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**TOWN BOARD MEETING
MARCH 23, 2020**

Statement to the Public

As the Chief Executive Officer of the Town, on Sunday, March 15, I declared a State of Emergency in the Town. This action was deemed necessary after consultation with my colleagues on the Town Board and our Department Heads for the safety, protection and well-being of our residents and business owners.

These certainly are challenging times we currently find ourselves in. But I want to assure all of you listening, that your Town Government is operating and functioning, albeit in a different way than we are all used to. A prime example of that is what we just finished. I believe for the first time in the history of our town, the Town Board had to prohibit the public from attending a Town Board meeting. We not only prohibited the public from attending, we restricted each other from attending, as all 5 Town Board member are remotely accessing this meeting from our private homes via the internet.

I would briefly like to take this opportunity to inform you of exactly what is fully operational and what isn't. For starters, our most essential services that your town government provides will continue to operate like they always have.

- Police Department and Paramedics are fully staffed and operating at 100%. For police and fire emergencies you still call 911. For NON-EMERGENCIES you should call 876-5300; and**
- Water and Sewer Departments are as well. So if you have a water break or sewer emergency you can still call 874-0490 24 hours a day; and**
- Our Sanitation crews have been and will continue to pick up our trash and recycling at the curb on your normal trash and recycling day.**

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- **All other departments are working with limited staffing, meaning that they are either working from home or if the department needs someone in the office there will be only 1 or 2 people in the office at a time, who will practice social distancing.**

If you need to reach one of our other departments you may call the department phone number that is listed on our webpage at www.tonawanda.ny.us under “Departments”.

All of us want this “isolation” period that we are facing to be over with as soon as possible I am sure. When we will be “back to normal” is anyone’s guess? But I can tell you one thing, the sooner ALL OF US practice social distancing, wash our hands frequently and practice proper coughing/sneezing etiquette and other hygiene practices, the sooner we will back to life as usual.

For more information on the Coronavirus COVID19 Pandemic we encourage everyone to visit our website at www.tonawanda.ny.us. There you will find some very useful and helpful information including a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) link, essential phone numbers to refer to, NYS Department of Labor information pertaining to unemployment benefits and information on locations where free food is available. Please visit this page frequently.

These are trying times for everyone and I’m asking everyone to please be more patient and understand with family members and everyone else as we deal with this crises. Everyone deals with crises in a different way and it’s incumbent upon all of us to practice a little more humanity in these times to our fellow human beings.

Social media is a great communication tool that we are using to communicate to the public. Please follow us on Facebook and Twitter for more news as it occurs. That said, do not believe everything you read on Social Media unless it comes from a reliable source and the same goes for if you want to “share” or “retweet” what you read what’s on your page.

Finally, on behalf of the Town Board, I want to thank all of the health care workers and first responders, not only in our community, but everywhere, who are only really just beginning the work that lies ahead of them. We also want to give special thanks to all of our town employees who are working and providing the essential services that all town residents and businesses expect and deserve. Please know that all of you are in our thoughts and prayers and together we will get through this. Thank you!