Certificate of Occupancy inspections. We wear masks and sanitize our hands upon entering and after leaving properties.*

*NEW MILFORD: Only inspecting properties that involve little or no contact with property owners such as gut/rehab, new construction, solar, generators, roof, windows, siding, and outbuildings (sheds, barns etc.) The building department is no longer conducting inspections, Contractors send in pictures to document progress and receive approvals to move forward. Revaluation contractor is not attempting interior inspections. Exterior measurements and data mailers will be used in lieu of inspections.*

*ROXBURY: Fieldwork will begin when all restrictions are lifted*

*SALISBURY: Hasn't come up yet, but we will do inspections later this summer when it is closer to grand list date.*

*SEYMOUR: Fieldwork is suspended. (I do not work off plans)*

*STAMFORD: We are able to assess the building department application from home in order to print new building permits and CO's. Building Department officials record FaceTime videos with the property owner to verify work performed and document % of completion. Our staff has access to these vid's for valuation purposes in lieu of performing interior inspections. We also have access to building plans and can enter our changes from home into the CAMA system.*

*VERNON: Generally, field inspections are outdoor activities. Many businesses are closed not allowing access to the interior. We prioritize our interior residential inspections, asking the homeowner to maintain a safe distance. We wear gloves and a mask during those activities.*

*WARREN: Fieldwork will begin when all restrictions are lifted*

*WEST HAVEN: Exterior permits only for now. This is a revaluation year for West Haven and I sent data mailers, since we can't currently do interior inspections, I have Vision calling the homeowners with certain data mailer discrepancies and larger discrepancies that involve an interior inspection will be put on hold for later.*

*WINDSOR: Preparing but not conducting any at the present time*

**How do you deal with the taxpayers' problems?**

*BETHLEHEM: Taxpayers problems are handled through email or phone calls.*

*BRISTOL: To date they are handled normally via phone, email and distance communication with a very delicate polite approach. Since we are not in prime tax collection or delinquent tax collection billing we are not experiencing volume at this time. We do anticipate having to be diligent and increase office coverage when we get closer to July even considering Bristol has adopted the tax payment deferral program too 10/1/2020.*

*BROOKFIELD: Speak on the phone to them.*

*COLCHESTER: We have been very lucky in that we have been able to handle every situation so far. We are able to meet with people in meeting room one by appointment only, but it has yet to be required.*

*EAST HARTFORD: Problems are dealt by email or phone*

*EAST WINDSOR: As best we can via phone, email, mail and fax. For the most part, questions/problems are able to be dealt with same as normal.*

*FAIRFIELD: By phone, email or fax.*

*GROTON: Email & phone when possible*

*MANCHESTER: Phone, fax, email, scans, drop box, and with discretion to allow them into Town Hall. It is working fairly well. Lot of phone calls, lot of emails. Lot of mail.*

*MERIDEN: Taxpayers are typically phoning the office and using email, fax or US postal to send us the necessary documents.*

*MIDDLETOWN: As noted, all interactions with the public are done remotely, by phone or email.*

*NEW BRITAIN: Taxpayer problems, at this time, are handled either through email, phone, fax or mail.*

*NEW MILFORD: Generally via mail, e-mail or fax.*

*ROXBURY: Taxpayers problems are handled through email or phone calls*

*SALISBURY: Hasn't come up yet.*

*STAMFORD: We can handle any issue except for performing interior inspections at the owners request. Certificate of corrections are still being processed and recorded, as well as deed transfers which are picked up at the Town Clerks office once a week and entered remotely from home.*



*VERNON: Many deadlines have been extended. We ask taxpayers' to send specific information by mail whenever possible. Email seems to be a very efficient method to conduct business.*

*WARREN: Taxpayers problems are handled through email or phone calls*

*WEST HAVEN: Email, fax, phone, drop box, mail.*

*WINDSOR: E-mail, regular mail and phone*

**Filing applications for the various exemptions?**

*BROOKFIELD: All of our forms are online. They can download and mail it in with the paperwork. The elderly they are calling before they drop off and they are not allowed in the building or contact with us.*

*COLCHESTER: We have a "drop box mail slot" here at Town Hall where if someone shows up, they can still drop something off. Or they can use regular mail, or scan and email to us.*

*EAST HARTFORD: We are still requiring application to be file on time by mail or email.*

*EAST WINDSOR: At this time, we are accepting the information via mail, email or fax for our records. The State has made provisions for people receiving elderly homeowner benefits who are due to refile this year to be excused from refiling. We are working within the confines of the executive orders as they come out.*

