Members of the Senior Center and Town Staff:

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has identified older adults and people who have severe chronic medical conditions like heart, lung, or kidney disease at higher risk of getting the COVID-19 illness. According to the CDC, early data suggest older people are twice as likely to have serious COVID-19 illness. Recently, the first cases of the coronavirus (COVID-19) were diagnosed in Connecticut. As the virus spreads, the Town turns to the CDC, to the State of Connecticut and to the Central Connecticut Health District (CCHD) for guidance on the Town response.

Yesterday, Governor Lamont declared a public health emergency and civil preparedness emergency throughout the State of Connecticut. CCHD Director Charles Brown, e-mailed the district town managers about senior centers continue to operate and provide programs for the vulnerable senior population and stated that the “CCHD feels it would be irresponsible to continue non-essential programs in the midst of community spread of this disease”. While the risk for transmission may seem low, the consequences of infection are very high.

Therefore, I am closing the Rocky Hill Senior Center effective this Monday, March 16, thereby cancelling all programs and activities as well as the lunch program. The mini bus program will continue provide service for doctors’ appointments, banking, and grocery store shopping. The food pantry will keep its regular hours for those that use this service.

People will view this action as “going over the top”. But, based on the information available and actions being taken around us relating to COVID-19, I believe this is the appropriate action to be taken at this time. The plan is to keep the Senior Center closed for three (3) weeks and make an evaluation of the situation around April 2. Town’s Senior Center staff will be available by telephone if any questions do arise.

Below are recommendations on how to avoid the COVID-19 virus:

- Wash hands for 20 seconds - after using restroom, before eating, after blowing nose, coughing or sneezing, between client/patient visits.
  - If soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with 60%-95% alcohol.
  - Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
  - Cough or sneeze into your elbow or use a tissue to cover your nose and mouth, then throw the tissue into the trash can.
  - Avoid crowds. Stay at home as much as possible.

Thank you and look forward to having things back to normal soon,
John Mehr - Town Manager, Rocky Hill