

Intro ([00:00](#)):

Music

Barry Lee ([00:03](#)):

Hi, Barry Lee with 92.5 WINC FM, excited to host our second season of the City of Winchester's podcast, the Rouss Review. So we do this twice each month. On the second and fourth Thursday, we explore City services, programs, and events, and discuss the information that you need to know.

Barry Lee ([00:20](#)):

So, up first is the Council BLUF, a Bottom Line Upfront recap of the July 14, 2020 Council meetings. During the Mayor's report, Mayor David Smith, encouraged residents to wear masks when visiting public places and remember to practice social distancing to reduce the spread of COVID-19 in our area. At the regular meeting, Council held the first reading of the Zoning Ordinance text amendment that would modify existing use regulations for the B-1 and B-2 districts to allow for non-intrusive light manufacturing in commercial spaces. This amendment seeks to modernize City regulations to recognize that there are many types of manufacturing that would be compatible with the uses already present in B-1 and B-2. These changes will provide an opportunity for Winchester to attract new business investment, create jobs and foster economic growth. Council forwarded the draft ordinance to the July 28th, regular meeting for second reading, public hearing and final vote. At the Work Session, Winchester Public Schools Superintendent Jason Van Heukelum provided an update on the current status of the Douglas Learning School proposed historic renovation due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Completing the original plan is no longer feasible, so Dr. Van Heukelum presented a new option to Council and requested \$1.8 million from City Council. This new option would restore the 1927 and 1940 sections and replace the 1951 and 1962 at additions in the back with new construction. Council's decision concerning the additional funding will be decided at a future date. The next round of SMART Scale funding applications for VDOT are due on August 3rd, public services, staff and VDOT are recommending that the City apply for funding for two projects. The first is a new pedestrian bridge over Millwood Avenue near Mall Boulevard. This project would be coordinated with roadway changes that are being planned for Millwood Avenue between Mall Boulevard and Apple Blossom Drive. The estimated cost of the pedestrian bridge project is \$3 million. The second project includes several priority improvements on Pleasant Valley Road as proposed by the VDOT Safety Study conducted earlier this year. The estimated cost of the Pleasant Valley improvements recommended for SMART Scale funding is \$5.4 million. If the applications are approved by VDOT, funds will not be available until 2025. Council discussed the public input regarding the possible renaming of Jubal Early Drive. A list of possible names were submitted by community members prior to the June 23rd Council meeting and were included in the online survey. Some suggested names recognize local and national historical figures while other names were more general in nature. Over 6,000 responses were submitted and the four names that received the most votes were Hunter Edwards for the Winchester police officer who died in the line of duty on Jubal Early Drive responding to an emergency call in 2018, Patsy Cline, Meadow, Branch, and Abrams Creek. Council requested more information about costs for businesses, community input from city residents, creating procedures for renaming roads and the potential timeline for implementation should Council choose to take action. Discussions on this topic will continue at a future Work Session. Council also discussed the need to create a policy, establish procedures and get community input for items such as these. For more information on these topics and to view the agenda packet, or watch the meeting video, visit the City of Winchester website and click "Council Meeting Agendas" under the "Government" tab.

Barry Lee ([04:06](#)):

Virginia is currently in phase three of the Governor's reopening plan, but we're not out of the woods yet. So, here to talk about the state and regional response is the director of the Lord Fairfax Health District, Dr. Colin Greene. Then, Superintendent of the Winchester Public Schools, Dr. Jason Van Heukelum will stop by to give us an overview of what the upcoming school year is going to look like with the COVID-19 restrictions. So, let's get started and welcome to our first guest of the show. Thank you for joining us today, Dr. Greene.

Dr. Colin Greene ([04:34](#)):

Well, thank you for having me.

Barry Lee ([04:36](#)):

It's been said probably a million times since COVID-19 was discovered that these are unprecedented times and everything we're experiencing these days is all new to us. So, what makes this virus so different?