*FAIRFIELD: We take applications by mail, drop off, or via an electronic drop box. Email is used unless there is sensitive information.*

*GROTON: Email, USPS or can be dropped off at local box outside town hall*

*MANCHESTER: Per the Executive Order, we do not have to take Homeowner's re-applications for this year, same applies to our local programs that piggy back off Homeowner's. We do need those applications by 5/15 for new applicants though, we can't use last year's numbers when we don't have those. I&E's are all extended to August. We are deferring tax bills until 10/1 as on-time. We are still sending them in June, but the taxpayers have to 10/1 to pay, no applications, it is automatic (it does not apply to escrow bills though).*

*MERIDEN: The programs that have not been suspended and for those who are newly applying are taken by appointment however we are encouraging them to mail us the documents and we will process and review the form criteria with them by phone. Once the ban is lifted we will have them come into sign.*

*MIDDLETOWN: Remotely.*

*NEW BRITAIN: At this time, we are receiving applications for exemption through email, fax or mail. The Governor has issued executive orders whereby elderly/disabled homeowners who were required to reapply this year now do not have to. Their benefit will automatically continue*

*for 2 more years. We are still taking new applications by mail. The deadline filing period for most other assessment related exemption programs fall just before or after October 1, 2020, so we are hopeful that we will resume more 'normal' operations by then.*

*NEW MILFORD: Generally via mail, e-mail or fax where possible. With October 1st far in the future, we hopefully will open soon.*

*SALISBURY: Mailing in and mailing back signed copies/originals.*

*STAMFORD: Additional Veterans applications are done by mail which are picked up weekly and taken home to be processed. New applicants for the elderly are done the same way. Refilers on our 2017 list were copied and moved to the 2019 list in our elderly application. Those accounts are now being reviewed individually to insure % of ownership is the same and assessments did not change.*

*VERNON: Many applications were already received prior to the isolation policy. Remaining application are either accepted by mail or are deferred to a later date. Elderly applications for renewal are not required and the previous year data is used for the 2019 grand list. New applications can be submitted by email or regular mail. Our applications are all online for easy access. We assist taxpayers' over the phone if they have an issue with the online application.*

*WEST HAVEN: Additional veterans have until October to come in, if a taxpayer calls, we are informing them that they have to come in when city hall reopens.*

*WINDSOR: Regular mail and e-mail*

### **How do you deal with motor vehicle adjustments?**

*BETHLEHEM: Motor vehicle adjustments that affect previous grand lists are addressed and the tax collector is notified through email*

*BRISTOL: Phone conversations, email and USPS at this time.*

*BROOKFIELD: Same as always. Have them send us the proof by taking a photo, faxing, or scanning. We are able to look things up on DMV if need be.*

*COLCHESTER: Again, has yet to become an issue. They can use regular mail, the mail slot drop box, or scan and email.*

*EAST HARTFORD: Information is received by mail, email, or phone. Adjustments are done as received.*

*EAST WINDSOR: We have been collecting information for the 2019 GL as it came in from taxpayers prior to being closed to the public, to be applied prior to the mailing of the tax bills. We are adjusting as the proofs come in. As the Assessment Clerk who usually handles motor vehicle issues is currently out of the office per the Town's mandate, the assessor is currently*

*making adjustments and deletes. The additions will be done by the clerk when she is back in the office. We accept the usual forms of proof via email, mail and fax.*

*FAIRFIELD: Email or Fax.*

*GROTON: Email, USPS or can be dropped off at local box outside town hall*

*MANCHESTER: Fax, mail, scan via email, drop box. 2 forms of proof still required.*

*MERIDEN: We are asking them to email, fax or mail US post. However if they come to the door with or without an appointment we are not turning them away as long as they are wearing a mask.*

*MIDDLETOWN: Remotely. Mostly by email or fax.*

*NEW BRITAIN: Taxpayers are asked to provide us their forms of proof via email, fax or mail. We will process the adjustments and communicate back with the taxpayer by phone or email. Taxpayers have the ability to pay their taxes or adjusted taxes online here in New Britain.*

*NEW MILFORD: Generally via mail, e-mail or fax where possible. We've been relying more on email/messaging over the last few years with the advent of technology such as smartphones.*

*ROXBURY: Any motor vehicle adjustments that affect previous grand lists are addressed and the tax collector is notified through email*

