

Community Engagement and Public Information Department

**IMPORTANT EMERGENCY
INFORMATION – PSA #4, MARCH 26, 2020**

**County Government Announces Operational
Changes due to COVID-19**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Due to the continuing concerns of the spread of COVID-19 (Coronavirus) and recommendations by state and national government to limit exposure to others, public access to all Gloucester County offices and buildings will remain suspended through March 31. This also puts the County in direct alignment with the President’s “15 Days to Slow the Spread” efforts on slowing the disease’s spread and flattening the infection curve. Gloucester County continues to operate under a Local Emergency declaration. This is a precautionary security measure, which allows for the full powers of government to deal effectively with emergencies or hazardous weather conditions.

During this time, County staff is committed to continuing services to the public to every extent possible. The following information is the latest as to how various County departments and constitutional offices are continuing to operate over the coming weeks:

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

Due to the continuing concerns over COVID-19 (Coronavirus), and the Governor’s temporary ban of gatherings with 10 or more people, the following changes to the Gloucester County Board of Supervisors’ meeting schedule have been made:

- The joint meeting of the Gloucester County Board of Supervisors and the Gloucester County School Board, originally scheduled for March 17 and previously postponed, is now cancelled.

- The public hearing on the proposed fiscal year 2021 budget and the public hearing on the calendar year 2020 tax rates, both of which were originally scheduled for March 25, are cancelled. The public hearings will be rescheduled to a later date, which will be advertised in local media outlets and announced through the County's website and social media.
- The Board's budget work session, which was tentatively scheduled for April 1, will not be held. Dates for additional budget work sessions will be determined during the coming weeks. Those dates will also be advertised in local media outlets and announced through the County's website and social media.

The Chair of the Gloucester County Board of Supervisors, in consultation with the County Administrator, County Attorney, and the County's Director of Emergency Management, indicates that these changes are necessary to allow additional action toward facilitation of the Board's ability to have meetings electronically in the coming weeks. During this time, the County Attorney and County Administrator will continue to work together, with staff, to establish a timeline and appropriate tools/mechanisms for moving both the budget and other essential County business forward in a legal and compliant fashion.

For more information, contact the County Administrator's office at 804-693-4042 or e-mail county.administrator@gloucesterva.info.

COMMISSIONER OF THE REVENUE

Those with questions regarding Business Licenses, Business Tangible Personal Property or Excise forms, can call 804-693-1319 for assistance. Those needing to submit forms and/or payments, the Commissioner of the Revenue's office will continue to process them by e-mail, mail, or in person by using the Treasurer's Office drop box in the median of Justice Drive between County Office Buildings 1 and 2.

Elderly and Disabled Tax Relief Affidavits have been mailed out. Those with questions regarding affidavits or what documents need to be submitted with the affidavits can call 804-693-3046 for assistance. The Commissioner of the Revenue's office will continue to accept and process these applications during this period by mail, the Treasurer's Office drop box, or e-mail until May 1, 2020.

The Commissioner of the Revenue's office can accept Virginia State Income taxes by mail or by using the Treasurer's Office drop box. Those with questions about this process can call 804-693-1320.

Those using the Treasurer's Office drop box are encouraged to label the envelopes for the correct office so that they will be delivered to the correct department. That drop box will be checked periodically throughout the workday.

For more information, visit <http://www.gloucesterva.info/cor> or call 804-693-3451 during normal business hours.

DEPARTMENTS OF PLANNING, ZONING AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROGRAMS, BUILDING INSPECTIONS AND COMMERCIAL SITE PLANS

While the county is closed to the public, we are still open for business! We want you to be safe, so please stay home and conduct your business with us remotely if possible. If not, please follow the protocol for social distancing, hand washing and sanitization.

Staff will be holding paper permits and plans for up to 72 hours before processing to reduce the chance of spreading the virus by surface contact transmission. Where possible, we highly encourage electronic submission of permit requests and phone calls to help expedite service delivery.

