



4410 W. Streetsboro Road ♦ Richfield, OH 44286-0387

Office: 330-659-9201 ♦ www.richfieldvillageohio.org

Mayor Michael Wheeler

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VILLAGE OF RICHFIELD PRESS RELEASE

DISTRIBTUION: IMMEDIATE

The current national emergency has been a been challenging time for the Village employees and our residents. The Village's response team has been working diligently with federal, state and county agencies to ensure that the necessary protocols are in place to protect Richfield if COVID-19 surges.

Guidelines to permit the opening of Village operations will be a phased-in approach based on up-to-date data, readiness, low risk of resurgence and, importantly, continuance to protect the most vulnerable. The Village has adhered to these guidelines since March when the Governor declared a state of emergency and the stay at home order.

The Village's initial response to adhere to these orders was to evaluate programs, events and portions of the Village operations. The result was to close the Senior Center, Recreation Center, building rental facilities and a number of programs sponsored by these departments. The facts and the data at this time indicated that the order would be short-lived and with consensus with Council impacted staff were placed on paid administrative leave.

The ability to re-open to normal functions within the next few months remains dubious due to the lack of evidence to support the inability for a resurgence or rebound from COVID-19. After careful consideration and communication with Council, these impacted staff members will be furloughed effective May 4, 2020 until such time that we can return them safely back to the Village and begin providing our community programs. The furlough status does qualify for unemployment compensation.

On behalf of Council and myself, this has been an extremely difficult decision but one necessary in these uncertain times. They are dedicated to public service performing their job professionally, efficiently, compassion for our community, and member of the "Village family" of outstanding staff. I look forward to their return as soon as possible and wish them well and healthy.

Sincerely,

Michael Wheeler
Mayor & Director of Public Safety