

From the Desk of the Mayor – May 30, 2020

I wanted to give updates on the City departments since the last From the Desk letter, as well as explain how the transition to Phase 3 of the Restore Illinois Plan affects the City's operations.

POLICE: Our police officer that contracted the COVID-19 virus has fully recovered and since returned to work. When I received notification of the COVID-19 positive officer, we required testing of all the PD employees that worked within the fourteen days prior to the last day the positive officer worked. The City also contracted a commercial cleaning company to perform a cleaning/disinfection of the police department offices. Subsequently, all the results of the tested employees were negative.

The Police Department is now issuing yard sale permits. Remember, a permit is required for a yard sale, but they are free and we can place your yard sale on the City's website. It is encouraged to limit yard sale patrons to 10 or less and follow cleaning and distancing recommendations.

Starting Monday June 1, 2020, the Police Department lobby will be open to the public but masks/face coverings will be required for entry.

FIRE: Our Fire Department has been asked many times about mini parades for birthdays or other social events. The FD was instructed to refrain from individual mini parades because of the number of requests and the volume of emergency calls during the pandemic. However, the Fire Department does have the ability to place a birthday greeting on their digital sign and coordinate a time to pull the emergency vehicles onto the front drive with their emergency lights activated (as long as there are no emergency calls).

The Fire Department recently placed a new Ford F-550 all-wheel drive ambulance in service, thanks to a generous donation from the Fred G. Harrison Foundation. The Paramedics are very anxious to show off this impressive asset for the Fire Department and the City of Carterville. They will be happy to share pictures and look forward to showing the new "rig" in person, when the virus concerns decrease in the future.

Starting Monday June 1, 2020, the Fire Department lobby will be open to the public but masks/face coverings will be required for entry.

PARKS: Because Phase 3 limits groups to less than 10 people, the City continues to refrain from scheduling reservations for the Community Center, Gazebo, and Pavilion. Phase 3 also continues to limit use of playground equipment, so the equipment at James Street Park and Cannon Park, including the skate park, will remain closed. Although the playground equipment is closed, the parks are OPEN. Please feel free to visit our parks and enjoy the weather, while exercising social/physical distancing.

STREETS: The Street Department continues to monitor the sunken area of West Sycamore Road. We are coordinating the monitoring and repairs with the Illinois Department of Mines and Minerals. If possible, please avoid the area. If you must drive on West Sycamore, please drive slowly and carefully in this area.

WATER: The Water Department continues to work with and monitor the contractors of the Ward 1 waterline project as they make the repairs to the right of ways and residential yards damaged during the construction. If there are any questions or concerns about areas needing attention, please contact the Carterville Water Dept.

SEWER: The Sewer Department is operating our wastewater treatment plant with a contracted plant operator while we seek to hire a full-time operator. The previous plant operator accepted an operator position out of state and moved in late May. We continue to work with the Illinois EPA on loan and grant opportunities on a new wastewater treatment plant as well as short term planning on maintaining the operations of our existing plant.

WATER AND SEWER OFFICE: The Phase 3 plan will allow the Water and Sewer office to open to the public, which will begin on Monday June 1, 2020. Though the offices will be open to the public, there will be limited access within the lobby delineated by stanchions and caution tape. Face coverings/masks will be required to enter the office, as well as maintaining physical/social distancing while inside. Even though entry into the office is permitted with the above requirements, we continue to encourage the use of the phone, email, website, and outside drop box.

Governor Pritzker extended his order to the Illinois Commerce Commission banning utility disconnections and late fee charges. We strongly encourage any customers with delinquent balances to contact the Water and Sewer office to make payment arrangements. This will curb the charging of late fees and eliminate service disconnections at a later date.

CITY HALL: The City Hall side will also reopen to the public on Monday June 1, 2020 with the similar guidelines listed above for the Water and Sewer Office. There will also be stanchions and caution tape leading to the service window. Face coverings/masks and physical/social distancing are required as well.

The Council Committee Meetings on June 2, 2020 and the City Council Meeting on June 9, 2020 will continue as scheduled. In order to comply with the Phase 3 requirement of groups of 10 or less, City Hall will be closed to the public during the meeting times. The public may participate in the Committee meetings or Council meeting by conference call. The dial-in information will be posted on the agendas and available on www.visitcarterville.com.

With Phase 3 allowing the opening of all retail establishments, I strongly encourage our residents to patronize our Carterville businesses and shop local. While the chain retail stores in other communities have continued to operate through the previous Executive

Orders, most of Carterville's small businesses have been closed. Please remember our Carterville businesses and use them whenever possible. At this time, the financial impact of COVID-19 on our local businesses and the City of Carterville is not fully known. The recovery will take months or possibly years, but supporting each other by shopping local will speed up that effort.

Phase 3 of the Restore Illinois Plan restricts restaurants to providing only outdoor dining options. With the two downtown restaurants primarily having on-street parking, the City moved some picnic tables from Cannon Park to an empty City owned lot. We felt this was a much safer option than having patrons and their children dining right next to the Division Street traffic. With the vision and hard work of City employees and volunteers, the downtown dining area looks fantastic...and it's drawing a lot of attention. I hope the other restaurants in Carterville utilize some of their private property/parking area to facilitate outdoor dining options. Don't just shop local, eat local too!

Please be patient with our City departments as we navigate through the recovery phases and reopen our facilities. Masks and distancing are not considered political issues to us in our workplace, they are required of our visitors as a matter of safety. All City employees are required to go through a screening at the beginning of each shift. We also have made as many accommodations as possible to maintain physical distancing in our work spaces. COVID-19 has impacted our work family and, because of that, we have a heightened sense of awareness and concern for each other. Thank you for your patience and kindness while we continue to navigate these unusual and stressful times.

If anyone has any questions for me, feel free to call the Mayor's Office at 618-985-2700 or send an email to brobinson@visitcarterville.com.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bradley Robinson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.