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Town Manager

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Town Manager's Coronavirus (COVID-19) Update
August 7, 2020

COVID-19 Numbers

The Massachusetts Department of Public Health is reporting that as of August 6, 2020 there are:

- 111,533 cases statewide
- 26,156 Middlesex County
- 8,470 deaths statewide

For more state data, visit <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/covid-19-updates-and-information>

Watertown has a total of 449 confirmed cases of COVID-19 and 423 community members have recovered from the virus. Four Town employees have had confirmed cases. Watertown has recorded twenty-four 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
20	64	98	56	65	63	82	1	449

COVID-19 Travel Order Takes Effect. RI Removed From Lower-Risk List

On Saturday, August 1, the Commonwealth's new COVID-19 travel order took effect. As of 12:01 a.m. on that date, all individuals entering Massachusetts, who are over the age of 18 or an unaccompanied minor, including returning residents, must complete and submit the on-line [Massachusetts TravelForm](#) unless the individual meets an exemption below. Effective today, August 7th, Rhode Island has been removed from DPH's lower risk state list for MA's new travel order due to increases in both RI's positive test rate and cases per 100,000. All travelers arriving in MA from RI must fill out a form, quarantine for 14-days or produce a negative COVID test. Exemptions apply for regular commuters.

Please visit [mass.gov/MATraveler](https://www.mass.gov/MATraveler) for more information

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).

Emergency Order Mandating Face Coverings

The Watertown Board of Health adopted an [Emergency Order](#) on April 30th mandating face coverings effective Monday, May 4th. Exceptions include children under the age of 5 and those not otherwise exempt per CDC guidelines.

#MaskUpMA Initiative Launched

On Friday, July 31, the Baker-Polito Administration [launched #MaskUpMA](#), an effort to continue to remind residents to wear masks and face-coverings in public to stop the spread of COVID-19. The effort underscores the importance of wearing masks across multiple channels including video testimonials on social media, a new PSA, and a website, [Mass.Gov/MaskUp](#)

In May, Governor Baker [issued an order](#) requiring residents to wear face-coverings in public where social distancing is not possible. This applies to both indoor and outdoor spaces. Exceptions include children under the age of 2 and those unable to wear a mask or face covering due to a medical condition.

Framingham Added to Stop the Spread Free COVID-19 Testing Initiative

On Monday, August 3, the Baker-Polito Administration announced an expansion of its “Stop the Spread” initiative, which provides free COVID-19 testing in targeted communities across the Commonwealth, with a new testing site in Framingham.

This site joins testing sites in 16 other communities - Agawam, Brockton, Chelsea, Everett, Fall River, Lawrence, Lowell, Lynn, Marlborough, Methuen, New Bedford, Randolph, Revere, Springfield, Taunton, and Worcester.

The Stop the Spread initiative is a data-driven focused effort to reduce the prevalence of COVID-19 in communities that are above the state average in total cases, positive test rate, and have experienced a decline in testing levels since April. All residents of these 17 communities, including asymptomatic individuals, are urged to get tested at one of these locations. While these sites are being launched in these communities, they are open to all residents of the Commonwealth.

Framingham’s 14-day average positive test rate increased from 1.82% on July 8th to 3.09% on July 29th. Residents of the 17 communities can visit [mass.gov/stopthespread](#) to find testing locations, which will be available through August 14.

Residents are reminded that if they test positive for COVID-19, please answer the call when they are contacted by the Community Tracing Collaborative or their local board of health. Also, any individual a safe place to isolate can call (617) 367-5150 to access an isolation and recovery site at no cost.

Watertown Public Schools (WPS)

At the Watertown School Committee meeting last night, the School Committee voted to reopen schools this fall with a gradual, phased-in approach to in-person learning: our "Bridge to Hybrid". All PreK-12 students will start remotely on September 22, with a robust, full-day virtual learning experience. Students identified as having the greatest learning needs, as defined by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, will have opportunities for instruction and support services that are delivered in school, if possible. The Watertown Public Schools will gradually phase to a hybrid model based on sound scientific metrics and the readiness of our buildings. A fully virtual program for students who can't return to school will be offered as well. The first assessment to determine readiness for return to in-person, hybrid learning will occur on October 22, with the second assessment being on November 25.

The School Nutrition Department continues to provide "grab and go" breakfasts and lunches on Tuesdays and Fridays in the Watertown High School parking lot from 11:00-1:00.

Vote by Mail for 2020

Recently, Chapter 115 of the Acts of 2020 was enacted relative to voting options in response to COVID-19. One such option is **VOTE BY MAIL**, also known as no excuse voting, which allows for the voter to submit a "Vote by Mail" application to the local Election Department. Watertown voters received a mailing last weekend from the Elections Division of the MA Secretary of State's Office that provided a post card application to be filled out and mail back (postage included) to the Town Clerk's Office. The application can also be faxed (617-972-6595) or emailed (townclerk@watertown-ma.gov), as long as the signature is visible and is signed in a substantial manner as a handwritten signature including applications signed with a mouse, stylus, or finger. Applications with typed signatures are still not accepted. The deadline to submit a Vote by Mail application or absentee ballot application for a mailed ballot for the September 1, 2020 State Primary is Wednesday, August, 26th.

2020 Saltonstall Park Concert Series

Great news! Concerts are still happening! This year marks twenty-one years that the Saltonstall Park Concert Series has provided free music and entertainment in Watertown's historic Saltonstall Park. The concerts will be a very different experience this summer. We are requesting that everyone follow the latest State and Town guidance in regards to masks and social distancing. The Saltonstall Park Concert Series Committee will take steps to help make the process easier, such as social distancing squares. We are very excited to invite our concert-goers back!