PLANNING AND ZONING

You can phone our office at 804-693-1224 and we will help you with whatever your questions or concerns are and walk you through how to submit an application either by email or by regular mail (see information for each type of applications below). Our fillable forms are available on our website under forms and policies:

<https://www.gloucesterva.info/362/Planning-Zoning>.

For payment, you can:

1. Pay on-line at www.officialpayments.com (a convenience fee will apply);
2. Mail your check with your application (Planning and Zoning, 6489 Main Street, Gloucester, VA 23061); or
3. Mail in your check **after** you've emailed your application **and we've provided you an application number** so the fee can be applied to the correct application. **Please include the application # on the check!**
4. Put your check in the treasurer's drop box located on Justice Drive with the application # on the check so that your fee will be credited to the application.

If you need to drop off applications or plans, we developed a system where you can bring your materials to the back door (parking lot side) of County Building 2 (6489 Main Street) and call to have a staff member pick up your documents from a drop-off location. We have a table for you to place documents and staff will wait for you to leave before coming out and picking up the material. This will avoid any direct contact with each other while still allowing you to drop off necessary items.

Please be patient with us if we don't reply right away as the phone lines will be used more heavily than normal. We will all be monitoring the phone lines to cover when other staff are on the phone.

Once approved, staff will return permits, applications or plans to you by one of the following pre-arranged methods:

1. We can email you the scanned permit;
2. We can mail you the permit or plans;
3. You can arrange to pick up the permit, plans, materials at the lobby interface;
4. You can provide a pre-paid package for larger plans or plats.

Zoning Permits:

Zoning permit applications are available on our website - please fill out the application as completely as possible and if you have any questions, please give us a call so we can help you over the phone the same way we would help you if you came in the office. ***Please make sure that you fill in the application completely and that the name and phone number are legible so that we can call with any questions and not hold up your approval.***

Zoning Permits for construction will need to be submitted with a scaled plot plan showing the existing structures (if any) and proposed construction. If you need help with creating a scaled plot plan, please call us at 804-693-1224 and we will do our best to help you to locate a plat or plan in our office that could be used for the plot plan. If we don't have a plan available, you may need to go to the Clerk's office or draw a plot plan using graph paper (available for free on the internet). Again, give us a call if you have any questions.

Please email any zoning permit applications to ZoningStaff@gloucesterva.info. This email goes to multiple staff members so that your application is taken care of regardless of who is in the office to receive it.

Minor Subdivisions Plats, Family Transfers, Property Line Vacations, or Boundary Line Adjustments:

We will do our best to review electronic submittals by email, but this may be difficult for some plats and plans which may be better submitted by mail or dropped off in the back lobby using the procedure outlined above. This process will be especially important for final plats that will need to be signed by the subdivision agent. ***Please make sure that the name and phone number of a contact person are included on the application and are legible so that we can call with any questions and not hold up your review or approval.*** Please email any electronic applications to PlanningStaff@gloucesterva.info. This email goes to multiple staff members so that your application is taken care of regardless of who is in the office to receive it.

Rezoning, Conditional Use Permits or Board of Zoning Appeals Applications:

These applications all require public hearings by different Boards and Commissions. They also require a mandatory pre-application. We are currently exploring ways to have online meetings or consider conducting the meetings via conference call. Those details have not been determined at this time; however, we would be happy discuss your application with you by phone and provide you with similar feedback as we would during a preapplication conference. Please call 804-693-1224 and explain what you are looking to do, and we will make sure we connect you with the appropriate staff member. You can also email PlanningStaff@gloucesterva.info. This email goes to multiple staff members so that your question is taken care of regardless of who is in the office to receive it.

For preapplication conferences conducted over the phone, please submit the preapplication request form by mail, e-mail, or dropped off in the back lobby using the procedure outlined above and staff will contact the applicant to determine a time and date to conduct the phone conference.

We are still determining whether the County Boards and Commissions will be meeting over the next few months to better provide guidance on these types of applications. More information to come.