Dr. Colin Greene ([04:48](#)):

Well, the biggest thing that makes this virus so different is it's new. We've not experienced it before last December and because it's new and it's an infection, it's scary. Six months ago, we knew almost nothing about it. We've learned quite a bit since then, but we still have a lot to learn. So, what's known for example, is this is a disease of proximity. For example, here in the studio, we've made sure that we're six feet apart from each other while we're having this interview. It's spread by close contact and by respiratory droplets, the kind that you put out, not only when you cough or sneeze, but also when you talk or a little bit more if you talk loudly or if you sing. It's a disease of proximity, which is why we stress staying six feet apart, decreasing the number of encounters that you have, wearing a cloth face mask at any time when you're indoors and it is feasible to do so. And then your hygiene and your cleaning. So, your hand washing, you're covering coughs and sneezes, you're cleaning commonly touched surfaces and so on. A disease of proximity that's one. The second thing we know is it is deadly to the elderly and, to a lesser extent, to those with chronic diseases, specifically heart disease, type two diabetes, chronic kidney disease, and some cases of being significantly overweight. The young typically get no symptoms at all to maybe a bad cold. And in this district on last count, we had 75 deaths from COVID, 40 of those 75 were over age 80, and 71 of those 75 were over age 60. This is a disease that is deadly in the elderly. We've had in the district, no deaths in anyone under age 35. So, the young, again, usually do not have a bad time with this, at least not with a fatal outcome.

Barry Lee ([06:45](#)):

So the governor implemented phase three because the number of cases and positive tests were trending downward. So, how's our area faring in relationship to the rest of the Commonwealth,

Dr. Colin Greene ([06:55](#)):

Better than some. So you may have heard the the governor make his speech yesterday [7/14/2020] and make some statements about a rise in number of cases. That rise in a number of cases has occurred primarily in the eastern part of the state. Again, we've seen similar rises in other coastal and beach environments, in the Carolinas and Florida and Texas, and so on. We here, in the Valley, have not seen that significant rise. We have seen a small bump, but nothing like what's happened in the eastern part of the state. Death rates still remain relatively low after the initial spike back in April and May. The greatest risk we have in this area continues to be outbreaks of the disease amongst the elderly, especially in long-

term care facilities, in nursing homes and assisted living facilities. I know I'm going to be followed by the superintendent of schools. I will tell you that the student population itself, being young, is not at all at great risk for a bad outcome. There may be the occasional complication, but for the most part, the young don't have a hard time with this disease. As far as we know right now, they also are less likely to spread it--not tremendously less, but maybe 50-75% of the rate of spread amongst younger people and that may be because they don't get the severe symptoms. The main risk in the schools is not to the students, it's to the elderly teachers and staff that they might encounter.

Barry Lee ([08:26](#)):

Let's go over the current recommendations for community health and safety and why they're important.

Dr. Colin Greene ([08:32](#)):

So again, wherever feasible and possible, you should try to stay six feet away from one another. And a quick way to check that is both of you extend your arms and your fingers shouldn't touch, or there can be markings on the floor. But beyond six feet, again, this is a disease of proximity beyond six feet, any droplets containing viruses that you put out are likely to disperse to the point where the other person wouldn't inhale enough of them to get sick. Outdoors is safer than indoors because there's more space for the virus and the particles to disperse into. You've got the whole atmosphere for it to disperse into, instead of just the room you're in. Number two is limit the number of new contacts. Again, it's a disease of proximity, the fewer people that you're in proximity to the fewer available spreadings, there are of this particular disease, the fewer opportunities for it to jump from one person to the next. Avoid crowds and especially crowds of strangers. There's no need to stay away from your household contacts, for example, but a large grouping of people that you don't know, particularly if you're likely to get within six feet and stay that way for more than a few minutes, that's a little bit more risky. It's actually right, much more risky. The third is masking. Masking greatly decreases the number of outgoing germs. Again, the mask you wear, the cloth mask doesn't really protect you. What it does is stop your germs. And remember you're contagious for at least two days before you get sick if you catch this and some people have no symptoms. So, you can be spreading this disease while you feel well. Mask wearing is crucial indoors, particularly if you're going to be in an enclosed space. Outdoors, if you're going to be in a tight group where you can't stay six feet apart, it wouldn't be wrong to wear a mask there, but it's especially crucial indoors.