*SALISBURY: Email or mail copies.*

*STAMFORD: Clerks review and process adjustments that come through the mail, email or fax while in the office 2 days a week.*

*VERNON: Both email and regular mail are the methods used when dealing with motor vehicle adjustments. The burden of proof still lies with the taxpayer, so submission is still essential.*

*WARREN: Motor vehicle adjustments that affect previous grand lists are addressed and the tax collector is notified by phone or email*

*WEST HAVEN: Taxpayers have to email, mail or fax the proof to get an adjustment. Taxpayers also have the option of using the drop box that is located in one of the entrance hallways. (the drop box is similar to a large plastic garbage container with a lock and an opening to drop paperwork) The hallway entrance has two doors, one located on the outside for the public to enter and one which is locked to city hall. The City Clerk checks the drop box and disperses the mail after she sprays the mail with Lysol. Yes Lysol.*

*WINDSOR: Regular mail and e-mail*

**How do you deal with those who want to view or to copy your records?**

*BRISTOL: Online services have worked to date. Although we do process request with the use of adobe and email copies that can be converted with this software.*

*BROOKFIELD: Our cards and mapping are online. If they need anything they call and we try to accommodate as best as we can.*

*COLCHESTER: Our cards and mapping are already online as well as our Town Clerk's deed information. If they cannot find what they are looking for on their own, we can only print to PDF and email to them. Has not been an issue so far.*

*EAST HARTFORD: If records are online we point them there. Records are scanned and emailed.*

*EAST WINDSOR: Our assessing records for property cards and GIS maps are available online via the Town website. For any other information, information can be mailed, emailed or faxed depending on the request and what the statutes state how that information can be shared. Keeping in mind FOI protocol*

*FAIRFIELD: Most data is online or we will mail cards at no cost.*

*GROTON: We email pdf's at no cost*

*MANCHESTER: A lot of our data is online. We can mail, fax or scan and email.*

*MERIDEN: Field card information is available online. I have had appraisers request to come in to view our records and they will also make appointments with the other departments.*

*MIDDLETOWN: Property record cards are available online, as is mapping. If needed copies are emailed or mailed.*

*NEW BRITAIN: We don't receive that many requests to view our records. Our real estate records have been available on line for 18 years now. Most of the public has a knowledge of that. The Assessor's section of the City website has links to real estate parcel data, GIS info, etc. Many forms including personal property declarations, I&E's, etc. are available on line and are PDF fillable.*

*NEW MILFORD: Presently we're emailing records at no charge.*

*SALISBURY: Email.*

*SEYMOUR: We will email any requests such as copies of field cards, etc.*

*STAMFORD: We're able to produce abutters lists from home. Checks are mailed to the office. Once we receive payment the list is generated from home through remote access and emailed to the taxpayer. Historical field cards are performed by the clerks or professional staff when they are at work to pickup/drop-off work as needed.*

*VERNON: We refer folks to our online system to view maps and property record cards, otherwise we can assist by phone.*

*WEST HAVEN: If a taxpayer needs a field card or map-they can go on line and view. We are also emailing and faxing information to taxpayers, if not too large.*

*WINDSOR: Everything is on-line. Property cards and maps. Updated weekly.*

**How do you deal with other departments in city hall/town hall?**

**These include: the Mayor or Town Manager or First Selectman, the Tax Collector, Town Clerk, Building Department, Town Engineer, Finance Director, Purchasing Office, Personnel Office, Town Attorney, IT Department.**

*BETHLEHEM: Communication between other departments is done through email or phone calls.*

*BRISTOL: Mainly the same as the public via phone, email or interoffice mail. Occasional distance face-to-face meetings or Webex/Zoom or teleconference meetings are established in the case when we are working remotely from home.*

*BROOKFIELD: Call first and then go to their department when necessary. We have been using Zoom for meetings. Mostly using email/phone when possible.*

*COLCHESTER: We are told to conduct all business over the phone or by email even with other departments. We have held our Department Head meetings over the internet on a ZOOM platform even when we are all in the same building.*

*Yes, we have dealt with all through phones and emails. With hard copy docs, we put them in their mailroom box and they pick them up the next day. We also pick up our mail twice a day in the Town Hall mailroom.*

*We did have one computer issue and IT came to our department when no one was here and resolve the matter.*

*EAST HARTFORD: Our first line of contact with other departments is by phone, then by email. We have done some face time through the web, my meeting, Zoom.*