Major Subdivisions (4 or more lots or any subdivision with a new road other than a private road serving 3 or few lots):

Major Subdivisions greater than 50 lots require review and preliminary approval from the Planning Commission. Due to the size of the plans, the plans will need to be submitted through the drop off procedure outlines above, but the application and fees could be submitted electronically or by mail. Application fees for major subdivisions reviewed by the Planning Commission must be paid prior to staff scheduling a date for the Planning Commission's review of the application. However, you can email draft plats or plans and ask questions for us to review prior to submittal. Email PlanningStaff@gloucesterva.info with any questions about major subdivisions. This email goes to multiple staff members so that your application is taken care of regardless of who is in the office to receive it.

Major Subdivision under 50 lots do not require preliminary approval from the Planning Commission. Prior to final plat approval of a major subdivision, development plans for the subdivision need to be approved by the site plan committee. Applications for development plans for major subdivisions are submitted to the [Community Development office](#) for review and approval prior to final plat approval. Procedures for submittal to that office are outlined separately.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROGRAMS

You can phone our office at 804-693-1217 and we will help you with whatever your questions or concerns are and walk you through how to submit an application either by email EnvironmentalStaff@gloucesterva.info or by regular mail (Environmental Programs, 6489 Main Street, Gloucester, VA 23061). Our fillable forms are available on our website under forms and policies: <https://www.gloucesterva.info/565/Forms>.

For payment, you can:

1. Pay on-line at www.officialpayments.com (a convenience fee will apply);
2. Mail your check with your application (Environmental Programs, 6489 Main Street, Gloucester, VA 23061); or
3. Mail in your check **after** you've emailed your application **and we've provided you an application number** so the fee can be applied to the correct application. **Please include the application # on the check!**
4. Put your check in the treasurer's drop box located on Justice Drive with the application # on the check so that your fee will be credited to the application.

If you need to drop off applications or plans, we developed a system where you can bring your materials to the back door (parking lot side) of County Building 2 (6489 Main Street) and call to have a staff member pick up your documents from a drop-off location. We have a table for you to place documents and staff will wait for you to leave before coming out and picking up the material. This will avoid any direct contact with each other while still allowing you to drop off necessary items.

Please be patient with us if we don't reply right away as the phone lines will be used more heavily than normal. We will all be monitoring the phone lines to cover when other staff are on the phone.

Once approved, staff will return permits, applications or plans to you by one of the following pre-arranged methods:

1. We can email you the scanned permit;
2. We can mail you the permit or plans;
3. You can arrange to pick up the permit, plans, materials at the lobby interface;
4. You can provide a pre-paid package for larger plans or plats.

CHESAPEAKE BAY PRESERVATION AND WETLANDS

Chesapeake Bay Exception Applications for accessory structures or additions to existing structures in the RPA and Chesapeake Bay Waiver applications for activities in the landward 50' of the RPA must be submitted through the above process. Please call 804-693-1217 with any questions or email rowens@gloucesterva.info.

Joint Permit Applications, requiring a public hearing through the Gloucester County Wetlands Board and are submitted to the Virginia Marine Resources Commission (VMRC). Please visit the VMRC website to get information regarding them directly: <https://www.mrc.virginia.gov/>

Army Corps Pre -Applications are available on our web page and sent to the Army Corps directly.

We are still determining whether the County Boards and Commissions will be meeting over the next few months to better provide guidance on these types of applications. More information to come.

SITE PLAN SUBMITTALS

You can phone our office at 804-824-2458 and we will help you with whatever your questions or concerns are and walk you through how to submit site plan by drop off or by regular mail (see information for each type of applications below). Our applications are available on our website under forms and policies: <https://www.gloucesterva.info/253/Commercial-Plan-Development-Site-Plans>.

