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Town Manager

TOWN OF WATERTOWN

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Town Manager’s Coronavirus (COVID-19) Update April 23, 2021

Watertown has a total of 2,352 confirmed and probable cases of COVID-19 and 2,250 community members have recovered from the virus. Thirty-seven Town employees have had confirmed cases. Watertown has recorded thirty-five 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
296	436	462	321	297	256	283	1	2,352

Watertown COVID-19 Positivity Rates Stabilize

Continued vigilance urged as we work toward herd immunity.

According to the Mass Department of Public Health (DPH) Dashboard, Watertown’s 14-day COVID-19 positivity rate is 1.02%. down from 1.51% last week [View the DPH dashboard.](#)

MEMA COVID-19 Command Center Situation Report

Yesterday, the Command Center released the comprehensive [COVID-19 Weekly Public Health Report](#), including community-specific COVID-19 case and testing data. The report also includes risk categories for each city and town based on the average daily incident rate over the past 14 days.

All Individuals 16+ Now Eligible for Vaccine

On Monday, April 19th, individuals 16 and older became eligible to receive vaccine at any of the Commonwealth’s over 300 public vaccination locations. With this group, 1.7 million additional residents are now eligible for vaccine in the Commonwealth. Individuals seeking appointments at mass vaccination sites are able to preregister for vaccine appointments at mass.gov/COVIDVaccine. Several regional collaboratives are also on the preregistration system. An individual who preregisters can still seek appointments at other sites including pharmacies, community health centers, or their healthcare provider. Due to limited supply of vaccines from the federal government, individuals seeking appointments should

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).

anticipate that it may take several weeks to get an appointment. This past weekend, the Commonwealth hit the milestone of having over 2 million residents fully vaccinated. Over 3.2 million first doses have been administered to date.

Free COVID-19 Testing for Watertown Residents – Additional Slots

The Town of Watertown is offering, by appointment only, one - free COVID-19 Test for Watertown residents. Testing is free, does not require a medical referral and you do not need to have COVID-19 symptoms to get tested. Pre-registration is required to receive a test (pre-registration details below) and we ask that you only sign up for one test to allow other residents access to testing.

Testing will be held inside the Commander's Mansion 440 Talcott Avenue on the following dates and times:

Tuesday, April 27 from 1:00 PM to 7:00 PM

Wednesday, April 28 from 8:00 AM to 2:00 PM

In order to obtain an appointment a Watertown resident must pre-register by clicking on the following link: <https://proemscovidtesting.as.me/watertown>

This is not a drive-up test. Watertown residents who have an appointment will enter into the Commander's Mansion and with the assistance of Pro Ambulance employees will conduct a self-administering nasal swab (PCR test).

Test results: As a reminder, a negative test does not mean you cannot spread COVID-19, or get infected with COVID-19, at a later date. Residents should continue to practice physical distancing and hygiene, regardless of a negative test result.

The above dates and times are the only dates and times available for Watertown residents through this program.

Watertown Public Schools (WPS)

Beginning April 5, Watertown Public Schools welcomed back our elementary students full time, five days a week, followed by our middle school students on April 12. Watertown High School students will return to full in-person learning five days a week on Monday, April 26. School administration, faculty, and staff worked diligently on the plans for a safe return, including shifting lunches to primarily being eaten outdoors, weather permitting.

At this time, well over 80% of staff have received at least one dose of vaccine, or have appointments scheduled. WPS has implemented mandatory weekly COVID-19 testing for all students who are learning in person.

Our school nutrition department offers seven days of free breakfast and lunch for any students in Watertown. Distribution occurs in the schools for students in person. Students who are learning remotely for the remainder of the school year are eligible for free school meals as well. Weekly meal bags are distributed by preorder only. For more information, please see the following newsletter:

<https://www.smores.com/2ca36>.

Town Hall is open to the public by appointment and drop-off transactions only.

All payments may be placed in the silver box next to the Library book drop-off labeled “Payments Drop-off” located on Thaxter Street. You may also drop-off transactions in person in the Philip Pane Hearing Room, Saltonstall Park side of Town Hall 9:00 AM – 4:00 PM Monday through Friday. Members of the public must wear a face covering while in the building and 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

All Departments are open 8:30 AM - 5:00 PM Monday – Friday. The Building Inspectors’ Offices are open at 7:30 AM.

Watertown Free Public Library

The Watertown Free Public Library is open for browsing. The library is open Monday through Thursday from 10 AM to 7 PM, Friday from 10 AM to 5 PM and Saturday from 9 AM to 5 PM. Monday through Friday from 9 AM to 10 AM is reserved for patrons 65+ and with high-risk health conditions. 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>

Check the library website (www.watertownlib.org) or call the reference desk 617-972-6436 for more information.

The Watertown Free Public Library, Wayside Multiservice Center, and Watertown Police Department have launched a mental health discussion series to help people cope with the emotional stressors of living through a pandemic. The series, led by mental health professionals, begins on February 25 at 6:30 pm with a discussion of sadness, isolation, and anxiety that will highlight strategies for coping and locally available mental health resources. To register for this zoom event, visit the library website or call 617-972-6431. Participants can remain anonymous. Series continues through the spring.

Watertown Council on Aging/Senior Center/Food Pantry

The Watertown Senior Center remains 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 Senior Shuttle Bus is running again on a limited, by-appointment basis to the Stop and Shop on Watertown Street, Market Basket, Marshalls and Target. Call the Senior Center on Fridays to reserve your ride for the following week.

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 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 8:30 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. Veterans who receive less than \$2,000 monthly and have less than \$5,000 in assets (\$9,800 if married) should consult Veterans' Services about Chapter 115 benefits. This is a financial lifeline for eligible Veterans and families, please inquire at the contact info below. Water 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. Please contact the VSO at: PGeorge@watertown-ma.gov or (617) 972-6416 (Office) and (781) 645-9127 (Cell).

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 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 a COVID-19 email to allow residents and business owners to ask non-medical questions specific to COVID-19 in Watertown. 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:

- Wear a mask
- 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) (55) [Updates/Statements](#)

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!