



VILLAGE OF SCARSDALE

Open Letter to Scarsdale Community

COVID-19 Update: April 01, 2020

Dear Scarsdale Residents,

As the Coronavirus continues to significantly impact our community, the Village is hard at work maintaining the safety of our residents and Village employees as well as continuing to provide essential Village services to our residents. We are entering a new phase of this pandemic with over 10,000 confirmed positive cases in Westchester County alone. Much will be asked of all of us in the coming days and weeks as we approach the local apex of this pandemic and then begin the long task of recovering and healing our community.

We hope that you and your loved ones are healthy and doing as well as can be expected during this difficult time. We understand that the rapid onset of this pandemic has not only impacted our physical and emotional well-being, but also our financial well-being. We enter this emotional and financial shock as a strong, united community and we will weather this storm in the same fashion.

Updated Guidance from Governor Cuomo

Here are a few recent updates from the Governor's office that are relevant to Scarsdale:

- The isolation protocol has been updated such that people infected with COVID-19 may end isolation if they meet ALL three of the following criteria:
 - It has been 7 days since first experiencing symptoms;
 - The patient has had no fever for at least 72 hours without taking fever-reducing medication, such as Tylenol; AND
 - Any shortness of breath, coughing and difficulty breathing has improved.

- Non-essential construction has been halted.

Updated COVID-19 Status in Scarsdale

The Village continues to receive daily updates of positive COVID-19 cases within the Village from the County Department of Health, which in turn receives its information from the State Department of Health. As of April 1, 2020, we have been notified of 93 confirmed COVID-19 cases in Scarsdale. However, it is important to note that during the acceleration phase of the pandemic, which we are now amidst, the reported count understates the actual prevalence of COVID-19 in our community. Residents are *strongly encouraged* to maintain social distancing from others, including persons not displaying symptoms.

Communication

Our Village government is working hard to keep you informed via Twitter at [@ScarsdaleGov](#), at Board meetings and work sessions on Zoom, and on the [Village website](#), including signing up for [Notify Me](#). Always feel free to email me at mayor@scarsdale.com.

Village Budget Update

Our Village government's top priority is to keep us safe and continue delivering essential services despite the operational hurdles resulting from COVID-19. Staff is working around the clock. We are also keenly aware of the economic impacts this pandemic will cause now and in the months ahead. That is why Village fiscal planning for the Coronavirus started in early February. Last week, the Village Board passed a modification of the current fiscal year budget and the coming fiscal year budget which allocated nearly \$1.6 million to a newly-created COVID-19 Reserve Account. The Village Manager and Treasurer also identified a second-tier funding source to potentially allocate up to an additional \$1.7 million to the COVID-19 Reserve Account. An additional \$185,000 may also be reallocated from the current fiscal year, bringing the potential identified funding of the COVID-19 Reserve Account to nearly \$3.5 million.

We are also working to ensure that we are ready for our planned next steps as soon as this public health crisis and state of emergency begins to subside. The Village Treasurer has prepared a preliminary scenario analysis of Village revenue for the coming fiscal year based on current information and extensive experience in municipal finance. The scenarios indicate a possible revenue shortfall in the \$2.5-3.8 million range, or 4.25-6.44% of the fiscal 20-21 budget. As we obtain more clarity in the coming weeks these scenarios will be revised and new scenarios will be created. Fortunately, our Village Manager's quick and decisive actions, including the implementation of fiscal austerity measures, have created a financial cushion to help offset potential revenue shortfalls the Village will likely face in the coming months.

State law requires us to have an adopted budget by May 1. We are also required to hold a public hearing, which will be held via Zoom during the Board Meeting on April 14. While the prudent decision may be to adopt the current tentative budget, it is important to note that the Village has the ability to modify our budget throughout the year. Difficult financial discussions in the coming weeks and months are inevitable. The Village Board and staff are ready to work with the community to determine appropriate adjustments to the FY 20-21 budget and service levels that may need to be modified to reflect the economic impacts of this pandemic. To make material cuts to our budget, we must consider reducing or eliminating a combination of services and infrastructure improvements. These fundamental decisions should not be made out of short-term fear or panic. Any changes to the budget should be driven by data and done using a methodical and inclusive process that contemplates medium- and longer-term considerations and include community input. We will also work with staff to determine how much of our unassigned fund balance or additional debt should be used during this time. The Board fully acknowledges its fiduciary duty to the taxpayers of Scarsdale and is committed to continuing the Village's long-standing practice of fiscal prudence as we navigate the months ahead.

Concluding Remarks

On behalf of all residents, I thank Village staff for their tireless efforts in supporting our community. The early planning, decisive action, and countless hours given by dedicated men and women who serve the Village are greatly appreciated – we owe them a debt of gratitude.

Our community's strength, cooperation and compassion have been readily apparent over the past weeks and will certainly continue as we look ahead. We wish everyone grappling with this disease a speedy recovery. We continue to hear stories of strangers within the community buying each other groceries and lending a helping hand. This is what Scarsdale does best; we lift each other up in times of adversity. These incredible acts of kindness are nothing short of inspiring and indicative of the community that we are proud to call home.

We will face tragic losses, and will need to lean on each other for support – as we always do.

Just as we will get through this challenging time together as a community, we will get through our recovery together as well.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'MS', is positioned above the printed name.

Marc Samwick
Mayor