*EAST WINDSOR: For the most part, same as normal but with some adjustments. We are mandated to only correspond with the other departments via phone or email at this time. Very limited access to other offices (ie. Town Clerk's vault) and only while wearing masks and gloves. Any interoffice paperwork is placed in the mailbox for the department for pickup. And since those departments are not running at full capacity, ours is not either. Monthly staff meetings, land use meetings, etc are held as Zoom meetings using computers and telephones.*

*FAIRFIELD: Phone, email, or interoffice envelope.*

*GROTON: BAA meetings are being held with Zoom platform – all baa members staying home and using either phone or video. Assessor's office will host Zoom meetings and they'll be recorded. All appellants also dialing in using either phone or video. Fingers crossed.*

*MANCHESTER: Mostly by email, phone, all Town Hall departments are using our drop box, and we have the key so we mail runs to their offices to drop off their deliveries. Most of the departments outside our building we work with via email.*

*MERIDEN: We access other departments via email or phone and will access their office only if absolutely necessary. I am still meeting in person with my City Attorney by appointment and finance minimally. My office shares a door with the Tax Collector so we still have immediate access to them. However the Tax Collector has opted not to take any in person payments.*

*MIDDLETOWN: All departments have some form of staffing either in the building or remote. There has been little interruption in this communication. There is a department head meeting twice a week via teleconference with the Mayor. Any issue can be brought up during one of these meetings, or by reaching out to the department directly. Time cards are now submitted by email, and pay checks are mailed or direct deposit.*

*NEW BRITAIN: The majority of communication these days is handled electronically. We download lists of permits and import them into our CAMA file. We view deeds recorded in Town Clerk electronically so we can do our transfer work. Communications with other departments have mostly been by email and through an occasional phone call. All Common Council and subcommittee meetings that I am required to attend are now done through video links and a phone call.*

*NEW MILFORD: All of these departments are staffed on a limited basis so we can meet with someone if we need to. Otherwise we use the phone or email.*

*ROXBURY: Communication between other departments is done through email or phone calls.*

*SALISBURY: Email.*

*SEYMOUR: All correspondence is thru emails. The department heads have a conference call on Mondays and Thursday. (Not much to report). An email is sent every Friday to the first selectman stating what we did during the week.*

*STAMFORD: I have weekly GoToMeetings with other Managers and Directors. We also communicate with each other by phone and email.*

*VERNON: We communicate by phone and email. When necessary, I.T. staff enter our office wearing protective gear to assist in computer and network concerns. We have a central mail drop location within town hall. We visit this location to retrieve mail and other communication for various departments including administration.*

*WEST HAVEN: Most of the work with other departments are via email or phone, however, if we need to go to an office it is okay. Some offices have the door shut and you need permission to enter. We have a department head meeting once a month via WebEx.*

*WINDSOR: E-mail and phone.*

**Any other information about running an assessor's office during these uncertain times**

*BETHLEHEM: The office work and taking care of the public have not been too much of a hardship for my offices as yet because of the duties this time in the Grand List year. Hopefully we will be back to normal before long.*

*BRISTOL: It is all hands on deck as we all try to be well and healthy. We are making extra efforts to be sure no one can look back and say we didn't cover our responsibilities because of any work conditions. If it is to be noted that I believe we are over coving all aspects of our functions so the complaint driven system is kept to a minimum...*

*BROOKFIELD: It has been tough due to the time of the year. I am more worried that the lost time is going to cause and issue on the back end trying to get next year's roll done. Also, we are doing a revaluation soon. I am concerned about that process and how to make it work. Too many unknowns right now. Depends on how the selectman opens back up and when he opens?*

*COLCHESTER: My RFP for revaluation (2021) was pretty close to complete and ready to go out just as COVID 19 came into play. Whereas it is time to complete full inspections of each property, I was going out to bid for a full measure and list that called for Data Mailer Questionnaires and full inspections being completed on all of those properties that failed to submit a satisfactory data mailer. However, due to the Governor's Executive Order eliminating the need for full interior inspections on all 2020 revaluations, and everyone saying that we should expect a second wave of COVID19 in the fall or next spring, or both, it certainly had me re-thinking things to ensure that I do not contract for, and pay for, services in which I may not receive. Therefore, we bid the project calling for any "physical inspections" to be billed separately at a "per inspection rate" that must be defined in their bid.*

*EAST HARTFORD: We are receiving many more inquiries than we use to, more people are at home and not sure what to do.*