Barry Lee ([10:21](#)):

Have there been any new developments that we need to be aware of with symptoms or treatments?

Dr. Colin Greene ([10:27](#)):

Well, initially we found that the main symptoms were fever, cough, and shortness of breath. Since then, we've recognized other symptoms that are associated with COVID. For example, chills with or without fever, muscle aches, and some gastrointestinal symptoms as well, some diarrhea. Those are, those are less common. One really peculiar symptom that that seems to be fairly specific to COVID is a sudden loss of taste and smell. And that's something that you might have with a sinus infection, but otherwise it's a pretty unusual symptom that shows up fairly frequently with COVID. As far as treatments are concerned, there is some promise from a drug called Remdesivir. It has actually shortened the course of the disease amongst people that are hospitalized and then a drug called Dexamethasone, which is a steroid. While that won't help prevent the disease for people that are very sick with it, it sometimes decreases the intensity of the symptoms and the damage to the lungs. There is no cure at this time, nor

is there any actual cure on the horizon. There are quite a few vaccines are being worked on and several are entering human trials right now, but a usable vaccine is probably still at least five or six months out.

Barry Lee ([11:39](#)):

If someone's having the symptoms that you've just mentioned, what should they do?

Dr. Colin Greene ([11:44](#)):

Well, number one, people should self screen every day. And especially if you're going to be coming to work or going out amongst other folks. The way you do that is number one, see if you have any symptoms. Number two, if you have access to a thermometer, check your temperature. The borderline of a meaningful fever is a 100.4 degrees. We pick that number because it's 38 Celsius, but 100.4 is usually the cutoff. So, if your temperature is a 100.5 or higher, at that point, you're at risk for being sick with something. So the thing to do next is to stay home, call in sick from work, contact your doctor or your healthcare provider can tell you if he or she thinks you need to be tested. If you are sick, and it does look like it's COVID-19, even if you're young and healthy, expect to be out of work and out of circulation for 10 days. That's the recommended time for isolation for someone who does get sick. Some longterm things to do: Number one, every last person who's over the age of two should get their flu shot this year. The last thing you need is flu on top of COVID-19, particularly if you have any vulnerabilities. Second, if you have susceptibility to the flu, it will confuse the symptom picture and make it harder to tell who does and doesn't have COVID. So everybody should get their flu shot as soon as it's available this year. Keep up with other immunizations. So, for children, all your regular ones. A lot of kids are getting behind on their shots. That's not a good thing. Those other shots are still important, even though they're not related to COVID. And for the elderly, getting immunized against shingles again and against pneumococcal pneumonia and then the usual TDF vaccines are crucial too. Again, you don't want to get pneumococcal pneumonia when you're already at risk for COVID. Maintain a healthy diet and exercise, and then stay in contact with family. Even if you can't see people personally, stay in contact by text, by telephone, by Skype, however you can do it. There's a host of ways to stay in contact with people, even people at great distances nowadays, and you should always use those in order to not be isolated.

Barry Lee ([13:58](#)):

And where are the testing sites in the Winchester area? And how long is it taking to get the test results?

Dr. Colin Greene ([14:04](#)):

Well, the best person to get your test from is your family or personal doctor or healthcare provider. However, if you don't have one, there are other places in the Winchester area. The CVS pharmacy, several of their sites are performing COVID testing and then Valley health has a site on the north side of town at Rutherford Crossing. If you don't have a primary care provider, there's a number you could call, (540) 536-0380 and you can find that on Valley Health's website, as well.

Barry Lee ([14:36](#)):

Well, thanks very much for the update, Dr. Greene. Do you have any final advice? Anything else that you'd like to cover before we let you go?

