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Town Manager

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WATERTOWN
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**Town Manager’s Coronavirus (COVID-19) Update
May 29, 2020**

COVID-19 Numbers

The Massachusetts Department of Public Health is reporting that as of May 29, 2020 there are:

- 95,512 cases statewide
- 20,972 Middlesex County
- 6,718 deaths statewide

For more state data, visit www.mass.gov/coronavirus.

Watertown has a total of 383 confirmed cases of COVID-19 and 301 community members have recovered from the virus. Four Town employees have had confirmed cases. Two of those employees are back to work. Watertown has recorded twenty-three COVID-19 fatalities. Our thoughts go out to the families as they mourn the loss of their loved one.

Watertown COVID-19 Case age Distribution¹

19 and Under	20-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60-69	70 and over	Unknown/no age recorded	Total
17	51	78	51	55	55	75	1	383

Reopening Massachusetts: Transition to First Phase of Four-Phase Approach

The Baker-Polito Administration released *Reopening Massachusetts*, the Reopening Advisory Board’s [report](#), which details a four-phased strategy to responsibly reopen businesses and activities while continuing to fight COVID-19. The Administration also released a new “Safer At Home” Advisory, which instructs residents to stay at home unless engaging with newly opened activities, as a way to continue limiting the spread of COVID-19. Starting today, based on current public health data and trends, Massachusetts will begin Phase 1 of a cautious reopening, and workplaces that are permitted to open are required to follow new safety protocols and guidance.

Learn more about the reopening process: www.mass.gov/reopening

[VIEW THE FULL REPORT](#)

[VIEW GUIDANCE FOR SPECIFIC INDUSTRIES](#)

¹ There is a difference between the Commonwealth’s reported numbers and what the Watertown Board of Health can confirm through the Massachusetts Virtual Epidemiologic Network (MAVEN).

Town Re-Opening Plan Update

As indicated in the May 22nd Coronavirus (COVID-19) Update, the Town is preparing to reopen Town buildings and facilities in the coming weeks but not earlier than June 1st. We are determining the best ways to responsibly and safely reopen Watertown. The following is an update on the Town's Re-Opening Plan:

- The Watertown Recycling Center is now open on the regular schedule of Fridays and Saturdays from 9:00 AM – 4:00 PM
- As of June 1st, the Department of Public Works Administrative offices will be open to the public for issuance of permits and for other Public Works related services.
- The Watertown Free Public Library will remain closed in accordance with Phase I of Governor Baker's Re-Opening Plan. The library continues to offer curbside pickup of library materials.
- Town Hall and the Watertown Senior Center will remain closed as we continue to review best ways to responsibly and safely reopen these town buildings. We will provide more information in next week's COVID-19 Update, on social media and on the Town's website.

Parks and Recreation

All programs offered by the Watertown Recreation Department remain cancelled and all courts, tot lots and dog parks in Watertown remain closed pending further guidance from the Town's Re-Opening Plan.

On Wednesday, June 3rd, the following will be opened:

- Parks and Athletic Fields (except Victory Field Turf)
- Victory Field Track
- Community Gardens

These facilities will be open for passive, non-contact use. No congregating, group activities or game playing is allowed. Violations of the social distancing standards (no more than 10 people, staying 6 feet apart from others) may result in the field, park or track being closed.

Emergency Order Mandating Face Coverings

The Watertown Board of Health adopted an Emergency Order on April 30th mandating face coverings effective Monday, May 4th.

Mask and Face Covering Order Took Effect Wednesday, 5/6

The Baker-Polito Administration has ordered all residents over the age of two to use a face covering or mask in public places where maintaining proper social distancing measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19 is not possible. This statewide order goes into effect on May 6th and supersedes previously issued guidance relative to mask use.

This order applies to all workers and customers of businesses and other organizations that are currently open to the public and permitted to operate as COVID-19 Essential Businesses, such as grocery stores, pharmacies, and other retail stores. Residents are also required to wear a mask or face covering at all times when using any means of transportation service or public mass transit.

[Read the Order here](#)

Watertown COVID-19 Resource Guide

The Watertown Free Public Library has developed a COVID-19 resource guide for Watertown residents. The guide will be updated frequently. www.watertownlib.org/covid19guide

How will you find out about local emergencies?

To get Emergency Alerts from the Town of Watertown text WATERTOWNMA to 888-777. Your cell phone number will be in the system without having to establish an Everbridge account. You also have the opportunity to add your email address into the system at this time. You would then receive all emails and/or texts from the system. If you already have an Everbridge account, this is not necessary, as you will continue to receive the notifications sent by the Town.

