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Town Manager

TOWN OF
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**Town Manager’s Coronavirus (COVID-19) Update
June 12, 2020**

COVID-19 Numbers

The Massachusetts Department of Public Health is reporting that as of June 11, 2020 there are:

- 104,667 cases statewide
- 22,996 Middlesex County
- 7,492 deaths statewide

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

Watertown has a total of 396 confirmed cases of COVID-19 and 343 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
19	52	84	51	58	57	74	1	396

Reopening Massachusetts: Transition to Phase II

The Baker-Polito Administration announced that Phase II of the Commonwealth’s reopening plan will begin on June 8th. Businesses and sectors set to begin opening in Phase II are subject to compliance with all mandatory safety standards.

On May 18, the Administration [released](#) a four-phased plan to reopen the economy based on public health data, spending at least three weeks in each phase. Key public health data, such as new cases and hospitalizations, has been closely monitored and seen a significant decline.

The public health dashboard designating the progress of key COVID-19 data metrics has been updated to reflect the number of COVID-19 patients in Massachusetts hospitals to green, indicating a positive trend.

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).

Since mid-April, the 7-day average for the positive COVID-19 test rate is down 83 percent, the 3-day average of hospitalized patients is down 59 percent, and the number of hospitals in surge is down 78 percent. A total of over 653,000 viral COVID-19 tests have been completed, and testing continues to increase throughout the state.

Full list and safety protocols available at www.mass.gov/reopening.

The Baker-Polito Administration also released other sector specific guidance:

[Read the full guidance here.](#)

[Click here for Governor Baker's Phase II Executive Order.](#)

[Click here for Governor Baker's Revised Gatherings Executive Order.](#)

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 opened 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 has opened 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. The tot lots and basketball courts remain closed for no-contact play in accordance with the Governor's Phase II requirements.

On Wednesday, June 3rd, the following opened:

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

These facilities are 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.

On Wednesday, June 17th, the following will be opened:

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

June 8th Special Town Council Meeting – Submission of the Fiscal Year 2021 Budget

The Fiscal Year 2021 Budget was submitted at the June 8th Special Town Council Meeting. Although there is COVID-19 related reductions in State Aid and Local Receipts totaling \$4,004,661, the Submitted Fiscal Year 2021 Budget contains no layoffs of Town and School employees.

June 9th Town Council Meeting – Elementary Schools Project

On June 9th, the Honorable Town Council unanimously adopted a Proposed Loan Order totaling \$103,455,000 to move forward with the building of a new Cunniff and Hosmer Elementary Schools! Construction will begin at the Cunniff and Hosmer during the summer. The Cunniff School will be completed the winter of 2021/2022 and the Hosmer School will be completed by the summer of 2022.

2020 Flag Day Ceremony

Please join us in this Time-Honored event as the Town properly retires the United States Flags that have flown over our Community for the past year. The Ceremony will be held this Sunday, June 14th at 10:00 AM at Ridgelawn Cemetery, Stuart Street.

Outdoor & Flexible Seating Initiative for Watertown Restaurants

In an effort to assist local restaurants, the Town of Watertown has developed a policy allowing outdoor seating for restaurants and licensed establishments. The Town is now accepting applications for temporary outdoor seating and use to allow for this activity to be undertaken by restaurants in a safe and responsible manner during the COVID-19 pandemic. The review process is designed to be streamlined with staff level review and final approval by the Town Manager. The approval process will begin on Tuesday, June 16, 2020 based upon submission of complete and acceptable applications. The application may be obtained at:

https://www.watertown-ma.gov/DocumentCenter/View/29480/Watertown_Temp_Outdoor_Seating_Application_2020_0611

The Watertown Farmers' Market is Opening on June 17th!

The Farmers' Market will be opening as an essential food access point with a new market layout providing social distancing, monitored entrance and exits, and one-way shopping, as our top priority is the health and safety of all. The market will continue to offer a \$15 SNAP match to eligible customers and include farm vendors who can process Healthy Incentive Program (HIP) benefits. The market is also able to process P-EBT cards.

The Farmers' Market will be held every Wednesday, 2:30 – 6:30 PM beginning on June 17th through October 14th at Saltonstall Park, 149 Main Street, next to Town Hall.

While we have eliminated special events and community groups for the time being, you can still expect to find locally grown and produced foods in our pleasurable, outdoor market space. Please visit our website and sign up for our newsletter to receive important information and updates about vendors, pre-ordering, and safety rules: <http://www.livewellwatertown.org>. If you are interested in volunteering, contact Stephanie Venizelos, Community Wellness Program Manager at: svenizelos@watertown-ma.gov.

Camp Pequossette

Given the COVID-19 pandemic and as a follow-up to a recommendation from the Recreation Director and Director of Public Health, Camp Pequossette is cancelled for the 2020 season out of an abundance of caution to protect the health and safety of the camp participants and staff. Although Camp Pequossette will be cancelled, the Recreation Department is researching creative ways to offer passive and active recreational program opportunities for this summer that would adhere to the Governor's Phase IV requirements.

Faire on the Square

Given the COVID-19 pandemic and as a follow-up to discussion with the Town Council President, the Chair of the Faire on the Square Committee and the Director of Public Health, this year's Faire on the Square is cancelled out of an abundance of caution to protect the health and safety of its participants and vendors.

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 went into effect on May 6th.

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.

ICYMI: New Data on COVID-19 Recoveries Added to Weekly Public Health Report

On June 3rd, the Department of Public Health (DPH) began reporting data on those who have recovered from COVID-19 on [page 22 of the report](#). Individuals who had a confirmed case of COVID-19 and are no longer in isolation are considered for purposes of this report to be recovered. As part of this definition, DPH is counting people as released from isolation after 21 days of illness or 21 days past the date of their test in all settings including nursing homes and state facilities.

The Weekly COVID-19 Public Health Report also includes town-by-town case and testing information, along with detailed case and death data related to long term care facilities. The report also includes update on nursing facility audits and more. You can find all the data reports by visiting the [COVID-19 Response Reporting page](#). ([Find the Data Files Here](#)).

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 Public Schools

The Watertown Public Schools (WPS) finishes the 2019/2020 school year on Tuesday, June 16th, three months after the closing of our school buildings on March 13th. The WPS students and staff have shown great resilience and determination during this time to keep the learning moving forward. Thank you to all of the parents and caregivers who supported their children's learning while at home. Seniors in the Class of 2020 will receive their diplomas over the course of the day on June 20th as the culmination of their 13 years of education. The WPS Reopening Task Force will meet weekly throughout the summer to plan for the eventual reopening of schools. Meals continue to be provided on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday in the WHS parking lot from 11 am to 1 pm through June 30th. The School Nutrition Department is exploring options to continue this service throughout the summer.

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 Children's Department Summer Reading Program will kick off with a drive through event on Tuesday, June 16! Visit www.watertownlib.org/summerreading for more information.

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) (13) [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!