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Town Manager's Coronavirus (COVID-19) Update
August 21, 2020

COVID-19 Numbers

The Massachusetts Department of Public Health is reporting that as of August 20, 2020 there are:

- 115,310 cases statewide
- 24,596 Middlesex County
- 8,657 deaths statewide

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

Watertown has a total of 469 confirmed cases of COVID-19 and 439 community members have recovered from the virus. Seven 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 |
|--------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------------|-------------------------|-------|
| 22 | 70 | 101 | 59 | 69 | 63 | 84 | 1 | 469 |

New Weekly Public Health Data Report Released

On August 19th, the COVID Command Center released the comprehensive [COVID-19 Weekly Public Health Report](#).

DPH has also posted an archive of previously released city and town data dating back to April on the COVID-19 reporting page. The Weekly Public Health Report includes also includes data on recoveries, along with detailed case and death data related to long term care facilities. The report also includes information on new nursing facility staff baseline testing, infection control audits e data reports, raw data files, by visiting the [COVID-19 Response Reporting page](#).

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).

Interactive Map of COVID-19 Community Data Launched

Last week, the Commonwealth began reporting enhanced community-level data on key COVID-19 metrics as part of the Baker-Polito Administration's [efforts](#) to partner with cities and towns to slow the spread of the virus. The Administration launched an [interactive map](#) in order to make it easier to access this important. The data in this interactive map is based on the weekly [Public Health Report](#) published each Wednesday by MDPH.

Administration Announces Testing Initiative to Help Schools

The Baker-Polito Administration announced two rapid response testing initiatives for schools to address potential clusters of COVID-19 cases among students, teachers or staff at a school building.

School officials, after consultation with public health authorities, will be able to request a state-sponsored mobile testing unit come to their school to test a group of students and/or staff if a potential cluster of COVID-19 has been identified and transmission appears to have occurred within the school. This resource is available to both public and private schools.

Before making a request, school administrators should consult with public health authorities first to determine if a request for mobile testing should be made.

The mobile rapid response unit will provide free testing of asymptomatic students or staff, who are not known to be a close contact of someone who tested positive, when there is evidence that COVID-19 transmission may have occurred within a classroom or school within the past 14 days. After consulting with an epidemiologist from the Department of Public Health, a school administrator or the local board of health can request a mobile rapid response unit be deployed by the COVID-19 Command Response Center.

- Anyone under the age of 18 must have written permission from their parent or legal guardian to receive testing.
- The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and the Department of Public Health will release detailed guidance in the coming weeks on how and when testing can be requested, as well as testing and result protocols.
- *The mobile response team may be deployed if the following minimal conditions apply:*
 - Two or more students/staff within the classroom group develop COVID-19 within 14 days, and transmission/exposure occurred in the classroom;
 - More than 3 percent of the cohort/grade (at least 3 individuals) develop COVID-19 within 14 days, and transmission/exposure occurred in the school;
 - More than 3 percent of the school develops COVID-19 within 14 days, and there is evidence of transmission within the school;
 - Three or more staff within the same school develop COVID-19 within 14 days, and there is evidence of transmission among the staff; or
 - Two or more students on the bus develop COVID-19 within 14 days.

In addition to the mobile testing unit, **the Administration will extend the Stop the Spread initiative through September 30** in certain communities with higher rates of COVID-19 to help cities and towns as students begin to return to school.

The [Stop the Spread initiative](#) was launched on July 10. It is a data-driven initiative and currently provides free testing in 20 communities that have high rates of COVID-19.

Flu Vaccine Now Required for All Students Enrolled in Child Care, Pre-School, K-12, and Post-Secondary Institutions

State public health officials announced that influenza immunization will be required for all children 6 months of age or older who are attending Massachusetts child care, pre-school, kindergarten, K-12, and colleges and universities. The new vaccine requirement is an important step to reduce flu-related illness and the overall impact of respiratory illness during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Students will be expected to have received a flu vaccine by December 31, 2020 for the 2020-2021 influenza season, unless either a medical or religious exemption is provided. Also exempted are K-12 students who are homeschooled and higher education students who are completely off-campus and engaged in remote learning only. This new flu immunization requirement to enter school in January is in addition to existing vaccine requirements for all those attending child care, preschool, K-12, and colleges and universities in Massachusetts. Elementary and secondary students in districts and schools that are using a remote education model are not exempt.