Watertown COVID-19 Informational Call Center and Email

For general COVID-19 questions not specific to the Town of Watertown, all Massachusetts residents are encouraged to call the State's **2-1-1 Hotline** that is staffed by operators 24/7 and with translators available in multiple languages. Residents with questions can dial 2-1-1 from any landline or cell phone or use the live chat option on the **Mass 2-1-1 website (mass211.org)**.

The Town of Watertown has established a COVID-19 informational call center to allow residents and business owners to ask non-medical questions specific to COVID-19 in Watertown. The call center will be staffed Monday through Friday from 8am to 4pm and the number for the call center is **# 617-972-6565**. Questions can also be emailed to **COVID19@police.watertown-ma.gov**.

Please call 9-1-1 in the event of an emergency.

Calls should not be made to 9-1-1 for questions regarding COVID-19.

Four (4) electronic sign boards have been placed around Town with the message: "Wear Face Coverings". Further message updates will be provided as needed.

May 28th Town Council Meeting – Fiscal Year 2021 Budget and Elementary Schools Project

Town Council President Mark S. Sideris announced at the May 28th Town Council Meeting that the Fiscal Year 2021 Budget will be submitted to Town Council at a June 8th Special Town Council Meeting beginning at 6:00 PM.

There will be a Public Hearing and consideration of a proposed loan order totaling \$103,455,000 for the construction of the new Hosmer and Cunniff Elementary Schools at the June 9th Town Council Meeting beginning at 7:00 PM.

Disaster Recovery Information

On March 27th, the President [declared](#) a Major Disaster Declaration for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts related to the COVID-19 pandemic response. Through this declaration, federal aid will be made available to cities and towns, state agencies, and certain non-profits in all Massachusetts counties to help pay for emergency protective measures (response costs) related to the COVID-19 pandemic. MEMA's Recovery Unit has developed a [website](#) with information and guidance regarding the disaster declaration, eligibility criteria, and the application process.

COVID-19 Public Resources Map

MEMA, together with MA VOAD and other partners, has developed a [COVID-19 Public Resources Map](#) showing the location of resources available to the public, such as food banks, houses of worship, and Project Bread site locations. Please note that this map is not inclusive of all resources, and is only as accurate as the information that has been provided to MEMA.

DPH Daily Dashboard Released

The Baker-Polito Administration released an enhanced, comprehensive and detailed COVID-19 data report, including trend data in a variety of areas. The new daily dashboard is 23 pages in length and includes information on cases rates, testing, and breakdowns by age, sex, race and ethnicity, and geography of confirmed cases. It also includes a similar breakdown of death data. Beyond the case data, the report also includes specific information on COVID-19 hospital census information, a list of nursing homes, skilled nursing facilities and rest homes with known clusters of COVID-19 cases and data on PPE distribution by recipient type and geography. ([See the new Daily Dashboard report](#))

Health Department

The Health Department has created a portal for COVID-19 Information: COVID-19 Resource Center where all COVID-19 related information will be posted:

<https://www.ci.watertown.ma.us/978/COVID-19-Resource-Center>

Watertown Public Schools

Watertown Public Schools (WPS) is finishing up the last two weeks of remote learning, with school ending on June 16. Our overall student participation rate has been high across all schools and levels. The WPS Reopening Task Force, comprised of 40+ teachers, parents, and administrators will meet throughout the summer to develop a plan for reopening when it is safe for staff and students to return. Breakfast and lunch distribution continues for any family who can benefit from the additional meals on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday from 11:00 -1:00 PM in the high school parking lot.

Watertown Free Public Library

The Watertown Free Public Library will **remain closed in accordance with Phase I of Governor Baker's Re-Opening Plan**. The Watertown Free Public Library offers curbside pickup of library materials. All items showing as available in the library catalog will be eligible for pickup. Simply call the library Monday – Friday from 8am to 4pm at 857-203-8009 (new number as of June 1st) and the items will be set aside and delivered to your car's trunk (or outdoor area for walkers and bicyclists). More details via the link <https://www.watertownlib.org/537/4929/Curbside-Pickup>.

Hatch Makerspace is now offering curbside pickup for 3D prints and laser cut original work on Tuesdays and Thursdays between 10 am and 4 pm. Print and cut jobs must meet certain eligibility requirements for this service. For more information, visit [watertownlib.org/hatchpickup](https://www.watertownlib.org/hatchpickup).