For payment, you can:

1. Pay on-line at www.officialpayments.com (a convenience fee will apply);
2. Mail your check with your application (County Administration-Third Floor, Attention: Christina Grover, 6489 Main Street, Gloucester, VA 23061); or

If you need to drop off plans, we developed a system where you can bring your materials to the back door (parking lot side) of County Building 2 (6489 Main Street) and call 804-693-4042 to have a staff member pick up your documents from a drop-off location. We have a table for you to place documents and staff will wait for you to leave before coming out and picking up the material. This will avoid any direct contact with each other while still allowing you to drop off necessary items.

Please be patient with us if we don't reply right away as the phone lines will be used more heavily than normal. We will all be monitoring the phone lines to cover when other staff are on the phone.

Once approved, staff will return plans to you by one of the following pre-arranged methods:

1. You can arrange to pick up the permit, plans, materials at the lobby interface;
2. You can provide a pre-paid package for mailing plans back to applicant.

BUILDING PERMITS AND INSPECTIONS

You can phone our office at 804-693-2744 and we will help you with whatever your questions or concerns are and walk you through how to submit an application either by email or by regular mail (see information for each type of applications below). Our fillable forms are available on our website under forms and policies:

<https://www.gloucesterva.info/172/Building-Inspection>.

For payment, you can:

1. Pay on-line at www.officialpayments.com (a convenience fee will apply);
2. Mail your check with your application (Building Inspections, 6489 Main Street, Gloucester, VA 23061); or
3. Mail in your check **after** you've emailed your application **and we've provided you an application number** so the fee can be applied to the correct application. **Please include the application # on the check!**
4. Put your check in the treasurer's drop box located on Justice Drive with the application # on the check so that your fee will be credited to the application.

If you need to drop off applications or plans, we developed a system where you can bring your materials to the back door (parking lot side) of County Building 2 (6489 Main Street) and call 804-693-2744 to have a staff member pick up your documents from a drop-off location. We have a table for you to place documents and staff will wait for you to leave before coming out and picking up the material. This will avoid any direct contact with each other while still allowing you to drop off necessary items.

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3. You can arrange to pick up the permit, plans, materials at the lobby interface;
4. You can provide a pre-paid package for larger plans or plats.

Building/Trade Permits:

Building/Trade permit applications are available on our website - please fill out the application as completely as possible and if you have any questions, please give us a call so we can help you over the phone the same way we would help you if you came in the office. ***Please make sure that you fill in the application completely and that the name and phone number are legible so that we can call with any questions and not hold up your approval.***

Request for Building/Trade Inspections:

Please contact the Building Inspections office at 804-693-2744 to request inspections. The request for next day inspections must be received by 4 p.m. the day prior to the requested inspection and is based upon availability.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The Economic Development staff has been working in conjunction with the Small Business Development Administration and the Virginia Employment Commission to provide the most up to date information on resources available for small businesses. A form to capture and report financial losses and employment changes was emailed out yesterday and is also on our website at www.gloucesterva.info/econ. Please contact our Business Recovery Coordinator, Sherry Spring at 804-693-1414 or email sspring@gloucesterva.info for more information, or visit <https://www.gloucesterva.info/1189/COVID-19-BUSINESS-RESOURCES>.

GENERAL DISTRICT COURT

Through April 6, 2020, all civil, traffic and criminal matters in the Gloucester General District Court, except for emergency matters, will be postponed. Emergency matters include, but are not limited to, petitions for isolation, inmate arraignments, bail reviews, protective order cases, civil commitment hearings. For specific information, call 804-693-4860.

LIBRARY

The Gloucester County Public Library, in compliance with Gloucester County Emergency Protocols regarding the COVID-19 virus, have suspended all programs and outreach through Tuesday, March 31. Updates will be provided on social media as well as on the Library's website. Also, all AARP Tax-Aide services that have traditionally operated out of the Library have been suspended.

Library staff will be available via phone to answer any questions at 804-693-2998 or via e-mail at library.questions@gloucesterva.info. Book drops are open 24/7. Overdue fines will not accrue during the days libraries are closed.

Book donations cannot be received at this time.