Dr. Colin Greene ([14:44](#)):

So, we've made great progress against this virus. We definitely have flattened the curve in Virginia. We've kept ourselves away from danger where we're gonna run out of hospital beds and we've reopened our economy. And particularly here in the Valley, we reopened it pretty well. We've managed to not have a big spike in cases, at least not yet. The threat for continued outbreaks is still there, that has not changed, and particularly outbreaks amongst the elderly in their long-term care facilities. There are some warning signs. There's a bump in cases, again, down toward the beach where people are starting to mingle more and be a little less careful about their distancing. We have seen what I would call imprudent behavior, which is ignoring basic rules of sanitation, of distancing and mask wearing, have led to some outbreaks of the disease, even in this area. It is extremely important that we pay attention to those recommendations. There are voices in Richmond and other places discussing the reimposition of restrictions if the cases spike. We'll see if that happens in the eastern part of the state or not. We really don't want that to happen here. So, we need to keep our efforts strong to avoid a recurrence of this disease. And again, the way to do that is distancing six feet where you can, limiting your new contacts of people that you're not in contact with already, masking when you're either indoors in public, or when you're outdoors in a group where [it's] going to be hard to stay six feet apart, hygiene and cleanliness. And please understand, for people that don't know me, I'm not a paper pushing bureaucrat, at least I try not to be. I'm an old soldier and I spent 30 years in the Army. I want this county, I want this community in this city, to stay laser-focused on this mission to control this virus. It's crucial. Please, please, please do not bring politics into the discussion of whether you wear a mask or not. This virus does not care how you vote. Refusing to wear a mask does not make you a patriot. It does not make you a First Amendment champion. It just makes you imprudent, because right now we need to stop the transmission of this virus. We need to continue stopping it until such time as we have a vaccine, which point life can really start returning to normal. And it will eventually, it's just gonna take time. Again, there are those who would consider reimposing restrictions. None of us want that. Let's continue to do the things we need to do to stop the spread of this virus so that doesn't need to happen. Distance, hygiene, mask. Thank you very much for listening.

Barry Lee ([17:31](#)):

Thanks again, Dr. Greene for being on the show and for all you and your team are doing to keep everybody informed. Stay safe out there. Here to give us an overview of the Winchester Public Schools reopening plan is Superintendent Dr. Jason Van Heukelum. Welcome back to the show, Jason.

New Speaker ([17:47](#)):

Thank you. Very good to be here.

Barry Lee ([17:49](#)):

So, let's start with the basics. When is the first day of school and will the times stay the same as last year?

Speaker 4 ([17:56](#)):

You know, uh, there was a time when basics were basic and they are no longer basic. [Laughs] So, I'll start with the start date. We're considering pushing the start date back. Right now, our calendar says we're supposed to start back on August 10. That is not feasible, or we're not going to be ready for that both logistically and with the changing landscape of what learning is going to look like. And literally every week there's new guidance for schools that changes dramatically. We'll be discussing that at our July 20 board meeting. The school board will be asked to make a firm decision on the start date, but, it

will be pushed back and, it will be several weeks past, August 10. It'll be towards the end of August, I would expect.

Barry Lee ([18:44](#)):

Alrighty. What changes have you made to meet the Governor's phase three guidelines?

Speaker 4 ([18:49](#)):

Under phase three, we can return to school, all students can return to school, but there's some pretty strict requirements. The most important are wearing a mask, wearing a face covering, maintaining social distance, and washing your hands frequently. So, the social distance really drives the capacity limits for schools. As you can imagine, we have, for example, 1,300 students at John Hanley High School on a very small campus. So, if you were to come to John Hanley High School in any given day, we are certainly not six feet away from each other. With that requirement, we have reduced capacity by 50%. And the model that we've put forward is a hybrid approach to learning where they will be 50% capacity. So we'll cut our student body in half. Half the students will go to school in one section and the other half of the students will go to the school another section of the week. It will be two days a week in person and three days a week distance learning

Barry Lee ([19:54](#)):

And speaking of distance learning, any advice for parents and students who go with that option.