All children at least 6 months old who attend child care or preschool must be immunized in accordance with the [ACIP Recommended Immunization Schedule](#).

More information on the new requirement can be found [here](#).

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.

Voting and Polling Location Changes for 2020 Elections

On July 6, 2020, the Massachusetts Legislature enacted Chapter 115 of the Acts of 2020, which governs the conduct of the upcoming federal, state, and local elections during the pendency of the COVID-19 public health crisis. The legislation provides for the specific processes for changing the polling locations and precincts for the primary election on September 1, 2020 and the general election on November 3, 2020.

On Tuesday, August 11th, the Town Council approved the following polling location changes:

To the voters of Precinct 2: Hosmer School
Your polling location has been changed to:
Hellenic Cultural Center
25 Bigelow Avenue

To the voters of Precinct 11: Cunniff School
Your polling location has been changed to:

Watertown Middle School
68 Waverley Avenue

To the voters of Precinct 12: Cunniff School
Your polling location has been changed to:
Watertown Middle School
68 Waverley Avenue

For a complete list of locations see the following link.
<https://www.watertown-ma.gov/259/Voting-Polling-Locations>

To view 2020 State Primary sample ballots, [click here.](#)

Early Voting

You can vote in person at Town Hall (all precincts) in advance of the election at these times. For everyone's safety, voters are asked to wear a face covering, social distance (stay 6' away) from others, and use the hand sanitizer available at the entrance. Masks will be provided if requested.

Saturday, August 22: 12PM-5PM

Sunday, August 23: 12PM-5PM

Monday, August 24: 8:30AM-5PM

Tuesday, August 25: 8:30AM-7PM

Wednesday, August 26: 8:30AM-5PM

Thursday, August 27: 8:30AM-5PM

Friday, August 28: 8:30AM-2PM

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 (townclerks@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.

Ballots for the September 1, 2020 State Primary can be returned anytime 7 days a week in the exterior Library drop box located on Thaxter Street (adjacent to Town Hall). You may also return library materials in this box.

Watertown Public Schools (WPS)

The Watertown Public Schools continues its planning for the reopening of schools. At this time, WPS will open remotely on September 22, with a phased-in approach to a hybrid model with both in-person and remote learning throughout the week later in the fall. The first checkpoint for moving to the hybrid model will be October 22 with a start date of October 27 beginning with our elementary students. The decision to move into a hybrid model will be based on the available metrics regarding COVID-19 cases and the percent of positive tests in Watertown and Middlesex County.

The School Nutrition Department will continue to provide breakfast and lunch for any family through September 21. Distribution is in the WHS parking lot from 11:00 am to 1:00 pm on Tuesdays and Fridays. Once school starts, we will evaluate the best way to distribute breakfast and lunch through the phases of reopening.

The Watertown Farmers' Market is open weekly through October 14th!

Wednesdays, 2:30 – 6:30pm, Saltonstall Park, 149 Main Street, next to Town Hall

The market is open as an essential food access point offering a wide variety of farm fresh, locally grown and produced foods. The market offers safe and efficient on-site shopping as well as pre-order options.

Volunteer Shoppers are available for those with medical, mobility, or transportation needs. Market flyer with SNAP information ([HERE](#)).

Visit our website for more information: www.watertownmarket.com

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 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 Hall

Town Hall is open to the public by appointment only. 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

Recreation Department

Filippello Arlington side is closed until Friday, August 28th due to field light installation.

Watertown's recreational facilities and activities' rules and regulations are guided by the Governor's Phase III reopening plan, which began on July 6th. Please refer to this [link](#) for detailed instructions.

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

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 is open by appointment only. For more information visit <https://www.watertownlib.org/576/Book-an-Appointment>.

Hatch will continue 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: PGorge@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>.

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.

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.

Helpful Links:

- [COVID-19 Travel Order](#)
- [Mass.gov/findfoodhelp](#)
- [Stop the Spread](#)
- [Reopening Massachusetts](#)
- [Mass.Gov/covid19](#)
- [Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency](#)
- [Unemployment & COVID-19](#)
- [Dept. Of Transitional Assistance Online Portal](#)
- [Emergency Childcare Site](#)
- [COVID-19 Cost Eligibility and Tracking Guidance](#)
- [Watertown COVID-19 Resource Guide](#)

Town Manager's Coronavirus (COVID-19) (22) [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!