*FAIRFIELD: Most of the measures put into place have worked fairly well. Elderly applications have been difficult to track as we have to receive the supporting docs and then mail the application for signature, we do include a SASE.*

*MANCHESTER: Someday this will be in the rear view mirror. Meetings with other CAAO members are usually via Zoom or conference call. We had a Motor Vehicle Committee meeting on 4/2 via conference call.*

*MERIDEN: I am taking this quiet time to cleanup files from my predecessor. For example reviewing veterans and getting entering the actual name of the veteran into the system instead of the surviving spouse. We are also entering dates of war, volume and page etc. We are also*

*cleaning up data in the CAMA system that is incomplete and inaccurate. There is a lot to do as we prepare for the 2021 revaluation. The staff remains quite busy.*

*MIDDLETOWN: There were several issues which confronted this office. One which continues to be ongoing is the issue of the Board of Assessment Appeals completing their duties, and returning their files to the office. These files contained the original appeal, copies of the assessment records, and notes of the meeting. After a month we are still waiting to have some of these files returned.*

*Income and Expense reports mailed on April 1st were granted an extension the same day necessitating a 2nd mailing. In addition, court appeals and pre-trials have been postponed while new appeals are being filed. Further, whereas our office processes over 1,000 applications for the Renters Rebate Program annually this program is looked at with great concern for the staff and public.*

*Some issues have been favorably addressed through the Governor's Office by Executive Orders. Primarily the reapplication process for Elderly or Totally Disable Homeowners, which was eliminated by the Governor. However some issues have not been. Specifically providing low-interest for delinquent payments, and benefits for "landlords" during the pandemic have caused confusion on procedure and eligibility.*

*All told, I take pride in knowing our office has maintained good communication with the public during this time, and been able to provide assistance without heavy burdens to the taxpayer. Our goal is to be able to have all changes in place for the July bill to occur without delay.*

*NEW BRITAIN: The Assessor's Office has made its data available electronically for many years now. Though some items are not available online, electronic communications by email have been able to solve the queries of most taxpayers. This has been most helpful as we've used technology to keep us functioning and I believe we've still provided the services taxpayers expect from us. As things begin to 'open up', we will continue to have to adjust our practices to keep our staff as safe as possible while still being able to complete our grand list functions. If you asked me the same questions during the height of the grand list season, I believe we would've had many more difficulties performing our duties and needs for additional executive orders.*

*NEW MILFORD: It's going to be interesting to see how the real estate market responds to the pandemic, especially during a revaluation year. It would not be appropriate to simply base values on pre-pandemic activity. Once we return to something resembling "normal" in our daily lives, the volume of real estate transactions will certainly be less. Will there be enough market activity to make reasonable judgments going forward?*

*WEST HAVEN: I sent letters to all of the taxpayers on the homeowners program and local freeze program with information informing them they don't have to come in and re apply this year etc. We are still getting a few calls and email but it is slowing down. I may also put information on the website. We have a lot of renters calling, we are informing them, as of now they need to come in when city hall reopens. They have plenty of time. We have the revaluation company dropping off and picking up paperwork. We do this outside.*

*The Assessor's Office is getting all of the work completed with the exception of interior inspections. I hope that we can resume inspections at some point soon. I have a feeling we will get less interior inspections and it won't be until much later.*



### **MISCELLANEOUS RETURNS**

*WATERBURY: Not much has changed here in Waterbury. City hall remains open by appointment only. We have divided the staff into 3 teams that come in every third day. We're still processing and responding to mail, emails, and phone calls. We are still doing permit work that we can complete from exterior inspections as well as viewing all sales. I'm the only one that has remote access to work so everyone else is home "on call" and getting paid. They do have access to emails and that is our main method of communications right now. We did create a phone chart of everyone's cell numbers in case we needed immediate contact with someone at home. We did make masks available to the staff although most do not wear them in the office. We have a large office and everyone is spread out pretty well. We accept applications for exemptions and do MV prorates. We just clean up after handling anything brought in by a taxpayer. We have had very few people coming in. Most everything is online, PRC, all exemption forms, BAA appeal applications, tax bills etc. I've only had in office meetings with the Mayor and Finance director. We just sat 6-8 feet apart. Everyone else has been using email to communicate.*

### **Other happenings and updates in the Assessing Community**

#### **Paying property taxes**

With some 40 million people filing for unemployment benefits, there is a concern that many of the people are unable to pay their local taxes. Connecticut has passed legislation that allows towns to defer taxes on real estate, personal property and motor vehicles for a 90-day period. The question is, is this enough?