Speaker 4 ([20:00](#)):

Yeah. We, to your point, are offering a 100% distance learning option to families. There's a survey out right now, it closes tonight [7/15/2020]. Today, we have over 900 individual students who have signed up for the 100% distance learning. We wanted to give that option to our families because we have many families that are nervous about sending their kids back to school, even with all of the requirements that are imposed. So, we wanted to make sure students and families had that option. So, that's about 20 to 25% of our student body has voluntarily said, we're going to take the first semester and not come to school physically. We're going to use the distance learning approach. Now all of our students will have to learn in some capacity with distance learning. And I think it's important to remind our community that even with the in-person option at any given moment, we could shut a school down for a number of cases that we have in the school. At any given moment, a group of students or teachers will have to quarantine for 14 days. And at any given moment, we could shut the whole school division down depending on the circumstances that are happening. So, distance learning will be a part of learning this school year, whether you choose the a hundred percent or the hybrid in-person model. To answer your question, distance learning, it is a challenge, especially the younger a student is. The best advice I can give to families is to maintain a schedule, to have breaks with your student, to talk about it ahead of time. The night before, [tell them] here's what tomorrow's schedule will look like for you, and give them the time and space to do that. We are also providing every student with a device from kindergarten through 12th grade. Typically, that's a sixth through 12th grade thing that we do. But we understand that everyone's going to need a personal device. We use Chromebooks in Winchester. The other really cool thing that I want to mention to our community is we've had a task force going for about a month and a half called Internet For All. This task force is made up of some City government folks, some school system folks, and two foundations, the J2W Foundation and the Opportunity Scholars Foundation. We're really close to making that a reality for our community. I can't wait to make that announcement,

hopefully in the beginning of August, where we'll be able to provide internet for families who qualify and pay for that. So, that all families will have access to internet in their homes.

Barry Lee ([22:37](#)):

Awesome. Awesome. And for students that are going to be coming to the buildings for classes, when they do, any changes there, as far as bus and car rider transportation options.

New Speaker ([22:47](#)):

Yeah. Similar to school buildings, buses will have limited capacity, one student per seat. So, we'll only be able to transport 25 students at a time, that significantly reduces our ability to transport students. So, we have also, as part of the survey that is out there, has been out there for over a week now, we're asking families to commit to their transportation. We're also asking our community, if they can, to provide their own transportation, not only will that help us out logistically as a school division, but if you're thinking from a parent point of view, it minimizes another group of exposure for your child. It's the safest option, to drive your own kid to school. So, as you can imagine, similar to a classroom, if a student on a bus has a confirmed case of COVID-19, then all the students around that student, wherever that student sat on the bus, within six feet of that student will have to quarantine for 14 days, whether they're sick or not. And by not riding the bus, you're just minimizing one more group that your child is not exposed to and won't have to be quarantined.

Barry Lee ([23:56](#)):

Right. Anything else that you'd like to cover before we say so long?

Speaker 4 ([24:00](#)):

Well, it's a challenging time for everybody. I would just ask patience and flexibility with our families. We are working very hard to make these options available. However, you know, even today, the news was full of divisions in Virginia that are going to a hundred percent distance learning. So, we're finding that the landscape changes on a daily, weekly basis and we all have to be ready to pivot and be flexible. I also think it's important [to mention], I don't like any of these options. I want to be clear on that. You know, [with] most problems, we come up with pretty good solutions. I don't like any of these solutions. And I don't want our community to believe for one moment that the superintendent or the school board or leadership think we got it all figured out and that we're really happy with our choices. We're not. This is going to be a challenge for our community. Childcare is going to be a challenge for our community. We understand that, we just don't have good answers.

Barry Lee ([25:00](#)):

Well, we appreciate your being here and sharing that information with us, Jason. And, if you would, please let Winchester Public Schools, the whole team know how much we appreciate the hard work, all the thought that's going into this, and the dedication to educating our community's kids in these very difficult times. We appreciate it.

