**In response to current guidelines for the Coronavirus response, the Penn Township Board of Supervisors have taken the following actions:**

**Penn Township Building office hours:** The normal working hours are Monday through Thursday, 7:00 am to 5:00 pm. These hours have been suspended. Beginning Monday, March 23, 2020, the office will be closed at least until Monday, April 6, 2020. Future office hours will be announced later. The office non-emergency phone number is 724-586-1169 (leave a message). The Township Manager, Linda Zerfoss, and Land Use Administrator, Clinton Bonetti, will be checking their voice mail and responding accordingly. Written notification of this closure will be placed on the front entrance door of the Township building and on the Penn Township website.

**Monthly Township Board of Supervisors meetings:** Second Tuesday at 6:00 pm (workshop at 5:30 pm). The next meeting is scheduled on April 14, 2020 but may be canceled later.

**Monthly Township Planning Commission meetings:** Fourth Thursday at 6:30 pm. The meeting scheduled on March 26, 2020 and other future meetings have been canceled. The next meeting will be announced later.

**Penn Township Road Department:** The normal working hours are Monday through Friday, 7:00 am to 3:00 pm. These hours have been suspended until further notice. The Road Department will be responding to emergencies only. Contact Doug Roth at the 724-285-9317 (leave a message).

**Penn Township Police:** Officers on duty as scheduled. The non-emergency phone number is 724-586-1169 (leave a message).

**Penn Township Sewage Enforcement Officer:** No office hours are scheduled. Call Mike Corle at 412-600-5813.

**Tax Collector:**  No office hours are scheduled. Taxes accepted by mail only. No payment deadline extensions have been announced to date.

**Penn Township will implement recommendations in accordance with the Pennsylvania State Association of Township Supervisors (PSATS) guidelines:**

Considering the governor’s proclamation to shut down non-essential services across the commonwealth, PSATS is providing advice to townships on critical issues.

**Should we shut down our township building?**

The governor’s proclamation directed governments across all levels to continue to provide essential services. PSATS recommends that the township government remain open for business and functional, but you may restrict access. Townships should practice social distancing and limit or cease offering non-essential services and events. Limit visitors by providing services online and on the phone, allow bills to be paid at a drop box or behind a window, or provide other means to do business with the township without personal contact.

**Should we send employees home?**

While township government should remain open for business, where appropriate and possible, employees could be allowed to work from home. Townships provide many essential services, including, but not limited to, police, fire, emergency response, water, sewer, trash collection, code enforcement, and maintenance of township roads and these services must continue.

Sick employees, or those with a fever, should be required to go home and to use leave. Townships should review their employee leave policies and contracts. Be sure all employee contact information is up to date.

**Should we cancel our board of supervisors’ meeting?**

As the governor’s proclamation provides for government to remain open as an essential service, PSATS recommends that the board of supervisors continue to hold their meetings, but that social distancing be adopted, and changes be made to meetings as necessary. Here are some suggestions:

* Practice social distancing, such as no longer shaking hands and staying six feet apart.
* Clean and disinfect the meeting room before and after the meeting. Clean frequently touched surfaces daily, ensure that bathrooms have adequate soap and drying materials, and make hand sanitizer available throughout your facilities.
* Township officials and employees who are sick or in an at-risk health category should participate in the meeting via remote means. Township supervisors are permitted to participate in meetings via a telephone or computer-based service if they can hear everything said at the public meeting and everyone at the public meeting can hear what they say.
* Consider live-streaming meetings through Facebook Live, Skype, GoToMeeting, or other platforms. Some providers are currently offering free service.
* To encourage less in-person attendance, provide alternative means for public comment, such as an email address where comments may be submitted in advance or a call-in number.
* Widely promote these options and encourage anyone who is sick to stay home.

**If we declare a local state of emergency, how long should it be?**

Townships should work with their local and county emergency management coordinator to determine if they should declare an emergency for their township. Title 35 references a 7-day local declaration unless the board agrees to a different number. PSATS recommends a longer proclamation to avoid having a special meeting every 7 days with corresponding expenses and exposure. While the Sunshine Law allows the board to make a declaration in an emergency meeting, PSATS recommends that this decision be made or at least ratified at an advertised public meeting.

**Where do we find accurate and up-to-date information for our community?**

* Be in contact with your county emergency coordinator and your regional health department for specific recommendations for your community.
* The Pennsylvania Department of Health is charged with the Commonwealth’s response and is updating the situation status daily: <https://www.health.pa.gov/topics/disease/Pages/Coronavirus.aspx>
* The Centers for Disease Control: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/index.html>
* National Institutes of Health: <https://www.nih.gov/health-information/coronavirus>

Township officials should be aware that the Pennsylvania Secretary of Health and the Governor continue to carefully monitor this situation and issue frequent updates as the situation develops. Different steps may be needed in communities based on the level of outbreak, and you should remain in contact with your local and county emergency management coordinators.

As always, PSATS will continue to provide uninterrupted services and offer alternatives to face-to-face services, such as webinars and virtual meetings. We look forward to continuing to work with you and be your source for reliable and accurate information.

Dave Sanko
Executive Director

**Vogel Disposal Service, Inc. Coronavirus Update:**

