Dear Vinalhaven Community Members,

It is hard to believe it’s already mid-June. With summer fast approaching and businesses reopening, Vinalhaven faces the same challenges as the rest of the state, the nation, and the world as we learn to navigate the pandemic, balancing public health and safety with the health of the economy.

Summer has always been such a special time on the Island, but we all know this summer will be different in so many ways. As members of the Town Select Board, it is our responsibility to work closely with Vinalhaven’s Public Health Team, businesses, organizations, and all of you, to assess the current state of the pandemic and of the island economy then make the best recommendations possible for the overall well-being of this community.

Even as Maine and the island “reopen”, we know that the virus has not changed; we are still in a pandemic. We know that the best way to prevent the spread of the virus is to stay home and avoid contact with others. We still have limited medical facilities. We do not have a hospital nor all of the resources that come with it—ICU beds, ventilators, Pulmonologists, and Respiratory Therapists. Transporting critically ill patients off the island continues to be dependent on things such as the weather, crew availability, and hospital access. Our medical teams and EMS providers are few in number and while they are prepared to respond to cases on the island, they are concerned an increase in population during the pandemic will put a strain on our limited resources.

While the state of the pandemic has not changed, what has changed is our ability to minimize our risk of exposure; we’ve learned to follow CDC guidelines. Businesses and organizations have put required safety protocols in place and changed the way they operate in order to keep both staff and customers safe.

We deeply appreciate summer residents who have been waiting patiently, at our request, to return to your island homes, and we applaud the safe actions of everyone on-island. Whether you are here now or have decided to come away, we know all of you love Vinalhaven as much as we do. So now and throughout the months to come, we ask you to join us in following the Community Guidelines we’ve included here. Together we are a strong and resilient community. And together we will get through this.

Wishing all of you the best of this different island summer.

Sincerely;

Eric Gasperini, Select Board Chair
On Behalf of the Vinalhaven Board of Selectmen

COMMUNITY GUIDELINES*

“Reopening is not the same as returning to normal.”

Everyday we make choices about what we can and cannot do, should and shouldn’t do. Bottom line: WE ARE STILL IN A PANDEMIC. We must all do our part to put our safety, our family’s safety, and the safety of our community first. Do not take unnecessary risks, and be respectful of others by following actions that are legally required and those that are recommended. Thank you for doing your part by abiding by the following guidelines.

Safety Protocols

Stay home if you are exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19 or if you are in quarantine. Limit any unnecessary travel.

Maintain physical distance by keeping at least 6 feet away from others unless you are living in the same household.

Do not gather in groups of more than the permitted number according to current guidelines.

Wear a face covering when in public, including places of business, downtown, on the ferry, and all areas where keeping at least 6 feet away from others is not possible.

Comply with CDC guidelines. Do not touch surfaces unnecessarily. Wash/sanitize hands often.

Comply with all guidelines for individual businesses.

Stay safe. Keep others safe. Be kind.

*Based on CDC Guidelines, Governor Mills’ 5-29-20 Executive Order, plan to Restart Maine’s Economy, Keep Maine Healthy plan, and Vinalhaven Public Health Team recommendations
Testing
At this time, ICMS is only able to provide testing for those that meet the CDC and lab guidelines. Under the Keep ME Healthy Plan, Maine is strongly urging visitors to “Know Before You Go” and to be tested and receive results in their home state before traveling to Maine, which will allow them to take appropriate action depending on the result. Websites like Get Tested COVID-19 show local testing options nationwide.

Quarantine
Beginning June 26, there will be two options for visitors from other states: 1) getting a recent negative COVID-19 test; or 2) quarantining for 14-days upon arrival.

Visitors from NH and VT are exempt from these requirements effective immediately.

People staying in rental lodging who are not ME, NH, or VT residents must sign a Certificate of Compliance indicating either that they have received a negative COVID-19 test result, that they will quarantine for 14 days, or that they have already completed their quarantine in Maine. Certificates of Compliance are available upon registering with your rental lodging.

If a ME resident visits NH or VT, they are not required to quarantine upon returning to ME, effective immediately. However, if they visit elsewhere, they must quarantine for 14 days or use a negative test as an alternative.

Seasonal homeowners, workers traveling to the island, and other visitors may also use a recent negative COVID-19 test as an alternative to the required 14-day quarantine in Maine effective immediately.

The Town asks that anyone travelling to the island from out-of-state who will not be staying in rental lodging complete a Certificate of Compliance available on the Town’s website. Prior to or upon arrival, return the completed certificate to the Emergency Operations Center via email, fax, or by using the online form.

If you are coming to the island from ANY AREA with community spread, it is RECOMMENDED you quarantine for 14 days.

The Public Health Team recognizes the 14-day quarantine is a proven public health strategy to mitigate the spread of the virus. Therefore, for the safety of the community, they strongly encourage those traveling from “hot spots” and areas of community transmission located out-of-state and within Maine to quarantine for 14 days upon arrival.

When in Quarantine...
Stay in your house or on your property during the length of your quarantine. Do not go out to shop, to hike public trails, to meet someone at the ferry, etc. Contact businesses on-island to arrange to have items delivered (groceries, medications, toiletries, etc.).

Monitor for symptoms.
If you have a fever, cough, or other symptoms, you might have COVID-19. Most people have a mild illness and are able to recover at home, but you should call your medical provider immediately and keep track of your symptoms, especially if you think you may have been exposed to COVID-19. Your medical provider will advise you on what to do next.

If you experience emergency symptoms—trouble breathing, persistent pain or pressure in the chest, confusion or inability to arouse, bluish lips or face—call 911 and let dispatch know you may have COVID-19. Emergency personnel will assist you.

Contact local businesses to get supplies while in quarantine or if you need to stay isolated.

Support the local economy! Shop on-island. Contact businesses directly to arrange for delivery of goods. The Town’s website has a list of businesses offering essential services, as well as links to the Vinalhaven Chamber of Commerce website and the Vinalhaven phone book, which both list business contacts.

For on-island goods, ICMS offers free delivery to anyone in need of supplies. Contact Vinalhaven Taxi (207-720-0056) or the business you are shopping with to request delivery.

For mainland deliveries, Bunkers (207-863-4828) and Penobscot Island Air (PIA) (207-596-7500) offer various pick up and delivery options. In addition, Phil Crossman and his brother Dick provide mainland deliveries to the island (207-863-4917).

For up-to-date Vinalhaven Covid-19 Information, Certificates of Compliance, and Business contact information go to www.townofvinalhaven.org and click on COVID-19.