New Speaker ([25:17](#)):

Thank you. Appreciate it.

Barry Lee ([25:22](#)):

And now it's time for the Now U Know segment where we talk about interesting City of Winchester facts that you may not be aware of or important information you need to know. This week's segment focuses on cyber crime and how to protect yourself from becoming a victim. The Winchester Police Department has recently received an increase in reports of cyber crime. Many cyber criminals will play to your emotions and try to scare you into giving them your information and money. So don't fall for these tactics. Government agencies and legitimate businesses do not solicit personal information, such as your birthday, social security number, bank, account numbers, and more by email, text or phone call. Criminals will try to elicit funds, credit card and personal information, or install malware on electronic devices by disguising their communications to appear from legitimate and trusted sources. The U.S. Secret Service Cyber Crime Investigations Division provides the following tips for how to protect yourself online. Ensure that all your electronic devices have the latest software updates and active antivirus protection create strong passwords, change them appropriately and avoid utilizing the same password across multiple apps. Use multi-factor authentication to avoid unauthorized access to your accounts. Regularly back up data stored on your electronic devices. Don't use public WiFi services. Use reputable websites when shopping online and check for a lock icon next to the URL in the browser to protect your credit card information. Never respond to an email or a text message from an unknown source. Never click on a link or open an attachment from an unknown source. Never respond to an email or text message offering you to earn quick and easy money and never respond, "stop" or "no" to prevent further text messages. Just delete the text instead. Never share your financial or personal information and read an entire email to look for suspicious indicators. Always independently verify where our request for sensitive information originates. Independently type a website address instead of clicking on a link and always mark an email from unknown sources as spam. And remember, government agencies and legitimate businesses will never solicit personal information by sending you an email, a text message or calling you. Protect yourself and know the facts. Visit the Winchester Police Department's crime prevention webpage at winchesterpolice.org for more information. Well, if you didn't know before, now, you know.

Barry Lee ([28:09](#)):

And last but not least here are several announcements we'd like to share with you. The outdoor pool in Jim Barnett Park is now open for general swim during designated times, in addition to lap swim times. Capacity is limited to 35 people for both and reservations are accepted for general swim only. Make your reservation up to seven days in advance by calling (540) 662-4946 or 667-2284. Visit the aquatics page on the Winchester parks and recreation website www.winchesterva.gov/parks for more details. July 25th is the final day of the Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation Program. If you are in need of assistance with standard unemployment compensation or applying for SNAP benefits, visit the City's latest news page www.winchesterva.gov/latest-news for information on how to apply. The City of Winchester will be awarding grants to eligible locally owned businesses and 501(c)3 organizations that have been negatively impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Small businesses and nonprofit organizations may receive a maximum grant of up to \$5,000. Large-sized businesses may receive a maximum grant of up to \$10,000. Apply by July 31st and visit the City's latest news page www.winchesterva.gov/latest-news for the application and more details. And did you know that there is a new pedestrian law in Virginia? Drivers are now to stop, not just yield for pedestrians. Also, passing a vehicle that is stopped at a crosswalk is now specifically prohibited. The Winchester Fire and Rescue Department and the Winchester City Sheriff's Office, they're hosting the Battle of the Badges blood drive Friday, July 17th from 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM. The drive will be held at the Jim Barnett Park Rec Center at 1001 East Cork Street. Registration is encouraged. Call the American Red Cross at 1-800-Red-Cross, or by visiting www.redcrossblood.org and use the sponsor code "battle20". The team with the

most donors [train horn in background] wins the friendly competition. So, donors are asked [train horn in background] to mention whether they're attending for team fire and rescue or team [train horn in background] Winchester Sheriff's Office.

Barry Lee ([30:29](#)):

Oops, I got to catch my train. So, that's going to do it for this week's Rouss Review podcast. Thanks for joining us. I'm Barry Lee with 92.5 WINC FM, and we'll be back on the fourth Thursday. Bye for now and stay safe. Hey, wait for me!