The Library's public Wi-fi connection equipment has been positioned to best support access from the parking lot. Those wishing to use the public Wi-Fi from the parking lot at either the Main or Gloucester Point branches can do so by using the password "hellopatron." Please be sure to practice effective social distancing if you get out of your car to do so.

The Library is always open online at www.gloucesterva.info/publiclibrary.

PARKS, RECREATION, AND TOURISM

All regularly scheduled programming and structured activities remain cancelled at this time. In compliance with Federal and State directives due to COVID-19, playgrounds at all County parks are closed until further notice. While the restrooms at Beaverdam Park are currently remaining open, rental equipment (batteries, jon boats, canoes, kayaks, paddles, life vests, etc.) and bait sales will not be available at Beaverdam Park. Reservations for shelters and the Whitcomb Lodge have been cancelled through March, and private league play at parks has been suspended indefinitely.

All County Parks are open in a limited capacity for passive recreation and people are asked to observe the rules such as practicing social distancing, staying off playgrounds and no group gatherings or group sports. Disregarding these rules may result in park closures.

PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Gloucester County Public Schools will remain closed for the remainder of the 2019-2020 school year. For more information, visit <https://gets.gc.k12.va.us/>.

PUBLIC UTILITIES

Customers can pay Gloucester water and sewer bills as follows:

- By mail to: 6489 Main Street, Gloucester, VA 23061.
- In person using the Treasurer's drop box in the median of Justice Drive between County Office Buildings 1 and 2. Checks and money orders will be accepted. Cash payments, while typically discouraged, will also be accepted through the drop box. Any over-payment will be credited to your next bill. Please be sure to include the payment portion of the bill in an envelope with your payment.
- Online, by visiting the Public Utilities page on www.gloucesterva.info using a credit/debit card (\$3.95 fee) or by electronic check (\$2.50 fee).

Account numbers will be required to ensure payment is applied to the correct account – please ensure that you include your account number on your check or on a separate piece of paper if paying by cash.

Applications for service are available by visiting <https://www.gloucesterva.info/DocumentCenter/View/1428/Application-for-Water-and-or->

[Sewer-Service-PDF](#). Completed/signed applications can be submitted by e-mail to (ADurham@gloucesterva.info), by fax, 804-693-4664, or by dropping it off in the Justice Drive drop box. Deposits or transfer fees can be paid through Official Payments. Contact customer service at 804-693-4044 to coordinate payments.

Payments for March bills are due by March 31, 2020. Late Penalties will be added to outstanding bills after the due date. Utilities staff will not be scheduling disconnection of service for delinquent accounts at this time.

Utilities staff will be reading meters starting March 23 and will finish by March 31. April bills will be mailed April 1, 2020.

As toilet paper runs short, many citizens may turn to alternatives such as "flushable" wipes and sanitizing wipes. These poor substitutes can cause problems for the nation's (and our local) sewers that could include backups into homes and malfunctioning treatment equipment.

SOCIAL SERVICES

Customers who currently have already-scheduled appointments for new applications or recertification for SNAP, TANF and childcare will have their appointment completed by phone. If you have recently changed your phone number and failed to report it to social services, contact the agency at 804-693-2671 to provide your current phone number.

If you do not have access to a phone to contact the agency, there are directions posted on the front door of the Social Services office with instructions on how to proceed. For more information, contact the Department of Social Services at 804-693-2671. To apply for benefits, contact Virginia Commonhelp at 855-242-8282.

TREASURER'S OFFICE

The Treasurer's Office is available by e-mail (treasurer@gloucesterva.info) or telephone (804-693-2141) to assist citizens while County offices are closed to the public. To make a payment, use the drive by drop box, located in the median of Justice Drive, between County Office Buildings 1 and 2. The drop box will be checked first thing in the morning and every few hours throughout the workday. Payments should be made by check or money order – cash payments will also be accepted, although typically discouraged. Please be sure to include a payment voucher and/or other identifying information, along with your name and phone number, to ensure that your payment is credited properly.

