

Community Services FY 20 – Fourth Quarter Report

Library

Although the library was closed to the public during this quarter, several measures were taken to stay connected to our patrons and neighbors, and to use this time to better organize our collection and spaces.

Information was dispensed about downloading e-materials on the CWMars system. Interesting & informational links were added to the library's presence on the town's website every week. Virtual Story Times were uploaded to the website and Facebook. "Puzzles on the Porch"- were available for anyone interested.

Returned materials continued to be 'checked in'. Several areas inside were re-organized. Staff viewed multiple webinars and zoom meetings related to: managing transactions, handling materials, initiatives during closure, and preparation for curbside service and eventual re-opening.

Senior Services

The Center was closed to the public during this quarter, however, the following areas of service continued, uninterrupted:

Meals on Wheels: Despite GAAMHA's decision to shut down the transportation piece of their operation which assisted us in delivering meals, we were able to bring our 2 drivers back into service to keep deliveries continuing uninterrupted.

SHINE: Our SHINE volunteer, Gail Noel continued to schedule phone appointments with individuals who had insurance and Medicare questions.

Check-in Wellness Calls: In partnering with our EMD, Rich, and the CERT members, we were able to stay connected with those individuals in our community who we felt could be in need of help. Follow-up assistance was arranged for those who needed it.

Community Garden: Approximately 10 volunteers cleaned out and planted the raised beds on the Senior Center grounds. With a neighbor committed to watering, the garden is providing fresh produce to the food pantry each week.

Newsletter: We continued to send an abbreviated, electronic version of the monthly newsletter to each Senior who had provided his/her email address

Food Pantry: Approximately 25 volunteers pitched in to organize and staff the food pantry this quarter. The pantry hours were increased from 3 each week to 11. Donations of food and money have poured in thanks to our generous community and partners such as MOC, Heywood Hospital, Worcester County Sheriff's Office, and Growing Places. Deliveries of food are arranged to anyone who is unable to get to the pantry.

Our food pantry remains one of the only such entities in our region, which is operated by a municipality, as opposed to a non-profit or faith-based organization.

At *least* 15 hours of my time each week, for the past 5 months, has been spent on food pantry matters. This includes: shopping to stock the pantry, receiving weekly donation during non-pantry hours, compiling and reporting statistics (required for participation in Worcester County Food Bank), processing monetary donations and sending thank—you notes, delivering food to residents who are unable to get to the pantry (averaging 2 per week), and staffing the pantry EVERY Thursday 5pm-7pm, and EVERY Saturday 12-3pm- (since mid- March). A small group of members of the New Hope Bible Chapel have been essential in staffing the pantry on Tuesday mornings, and Thursday afternoons. Unless and until the pantry operations are formally turned over to this group (or one like them), it is simply not realistic to expect them to take on a greater role, which would return those 15+ hours of my time back (where they belong) to Community Services.

Veterans Services

1. State considers VSO essential and relaxes requirements to qualify for Ch115 due to COVID-19.
2. Attend weekly VSO calls for briefings held by the DVS and Secretary of Veteran Services.
3. Worked with veterans to file VA claims and get enrolled in VA healthcare.
4. Worked with a veteran in Orange to address Veteran food insecurities. Teamed up with Massachusetts Military Support Foundation and the Baldwinville American Legion to deliver Food4Vets boxes every Saturday since April. Delivering over 400 boxes, produce, milk, eggs and bread. This equals over 9600 meals we have provided. Sponsor have donated to support this endeavor.
5. Partnered with the American Legion and sent a two page information sheet to over 700 veterans in Templeton, Phillipston and other neighboring veterans.
6. Did outreach to Ch115 participants/health and welfare checks by delivering food baskets supplied by the food pantry twice during April and May.
7. Coordinated and scripted the Memorial Day virtual ceremony.
8. Coordinated and placed over 900 flags on veterans gravesites for Memorial Day and maintained them until after Memorial Day.
9. Placed lights at war memorials at each village for Gold Star day/night.
10. Worked with Quabbin mediation to develop an online training program for veterans mediation. As well as working to get this program into the National Guard.
11. Developed preliminary plans for park at Otter River and obtained Fire and Police Chiefs approval time proceed. Presented these plans to the BOS.
12. Worked with Jackie Prime to clean up, coordinate and run the food pantry.
13. Worked on Senior Center network and setup all computers to get signed on, print and connect to the main storage location.
14. Cleaned and organized the Senior Center with Jackie.