The library continues to provide a wide range of online resources and virtual programming. Please see the website for all of the details. <https://watertownlib.org/>

Watertown Council on Aging/Senior Center/Food Pantry

The Watertown Senior Center and the Senior Shuttle Bus **remain closed pending further guidance from the Town's Re-Opening Plan**. Please call the Senior Center for information about new virtual programs (Art with Dawn, Exercise with Joanna, Seated Strength with Pearl and more!). The Watertown Food Pantry continues to be open Tuesdays, 10 AM until 2 PM at 80 Mt. Auburn Street, rear. When going to the Food Pantry, please wear a mask or other face covering to protect your own self and those around you in the parking lot and at the Food Pantry. See above for links about masks and other face coverings. Food donations (canned goods, cold cereals, peanut butter) are accepted at the Food Pantry on Tuesdays starting at 9:00 AM until 2 PM. Senior Center staff are available to answer your questions and to help connect you to resources you may need. Call the Senior Center at (617) 972-6490 or send an e-mail to SeniorCenter@watertown-ma.gov.

Watertown Veterans' Services

Watertown Veterans' Services is closed to the public but is still available to assist with administering and applying for benefits. Families and Veterans may reach out to inquire about applying for benefits. Watertown Veterans' Services, in partnership with the Greater Boston Veterans' Collaborative has a detailed spreadsheet with benefits and services—including but not limited to: financial, mental health, transportation, and food resources— available to Veterans and others during this pandemic. The list is constantly being updated and interested Veterans and families should contact Patrick George, Veterans' Services Officer (VSO) for the most up to date list. Please contact the VSO at: PGeorge@watertown-ma.gov or (617) 972-6416 (Office) and (781) 645-9127 (Cell)
[COVID-19 Resource Guide](#)

Town Hall will remain closed to the public pending further guidance from the Town's Re-Opening Plan. Offices remain available by phone or online. All calls and emails will be responded to Monday through Friday 8:30am-5:00pm.

[Visit the Department directory for phone numbers.](#)

This includes the following Town Offices:

- Town Manager, TownMgr@watertown-ma.gov, (617) 972-6465
- Health Department, Health@watertown-ma.gov, (617) 972-6446
- Senior Center, SeniorCenter@watertown-ma.gov, (617) 972-6490
- Recreation Office, Recreation@watertown-ma.gov, (617) 972-6494
- DPW Administrative, DPW1@watertown-ma.gov, (617) 617-972-6420
- Inspectional Services, buildinginspector@watertown-ma.gov, (617) 972-6480
- Treasurer/Collector, Treas&Collectors@watertown-ma.gov, (617) 972-6450
- Assessor, Assessor@watertown-ma.gov, (617) 972-6410
- Town Clerk/Vital Records, TownClerks@watertown-ma.gov, (617) 972-6486
- Veterans Services, PGeorge@watertown-ma.gov, (617) 972-6416

Emergency Management Team

The Town of Watertown Emergency Management Team is meeting daily to monitor the developments in the outbreak of the coronavirus. We have used these meetings to keep an organized flow of information and to develop strategies to best respond to the needs of our community. We will continue to update the community through the Watertown Health Department's web page.

<https://www.watertown-ma.gov/965/CORONAVIRUS>.

Please continue to take the following actions to limit the spread of COVID-19:

- Stay safe, stay home
- Practice social distancing – when in public spaces try to remain at least 6-feet away from others.
- Stay home if you are sick – and avoid close contact with others.
- Cover your mouth – when you cough or sneeze use a tissue or your inner elbow, not your hands.
- Wash your hands – with soap and warm water or use an alcohol-based sanitizing gel.

We also recommend the following resources:

Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MDPH) Resource Page:

<https://www.mass.gov/2019coronavirus>

Center for Disease Control COVID-19 information: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>

Town Manager's Coronavirus (COVID-19) (12) [Statements/Updates](#)

We are in this together

We are living in an unprecedented time where our world, our nation and our community, is faced with the threat of an international pandemic known as COVID-19.

All of our Town employees are incredibly committed to ensuring the Town can safely meet the needs of our community while we are also protecting our employees' safety. All departments have implemented vigorous social distancing and hygiene protocols. I am so grateful for all of our employees' efforts under difficult circumstances.

The members of the Honorable Town Council continue to be available to help all residents and to provide updates/information to protect the health and safety of all the residents of Watertown.

I want to thank all of the members of our community for your cooperation and efforts to date; and for your continued actions to limit the spread of COVID-19. **Additionally, please check on your neighbors who may live alone. If you have any concerns, please email us at COVID19@police.watertown-ma.gov or call the Police Department at (617) 972-6500; and we will follow up.**

Watertown is a resilient community and we are all in this together. We will continue to support each other and stay strong, Watertown Strong!