Customers are also able to pay online or by telephone through credit/debit card or by electronic check (convenience fee will apply).

Online – www.officialpayments.com

Telephone (jurisdiction code 1087) – 1-800-2-PAYTAX (800-272-9829)

Finally, the office will continue to receive any payments or other information sent to the office via U.S. Mail.

For those who have a hold on their registration with the DMV, call the Treasurer's Office at 804-693-2141 for the current balance due on the account. The balance can be paid online, by telephone or by putting a payment in the drop box. Those paying online or by telephone can call the office with their confirmation number to have the hold released as soon as possible. PLEASE NOTE – DMV has closed its offices and provided an extension on registration renewals. Please visit their website at www.dmvnow.com for additional information.

VIRGINIA COOPERATIVE EXTENSION

Commercial Grower diagnostic testing services at the Virginia Tech Plant Disease Clinic: Due to the COVID-19 response in Blacksburg, the Plant Disease Clinic is without student workers and is prioritizing samples from commercial growers whose livelihood depends on accurate diagnosis. For samples from home landscapes, home gardens and public gardens (including samples from landscape professionals), the Plant Disease Clinic will use visual and microscopic examination to make the best diagnosis of the problem but will only culture samples from commercial growers.

Local producers in need of plant diagnostic services, soil tests, and nematode assays are asked to contact Krista Gustafson by email at kgustafson@vt.edu to arrange delivery of test kits and/or pick up of plant samples.

The Gloucester County week of 4-H Camp at Jamestown 4-H Educational Center (June 22-26) is full and on a waitlist. We understand that there is concern regarding the possibility of camp cancelation due to COVID-19 response. Parents should know that our first priority is camper health and safety, and that we are still engaged in planning a terrific camp week. Should the 4-H Center need to cancel, participants will be refunded paid camp fees.

For Extension information regarding family economics, food and health, please contact Glenn Sturm, Extension Agent for Family and Consumer Sciences at gjsturm@vt.edu. For information on 4-H and Agriculture and Natural Resources, contact Krista Gustafson at kgustafson@vt.edu.

Those without access to email are asked to leave a message on the office main line at 804-693-2602.

VOTER REGISTRAR

Although the Voter Registrar's Office has been closed to the public, residents can still get registered to vote, make changes to their voter registration and make many other transactions online at www.vote.virginia.gov. Residents with questions can call the Voter Registrar's office at 804-693-3659.

WASTE MANAGEMENT

All Waste Management's convenience centers will continue to operate as normal. The organization does not have intentions of taking extraordinary measures at this time. Staff members at convenience centers have been asked to keep their distance from the public and assist only those with disabilities.

GLOUCESTER COUNTY'S COMMITMENT TO YOU

To the best of our ability, Gloucester County will continue delivery of services, so long as we can do so in a safe manner – promoting the continued health of our employees, our citizens, and the community overall. While we are doing our best to create service delivery solutions to accommodate these unique and unprecedented times, we acknowledge that no solution is perfect. Those identifying service delivery gaps that we need to focus on, and those with ideas as to how we can better serve our community are encouraged to provide feedback directly through the department affected.

Additionally, County Administration can be contacted directly for escalation of concerns, for suggestions that may impact multiple departments, and otherwise with regard to County service delivery generally at county.administrator@gloucesterva.info or by dialing 804-693-4042.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

This is an evolving situation and all information is subject to change at any time. For up to date information, visit www.gloucesterva.info or the County's Facebook page at www.facebook.com/gloucesterva. For specific questions, contact Gloucester's Community Engagement and Public Information office at 804-693-5730 or e-mail gsheppard@gloucesterva.info.

For health-related information, contact the Virginia Department of Health, Three Rivers Coronavirus Call Center, by calling 804-313-1638. Call Center Hours are 8AM to 6PM Monday through Friday. Alternatively, the public is encouraged to visit the Virginia Health Department's special website on Coronavirus at <http://www.vdh.virginia.gov/surveillance-and-investigation/novel-coronavirus/>.