

Beaver Island Public Statement regarding the Coronavirus (COVID-19) Pandemic

Last Updated: April 23, 2020

“Stay Home, Stay Safe” and “Be Aware of What you Share”

As of April 23, 2020, the Beaver Island Rural Health Center is reporting that three patients have been tested for COVID-19 and are following strict medical protocol. All patient tests have come back negative. It is assumed that individuals who have sought testing will contact others with whom they have had recent contact.

It is our hope that Islanders will continue to follow the Governor’s Orders as are currently in place until May 1, 2020. On Friday, April 24, Governor Whitmer is expected to share state plans to safely ease stay-home restrictions. According to mLIVE (April 22, 2020): “Gov. Gretchen Whitmer’s administration will be announcing a plan for loosening restrictions on business, activities and travel in Michigan later this week. But she warned some form of a stay-at-home order will likely have to remain in effect past the end of the month as the state continues to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic.”

For the foreseeable future it is still extremely important for everyone to follow these guidelines:

- **Respect Social Distancing.**
- **Wash your Hands.**
- **Wear a Mask. Thanks to local sewing groups, these are available at the BI Rural Health Center.**
- **Monitor your Health. Pay attention for COVID-19 symptoms: Fever, Cough, Shortness of Breath. If you are concerned about your health, contact your health care provider. If you are ill, do not go out of your home.**

You Asked: What about summer events, will they be cancelled? The Answer: Everyone should understand that the townships do not have the authority to cancel events, other than those they specifically sponsor. Most of the Island’s summer events are planned and executed by amazing non-profit organizations. Ultimately, those organizations will make the difficult call about cancellations. Organizational boards will make decisions based upon several factors including adherence to State Restrictions and guidelines by the Health Department. Each of these boards has the best interest of Beaver Island at the heart of their mission and will act in a way that best protects the community. It is expected that each event sponsoring organization will monitor ever changing situations and determine an appropriate timeline for decision-making concerning individual events. Some Island Events have already been cancelled, for example the Birding Festival that happens early in the summer.

You Asked: I am a property owner wishing to return to the Island soon, what should I be concerned about? The Answer: We welcome our summer residents back as state orders allow and look forward to when we can all be together in a ‘more normal’ way. Again, we ask returning residents to individually consider when is the best time to safely return. We are asking those residents returning home to Beaver Island to remain in self-quarantine for 14 days, even if they have no symptoms or known exposure. We ask that if you do come to the Island while the State Order is in effect, as well as after April 30, 2020, that you please be prepared to self-quarantine. That means making arrangements to have groceries and supplies delivered to you and bring items not available on the Island with you. We ask that you not go out to the stores when you arrive, or call service workers to fix something; make plans ahead of time to have work completed in your home before you arrive. Please refrain from socializing with your neighbors. We hope that residents will take these precautions and that together we can help slow the spread of the virus and save lives.

The goal of the Township Supervisors is to make sure emergency organizations have what they need to carry out their individual missions during this crisis: BIEMS, BIRHC, BIFD, CCSD (Charlevoix County Sheriff Department). As such, we ask for regular input from their leaders through conference calls and we monitor the Regional EOC calls twice times a week. We plan to release a Public Statement once a week, unless there is something urgent to report.

For updated information click on the "Coronavirus 19" Link on either township's homepage peainetwp.org or stjamestwp.org

You can sign up for email notifications of changes to the St. James Twp. website by going to the homepage and clicking the eNotify Tab. This will soon be available for the Peaine Twp. website too.

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