



Columbia County Board of Supervisors

401 State Street
Hudson, New York 12534

Matt B. Murell
Chairman

Kelly S. Baccaro
Clerk

Telephone: 518-828-1527
Fax: 518-822-0684
www.ColumbiaCountyNY.com

Ronald L. Knott
Deputy Chairman

James J. Guzzi
Deputy Chairman

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

FROM: Columbia County Board of Supervisors Chairman Matt Murell

SOCIAL DISTANCING CRITICAL

“I can’t stress enough that people need to practice social distancing,” Columbia County Sheriff David Bartlett said Monday. “Many people are not taking the coronavirus situation seriously. If they’re not concerned about themselves, they need to understand they may take the virus to someone else such as an elderly person at risk.”

As of Monday, there were 19 positive tests for COVID-19 in Columbia County, said county Department of Health Director Jack Mabb. There have been no hospitalizations from the disease to date.

Mabb noted that one Ichabod Crane Central School student had tested positive. All parents have been notified via email.

In these confusing early days of trying to manage the crisis, Mabb said reporting of those affected by the virus is a work-in-progress. “If you fly in from out of the country,” he said, “and you are told by screening staff to self-isolate, please notify the Columbia County Health Department.”

“Also,” said Mabb, “there are those who work in health care in places like Albany or Berkshire counties. If you are told by your employer to self-isolate, we may not know about it.”

Director of Emergency Management Director David Harrison, Jr., said we have spoken with some of the county’s largest supermarkets, and was advised that “there is no food supply problem in the county.” Paper products remain in short supply, however. Hours have been established for senior-only shopping opportunities in many supermarkets – shoppers are advised to contact the specific store for those hours.

As of Monday, Harrison said the Columbia County Emergency Operations Center will be open from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. to monitor the coronavirus situation. Harrison also reported that emergency management services in the county are “doing well,” although there is the need for more Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). “The PPE situation is not good – we’re hoping that federal money filters down to help with that.”

Emergency responders – and everyone else – are best off to “assume that everybody has the virus. There are many who have it who may not know it,” Harrison said.

At the Columbia County Sheriff’s Office and jail, the lobby is open but all jail visits have been cancelled, said Bartlett. Additionally, the county court system is closed.

County departments continue to function, however, business is conducted either over the telephone or by appointment only. Phone numbers are posted on county buildings and can be found on the county website.