Concerts are as follows:

Wednesdays – starting at 6:30 PM

August 12 - Southbound Train is a seven-piece group, including fiddle and steel guitar, that covers all the top country hits: old, new, and everything in between.

August 19 - Gainsville Road is a female fronted dance/party band with a great song list, excellent musicianship, powerful vocals and genuine stage presence.

August 26 – Lightning Rose. Good friends and Palfrey Street neighbors, John Copeland and David and Dawn Scaltreto, found that one of the hardest parts of quarantine was not being able to play live music with their respective bands, or play live in clubs and restaurants. When the Scaltretos heard John playing one day on his front steps, they wanted to join in the fun! That weekend they began playing concerts in the backyard over the fence. Appreciative neighbors came out with their lawn chairs to listen, and everyone loved it! With the addition of Watertown native David Donnelly on drums, the band was complete. John's adorable 5 year-old daughter, Natalie, came up with the name for the new ensemble, and "Lightning Rose" was born! They play a selection of popular classic rock tunes with a bluesy-jazzy-country spin and lots of beautifully layered vocals.

The 2020 concert series is sponsored by the Watertown Savings Bank, Eversource, Massachusetts Cultural Council, Graphic Connections and Town of Watertown

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. 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 open on Fridays and Saturdays from 9:00 AM – 4:00 PM
- As of June 1st, the Department of Public Works Administrative offices has opened to the public for issuance of permits and for other Public Works related services.
- The Watertown Senior Center will remain closed as we continue to review best ways to responsibly and safely reopen. We will provide more information once available in COVID-19 Updates, on social media and on the Town's website.

Town Hall

Town Hall is open to the public by appointment only. Under this initial reopening, any member of the public must wear a face covering while in the building. Additionally, the public is asked to maintain physical separation from employees and other visitors of at least six feet.

Many departments offer residents and businesses the ability to conduct transactions by phone, online or by mail. Individuals should check with their intended departments to see if there are options for service.

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

Town Hall Summer Hours through Friday September 4th will be as follows:

Monday, Wednesday, Thursday 8:30 AM - 5:00 PM

Tuesday 8:30 AM – 7:00 PM

Friday 8:30 AM – 2:00 PM

The Building Inspectors' Offices are open at 7:30 AM

Parks and Recreation

On Wednesday, June 3rd, the following opened:

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

On Wednesday, June 17th, the following opened:

- **Dog Parks**
- **Tennis & Pickle Ball Courts (singles play only - no doubles play)**

On Wednesday, June 24th, the following opened:

- **Playgrounds & Tot Lots**
- **Basket Ball Courts**
- **Picnic Tables & Grills (permit only)**

On Saturday July 11th, the following opened:

- **Victory Turf Field – Hours of operation will be 8:00 AM – 10:00 PM**
- **Spray pads at Arsenal and Filippello Parks – Hours of operation will be 10:00 AM – 7:00 PM. Capacity at the Arsenal Spray Pad is 8 users at a time; and 15 users at a time at the Filippello Spray Pad**

Watertown's recreational facilities and activities' rules and regulations will be guided by the Governor's Phase III reopening plan, which began on July 6th. Please refer to these documents for detailed instructions.

Parks-Open-Outdoor Education – Phase III

<https://www.mass.gov/doc/safety-standards-for-parks-open-space-and-outdoor-education-programs-phase-iii-step-1-0/download>

Safety Standards for Playgrounds-Spray Parks and Outdoor Fitness – Phase III

<https://www.mass.gov/info-details/executive-office-of-energy-and-environmental-affairs-eea-covid-19-guidance-documents#playgrounds,-spray-decks-and-outdoor-fitness-areas->

Youth and Adult Amateur Sports: Phase III

<https://www.mass.gov/doc/safety-standards-for-youth-and-adult-amateur-sports-activities-phase-iii-step-1/download>

Face coverings are mandatory at all times in the Town's recreational facilities in accordance with the Watertown Board of Health's Emergency Order.

The Recreation Department began a summer programming schedule on Monday, July 13th.

Click here for the [Summer Program Offerings Brochure](#)

The Watertown Free Public Library is open for browsing only, at reduced capacity, and shortened hours in compliance with the State's phased reopening guidance.

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.

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/Coronavirus>

Watertown Free Public Library

The Watertown Free Public Library is open for browsing. Hours open are Monday through Thursday from 10am -7pm with 9am -10am reserved for seniors and at risk patrons, and Saturday from 9am to 12pm. Every person entering the building must wear a face covering and staff will monitor capacity. In addition, every patron will be asked to sign in with their contact information as required by the State of Massachusetts for contact tracing purposes. That information will be kept confidential and only turned over upon request from the state or local health department. The information will be destroyed after 14 days.

For more information on what to expect when returning to the library, please follow this link
<https://www.watertownlib.org/514/COVID-19-Library-Updates>

Curbside service continues and has been expanded. For more information visit
<https://www.watertownlib.org/537/Curbside-Pickup>

Hatch Makerspace continues to offer 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.

Watertown Council on Aging/Senior Center/Food Pantry

The Watertown Senior Center and the Senior Shuttle Bus remain closed, but Senior Center staff are available to connect you to their Zoom programs and to provide other assistance. Senior Parking Permits can be renewed over the phone by calling the Senior Center and new permits can be purchased by calling the Senior Center and making an appointment. The monthly Watertown Senior News can be found at
<https://www.watertown-ma.gov/150/Activities-during-COVID-19>.

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. Food donations (canned goods, cold cereals, peanut butter and other shelf-stable items) are accepted at the Food Pantry on Tuesdays starting at 9:00 AM until 2 PM. For more information about the Food Pantry or any senior issues, 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)

Emergency Management Team

The Town of Watertown Emergency Management Team is meeting 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) (20) [Updates/Statements](#)

We are in this together

We are living in an unprecedeted 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!