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Town Manager

TOWN OF
WATERTOWN
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**Town Manager’s Coronavirus (COVID-19) Update
July 2, 2020**

COVID-19 Numbers

The Massachusetts Department of Public Health is reporting that as of July 1, 2020 there are:

- 109,143 cases statewide
- 23,998 Middlesex County
- 8,081 deaths statewide

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

Watertown has a total of 423 confirmed cases of COVID-19 and 391 community members have recovered from the virus. Four Town employees have had confirmed cases. 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
20	55	89	54	64	61	79	1	423

The Baker-Polito Administration announced today that Phase III of the Commonwealth’s four-phase reopening plan, [Reopening Massachusetts](#), will begin on Monday, July 6th. We will provide more information in the next COVID-19 Update.

Grants Available to Help Collaborative Workspaces Reopen & Operate Safely

The Baker-Polito Administration and MassDevelopment announced funding for the fifth round of the [Collaborative Workspace Program](#), a MassDevelopment program that accelerates business formation, job creation, and entrepreneurial activity in communities by supporting infrastructure that fuels locally based innovation. Established coworking spaces may apply for grants of up to \$100,000 for new equipment or building improvements, including adjustments to help spaces adhere to the social distancing and health and safety standards outlined in the Commonwealth’s sector-specific [COVID-19 Workplace Safety Standards](#). [\(Find out more about the grants.\)](#)

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).

GIC Deferring \$190 Million in FY21 First Quarter Premium Payments for Municipal Members [\(News Release\)](#)

The Administration announced that the Group Insurance Commission (GIC) will defer \$190 million in premium payments during the first quarter of Fiscal Year 2021 (FY21) from local cities and towns, regional school districts, and other entities that became members of the GIC through the Municipal Partnership Act.

This measure will provide important cash-flow relief to GIC municipal members across Massachusetts without compromising the GIC's ability to pay all member claims without any impact on total FY21 revenue.

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 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.**
- **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)**

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.

The Recreation Department will begin a summer programming schedule on Monday, July 13th. Specific program information will be available tomorrow on the recreation website at www.recreation.watertown-ma.gov, social media and notify me platforms. All program registrations will begin on Tuesday, July 7th.

Outdoor & Flexible Seating Initiative for Watertown Restaurants

In an effort to assist local restaurants, the Town of Watertown began a policy allowing outdoor seating for restaurants and licensed establishments. The Town is 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 following restaurants have been approved to have outdoor seating:

City Works Eatery and Pour House
91 Arsenal Yards Blvd

Conley's Pub & Grille
164 Belmont Street

Deluxe Town Diner
627 Mt. Auburn Street

Gerry's Italian Kitchen
1072 Belmont Street

Greg's Restaurant
821 Mount Auburn Street

Halfway Cafe
394-396 Main Street

Ixtapa Mexican Grill
18 Mount Auburn Street

Jana Grill and Bakery
2 Watertown Street

La Bodega
21 Nichols Avenue

Not Your Average Joe's
55 Main Street

Ritcey East
208 Waverley Avenue

Shiraz Cuisine
72 Bigelow Avenue

Stellina
47 Main Street

Tresca's Eating Place
25 Church Street

Wild Willy's Burgers
46 Arsenal Street

Fiscal Year 2021 Budget

The Honorable Town Council met on Monday, June 29th at 6:00 PM and adopted the Fiscal Year 2021 Budget.

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 (WPS)

On June 25th, Governor Baker's office and the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education released their initial guidance about reopening schools this fall. The goal of the guidance is the safe return of as many students as possible to in-person school settings in order to best meet students' academic, social, and emotional needs. Over the coming weeks, the WPS Reopening Task Force will review the guidance to begin to understand how it impacts what we can do in Watertown. We also acknowledge that these initial guidelines do not address every topic and that there will be additional guidance coming throughout the summer. The full guidance document can be found at the following [link](#). Districts will need to develop three separate plans - one for return to full in-person instruction with safety requirements, one for full remote learning, and one for hybrid learning that combines in-person and remote learning. As we get closer to the opening of school, we will implement the plan that makes the most sense for Watertown based on the information that is available at that time.

Breakfast and lunch is available for any student throughout the summer. Starting on July 7th, meals will be available on Tuesday and Friday from 11:00-1:00 in the WHS parking lot. Any families are welcome to take advantage of this offering.

Watertown Free Public Library

The Watertown Free Public Library building 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) to schedule a pickup. 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.

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/>.

Thanks to the Town Council, the library is now fine-free! Any items borrowed at WFPL incur no fines. More info here <https://www.watertownlib.org/559/Press-Releases>.

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 Parking Permits can be renewed over the phone by calling the Senior Center. 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)

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) (16) [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!