**Automatic E-Mail replies:** Some towns have set up automatic e-mail messages notifying the sender that the town hall is close until a certain date. They also include a list of documents that are required for certain motor vehicle correction and exemptions. The e-mail asks taxpayer to call before coming to the town hall to determine if your needs can be met without needing a visit.

**CAAO Executive Board Meetings:** The May Executive Board meeting will be via Zoom.

**Elderly filing:** The elderly do not have to file this year due to COVID-19 and get a one-year free pass. Assessors still have to enter the data for billing.

**Revaluations:** There are a number of towns scheduled for revaluations are now requesting a postponement.

**Big hit on CAAO functions:** The COVID-19 pandemic has taken a big hit on CAAO functions. A May 15, 2020 CAAO Hot Line announced that the June 23<sup>rd</sup> CAAO Spring Meeting was cancelled. In the August 2020 *Assessorreporter* it was announced that the 2020 UConn Assessors School was cancelled. This was the first time that the Assessors School was cancelled since the first classes were held in 1944. It was also announced that the 2020 Fall Symposium is cancelled.

### **Reopening Connecticut's economy.**

Phase 1 of Connecticut's soft reopening began May 20, 2020 with the opening of restaurants, offices, retail stores, malls. Hair salons and barber shops were to open on May 20, 2020 but the opening has been delayed until June 1, 2020. All of these businesses are required to limit patrons to 50% of capacity. Restaurant patrons will only be able to dine outside. State beaches along the shoreline opened May 22, 2020.

Phase 2 of Connecticut's reopening June 17, 2020 was the official date for the next step in the state's reopening plan. Businesses that are allowed to reopen in phase 2 include: Amusements parks at 25% capacity, hotel/lodging, restaurants indoor (no bar) with a table limit of 25 people, indoor recreation, libraries at 50% capacity, personal services and sports and fitness facilities.

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### **Summary of Reported Town Hall Reopenings**

Most Connecticut town halls have been closed since mid-March 2020 as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. This is a summary of when the **reported** town halls re-opened.

#### **Towns That Never Closed**

Bethlehem: Never closed, but was open by appointment only.

Cromwell: Never closed, but appointments were needed up until June 1, 2020.

Darien: Many offices never closed. Assessor's office opened June 1<sup>st</sup>.

Fairfield: Never closed. Worked with half-staff in the office every other day. Effective June 22<sup>nd</sup> full staff back in the office and accepting customers by appointment.

Granby: Never closed. Open by appointment only. No official date for town hall re-opening.

Meriden: City of Meriden never closed. They have been and still are taking taxpayers by appointment. Went to full staff May 18<sup>th</sup>. Many offices have Plexiglas around desks and counters. Fieldwork with masks began June 8, 2020. Assessors and collectors offices opened without appointments July 1, 2020, other departments by appointments only.

New Britain: City hall has been open throughout COVID-19. Only closed to the public April 7<sup>th</sup> to May 11<sup>th</sup>. Opened back up to the public May 12<sup>th</sup>.

Old Saybrook: Never closed. If someone called ahead, assessor's office would provide a copy of the card at the door. Town hall opened June 22<sup>nd</sup>. Plexiglas installed on counter and some desks near the counter.

Wallingford: Never fully closed. The building was locked and members of the public were brought in by appointment or calling the office to have someone let them in. Building fully open to the public July 20<sup>th</sup>. Property record cards are not available on-line, so property cards and maps were scanned and emailed upon request.

Waterbury: Never really closed. Always open by appointment. If you had an appointment with the tax collector and then needed a prorated, they just sent them to the assessors office and they would be taken care of.

Woodstock: Never closed. Department's heads were in the office to answer phones, emails and assist public by appointment. July 1<sup>st</sup> town is allowing residents to enter foyer and

conduct business through town clerks and tax collectors teller windows, which were newly installed. Assessor's computer is in the foyer for public use as well as a phone.

### **Reported Town Reopenings in March**

Haddam: Town hall was open by appointment only March 17<sup>th</sup> to June 1<sup>st</sup> then June 1<sup>st</sup> for walk ins in the morning and appointments in the afternoon with restricted hours. July 16<sup>th</sup> went back to regular hours. Masks required.

### **Reported Town Reopenings in May**

Enfield: Town hall opened May 20, 2020 by appointment only. Plexiglas installed and masks required.