15. Continued to have appointments with veterans throughout the pandemic.
16. Appointed to the Intelligence officer position on the ICS team in May. Met every week until June and now every other week. Informed team on current trends, issues and recommendations on how to proceed.
17. Setup signature pad for the new Vetraspec system.
18. Partnered with VetCenter in Worcester to get more information out to veterans and assistance with Food4Vets.
19. Partnered with Project New Hope in Worcester to provide supplemental food to veterans, and provide another source of assistance to veterans in need.

TCTV

General Summary

Most TCTV operations focused on the COVID crisis from mid-March through Q4.

Regular productions and growth initiatives had to be suspended.

TCTV was early on the COVID scene and has provided reliable information.

TCTV Meetings Coverage

39 meetings broadcast/recorded, 37 on Zoom and live-streamed

Templeton and Phillipston Town Meetings + livestream of Templeton ATM to YouTube, Cable Channel 8

Observations and concerns:

We are relying on Comcast, Zoom and YouTube.

Zoom is reliable, YouTube sometimes is not.

Bitstreams have dropped precipitously low at times during livestreams.

Our success rate is testament to Shawn, testing, and reliability of today's tech.

We push the envelope of our systems and get good results for our buck.

TCTV YouTube Channel Analytics

15.7K views, +44% in quarter, +70 subscriptions

138.4K impressions, +22% in quarter

Most views from external links and Facebook

Most popular content surprises:

Songbirds of the Northeast (from 2017) 5,200 views total

Collector Time: Tonka Trucks

How to Make a Ninja Mask

Takeout Templeton

Inside Police Station

Observation:

Community-focused video works over the long term. It has staying power.

TCTV Facebook Page - Templeton area informational resource

+100 follows in Q4

414 avg. reach/day in quarter, +66%

37.7K total reach in quarter

Observations:

We have evolved from a COVID info source to more community focus.

People respect objective and transparent info about news and issues.

Pat Gale, Alisha O'Malley, have helped tremendously with Facebook posts.

TCTV Cable Channel 8

Emergency notices ran April-July on Ch. 8, changed daily or multiple times a day.

Slide show notices were rebuilt from event-based to COVID-based.

New server purchase, installation and initial training was completed

Cultural Council

The TCC met several times via ZOOM this quarter. May was our first quarterly meeting to discuss this quarter's 2020 events, mostly regarding cancellations and help with Grantees.

The council in April sent out a letter to all Templeton Cultural Council 2020 grantees, letting them know if there is anything they need from us to please reach out.

Covid-19 was certainly a devastating circumstance for many people having performances or gatherings and our council tried to accommodate any requests for changes.

Winchendon Music Festival was allowed to use its grant to develop a digital series. This allowed the WMF to showcase artist's videos and the artistic processes. Also discussions about instruments, composers and genres, to the community.

Other requested had been to move the event dates, however, ultimately ending in cancellation.

Our TCC was helped greatly by the Templeton Community TV, providing safe access to ZOOM links. Steve Castle and Shawn Lampert made sure all council members could log on and maneuver ZOOM with no problems.

April-June had no expenses paid out with State funds. Town funds used for Narragansett Historical Society - Lucy Stone Tea advertising and for purchase of Bongo's, for TCC use during festivals.

The remainder of the quarter was uneventful, as everyone adhered to Covid-19 rules of social distancing and no large gathering. Many of the Templeton Cultural Councils sponsored events were cancelled.

Hopefully our next quarter will have more events to share and report on.

Recreation

Nothing reported