Guilford: Opened May 26<sup>th</sup>.

Orange: Town hall opened May 20<sup>th</sup>. Staggered staffing for two weeks prior since an active case was found in the building.

Torrington: City reopened on May 4<sup>th</sup> with only one entrance for the public to use.

### **Reported Town Reopenings in June**

Beacon Falls: Town hall opened June 15<sup>th</sup> by appointment only. Phone numbers are posted outside for visitors to call the appropriate department. Visitors must wear mask and use hand sanitizer. This will continue through the month of July.

Bethel: June 1<sup>st</sup> by appointment. Instructions are on town web site.

Bloomfield: June 8<sup>th</sup>. Sent out postcard with instructions. Appointments are preferred.

Branford: Open June 1<sup>st</sup>. Monitor at door. Only a certain number allowed in at one time. Mask required.

Bridgewater: Town hall opened June 15<sup>th</sup>.

Brookfield: Open by appointment and rotating half-staff weekly. See July up-date.

Canton: Opened June 22<sup>nd</sup>. Restricted hours. Any other time is by appointment only.

Cheshire: Town hall opened June 3<sup>rd</sup>.

Colchester: June 8<sup>th</sup> temperature checks at front door plus contact tracing. After June 22<sup>nd</sup> full hours allowing one person in the office at a time. Plexiglas in active offices.

Coventry: Accepting appointments for limited purpose starting June 8<sup>th</sup>. Full opening June 29<sup>th</sup>. Extensive reopening plan issued to all departments.

Darien: Assessor's office opened June 1, 2020 with appointment for the public.

Many of Darien's departments never closed.

East Haven: Town hall opened June 22<sup>nd</sup>. Department heads worked during closure. Assessor's staff worked remotely from home.

East Lyme: Open by appointment June 17<sup>th</sup>.

Easton: Currently closed to public. The tax collector and assessor's office will be open when bills go out. Other offices will be closed to the public.

Essex: Town hall opened June 22<sup>nd</sup>.

Greenwich: June 1<sup>st</sup> open to the public by appointment only.

Lebanon: June 1<sup>st</sup> by appointment. Equipped with sanitizer stations. Most offices have plastic protection at the counter. Masks are required in building.

Ledyard: Open to the public June 8<sup>th</sup>.

Middlebury: Town hall opened June 26<sup>th</sup>.

Middlefield: Access by appointment only for town records or meetings with town officials.

Milford: Town Hall opened early June. Limited hours for public 10:00 to 2:00. Assessor's office remains closed to the public. Work is being done via drop box, email, or fax.

Montville: Town hall opened June 15<sup>th</sup>.

New Fairfield: Open only by appointment. Most of staff still working from home.

New Hartford: Town hall opened June 1<sup>st</sup> by appointment only on reduced hours. Currently open with no appointments needed with regular business hours. Visitors must wear masks.

Newington: June 15<sup>th</sup> per news article. Limited hours and by appointment.

North Branford: Starting June 22<sup>nd</sup> the tax office opened to the public from 8:30 to 11:30. All other departments are currently operating on an appointment only basis.

North Canaan: Re-opening only by appointment June 22<sup>nd</sup>.

North Haven: Town hall open to the public by appointment only on June 29<sup>th</sup>. Limited reopening July 6<sup>th</sup>. Front door attendant to regulate number of people in building.

North Stonington: Open by appointment June 1<sup>st</sup> Monday to Thursday. On June 22, 2020 by appointment with staffing every day.

Old Lyme: Town hall opened June 22<sup>nd</sup>. Appointments encouraged.

Oxford: Town Hall open June 22<sup>nd</sup>. Temperatures taken, must wear mask, hand sanitizer provided, marker on floor. Plexiglas placed on the front of the desk. Limited hours.

Plainville: Town hall opened to the public June 8<sup>th</sup>.

Putnam: Back to normal June 15<sup>th</sup> with social distancing guidelines.

Redding: Town hall closed. Planning on allowing limited public access by appointment. Date to be determined. Staff was back June 29<sup>th</sup>.

Rocky Hill: Open to the public June 22<sup>nd</sup>.

Salem: Open June 22<sup>nd</sup> by appointment only.

Sharon: June 15<sup>th</sup> per news article.

Shelton: Town hall opened June 15, 2020 8:00 am to 2 pm five days a week, no appointment.

Stonington: Town hall opened June 8<sup>th</sup>.

Union: Open June 22<sup>nd</sup>. Requesting businesses to continue using e-mail and phones. Town is following a COVID-19 safety guideline format.

Washington: Open June 22<sup>nd</sup> by appointment only. Full office staff is now in office. Temperatures of visitors are taken before entry into town hall.

Waterford: Town hall opened to the public June 17<sup>th</sup>.

Watertown: Open to the public June 10<sup>th</sup>.

West Haven: First floor assessor's office has been conducting business since the end of June via outside walk up windows. Plexiglas with opening placed in each window. Wood deck with cover was installed in front of the windows. City hall opened by appointments only for the first floor offices August 5<sup>th</sup>. Masks and temperature checks will be required.

Wethersfield: Open June 15<sup>th</sup> by appointment. All of the staff is in the office as of June 3<sup>rd</sup>.

Winchester: Town hall opened June 22, 2020 to the public.

Windsor: June 8, 2020. New Plexiglas partitions installed. Signage on floors to encourage visitors to maintain social distancing.

### **Reported Town Reopenings in July**

Ansonia: Tentative opening by appointment only July 20<sup>th</sup>. Staff was back June 22<sup>nd</sup>. Visitors must wear masks. Employee must wear masks when interacting with public. Work stations equipped with sanitizer. Physical barriers to be erected.

Avon: Town hall re-opened on July 6<sup>th</sup>.

Barkhamsted: Did not open as of 7/20/20. People can come to the door with a mask and ring the bell. They will assist them 1 at time, but they must remain behind a table in the lobby.

Bristol: Re-open July 6<sup>th</sup>. Observe 6-foot distance measures along with wearing PPE items.

Brookfield: July 6th staff is fully back working in town hall. Public is by appointment only. Installed sneeze guards for counters. Temporary dividers are up within each office.

Canterbury: Opened July 13<sup>th</sup>.

Columbia: Opened July 6<sup>th</sup> to the public. Must enter a specific door, wear mask, sanitize hands, have temperature taken and answer questions.

Deep River: Town hall opened July 6<sup>th</sup>.

East Granby: Opened July 6<sup>th</sup> by appointment.

Ellington: Town hall opened July 6<sup>th</sup> by appointment only.

Goshen: Town hall opened July 1, 2020. Visitors required to sign in, wear masks and practice social distancing. Signs on the floor for distancing.

Griswold: Middle of July started to let some people in to see the selectman. Building closed to the public. Waiting for Plexiglas to arrive.

Haddam: Reported July 9<sup>th</sup>. Town hall is open to the public for walk ins from 8:30 am till 2:00 pm and 2:00 pm till 4:00 pm by appointment M, T, W and Thursday 8:30 till 2:00 pm walk ins then 2:00 pm till 6:00 pm by appointment and Friday 8:30 am till noon for walk ins.

Hebron: Town hall opened July 6, 2020. Visitors are required to wear masks, practice social distancing and follow all posted instructions.

Manchester: Closed to the public and open by appointment at town's discretion since March 17, 2020. Re-open town hall July 6<sup>th</sup>. Plexiglas installed, masks required. Limited number of people in building when they re-open.

Marlborough: Assessor's office to open July 1st. Masks and gloves are a must. A few staff workers will continue to work remotely from home.

Newtown: Town hall open July 1<sup>st</sup>. Mask must be worn. Limited number of people in building. Signs on the floor for distancing.

Plainfield: Opened town hall mid-July after glass has been installed in the offices that work with the public.

Roxbury: Opened to the public July 7<sup>th</sup>.

Somers: Town hall opened July 22<sup>nd</sup>. Visitors are required to wear masks and maintain a 6-foot distance from each other. A drop box is also available.

Sterling: Town hall opened July 7<sup>th</sup> normal hours.

Stratford: Opened July 6<sup>th</sup> to the public. All of the staff is back June 15<sup>th</sup>.

Trumbull: Town hall opened July 1<sup>st</sup> by appointment. Half of staff works every other day in office, other half of staff working from home every other day.

Voluntown: Assessor's office open July 1<sup>st</sup> by appointment only.

### **Proposed Town Reopenings in August**

Eastford: Still closed to the public as of July 28<sup>th</sup> but take transactions through a newly installed interior window.

Middletown: Town hall open August 3<sup>rd</sup> by appointment only. Drop-down sneeze guards installed.

Weston: Plans to reopen August 10<sup>th</sup> but still has to be approved by board of selectman. The town hall in Weston is currently under renovation as well as the COVID-19 issue.