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Michael J. Sullivan
Town Administrator

Town Administrator’s Report to the Selectboard for July 28, 2020

Honorable Selectboard,

Please consider and review the information presented in this report. Thank you for your attention, patience, and leadership!

COVID 19 Update

I have copied a one page of data from the Mass.gov analysis and one section of the BioBot report regarding COVID 19.

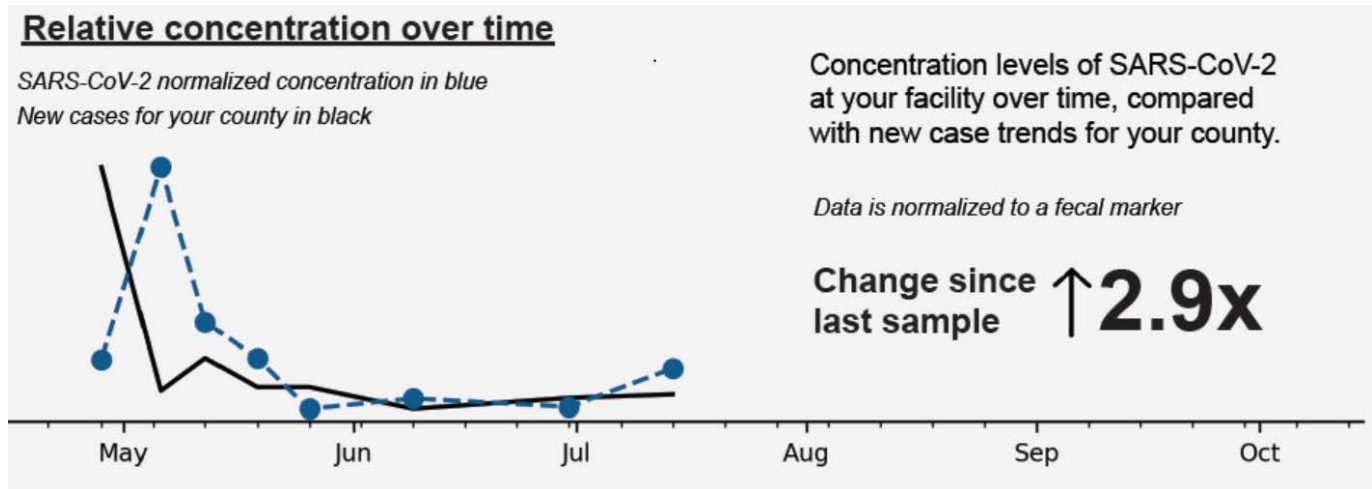


Massachusetts Department of Public Health COVID-19 Dashboard – Wednesday, July 22, 2020

Count and Rate (per 100,000) of Confirmed COVID-19 Cases and Tests Performed¹ in MA by City/Town, January 1, 2020 – July 22, 2020

City/Town	Total Case Count	Case Count (Last 14 Days)	Percent Change ²	Total Tests	Total Tests (Last 14 days)	Total Positive Tests (Last 14 days)	Percent Positivity (Last 14 days)
Rockland	285	<5	Decrease	3138	329	3	0.91%
Rockport	82	<5	No change	1047	142	2	1.41%
Rowe	0	0	No change	43	8	0	0%
Rowley	63	<5	Decrease	1082	143	3	2.10%
Royalston	<5	0	No change	162	29	0	0%
Russell	17	<5	Decrease	198	30	5	16.67%
Rutland	54	<5	No change	1175	182	2	1.10%
Salem	651	13	Increase	8876	1229	17	1.38%
Salisbury	59	5	Decrease	1329	192	5	2.60%
Sandisfield	<5	0	No change	210	40	0	0%
Sandwich	98	<5	Decrease	2644	396	3	0.76%
Saugus	566	8	No change	5926	718	12	1.67%
Savoy	<5	<5	Increase	73	26	1	3.85%
Scituate	195	5	Decrease	2781	347	5	1.44%
Seekonk	90	<5	Decrease	1582	225	3	1.33%
Sharon	161	<5	Increase	2727	347	2	0.58%
Sheffield	15	0	No change	400	93	0	0%
Shelburne	8	0	No change	511	98	0	0%
Sherborn	15	0	No change	542	90	0	0%
Shirley	176	0	Decrease	2947	99	0	0%
Shrewsbury	340	13	Increase	5898	1044	13	1.25%
Shutesbury	<5	0	No change	196	48	0	0%
Somerset	212	7	Increase	3685	256	9	3.52%
Somerville	998	24	Increase	20715	2781	29	1.04%
South Hadley	168	<5	Decrease	2178	339	2	0.59%

The above Mass.gov data suggests there is a very small rise in cases in South Hadley (.59%). Some of this may be affected by timing of the reporting to MAVEN from healthcare facilities for South Hadley residents, but generally the trending continues to suggest the virus continues to increase its presence in South Hadley.



BioBot is a twice-monthly sampling of fecal material at the wastewater treatment plant that reveals RNA, which is a messenger carrying instructions from DNA for controlling the synthesis of proteins. In this study it is used to determine how much RNA related to COVID 19 is prevalent in South Hadley. The test material is taken every two weeks and will build a database for leading indicators to determine when COVID's presence is increasing in South Hadley.

In the last week the concentration levels have increased nearly three times over the previous test. The present amount is used in a calculation which would suggest there were about 417 cases of COVID in South Hadley at the time of the test. This may include individuals who have recovered and were or are asymptomatic during their infection.

The recent outbreak of 36 (23 staff, 13 patients) at Baystate in Springfield literally overnight indicates how quickly things can change with this virus. One day it looks like we have it under control - we take a breath, start to relax and are again in the middle of a battle.

I would like to thank the public employees who have had to survive the wrath of a small number of frustrated citizens. This includes verbal abuse to a more concerning incident where an employee was spit at when the spray park automatically shut off and a woman demanded it be turned back on. We understand how the pandemic has made us all a bit more edgy, but this type of behavior is unacceptable.

We appreciate citizen support in wearing masks, practicing social distancing and some old favorites like not littering, speeding, or taking care of their property. Please stay safe and think of others.

Mount Holyoke Reopening



Beginning Aug.18 the first of three waves of 350 (approximately) students will arrive on the MHC campus. There will be additional groups of similar size returning on Aug. 20 and 22. All students will be tested upon arrival, restricted to campus for their first 14 days and will be isolated immediately if they test positive for COVID-19 in the arrival test or the twice-a-week tests following arrival.

Any positive cases will be traced by MHC staff and the data will be provided to the South Hadley Health Department for processing into MAVEN. The MHC staff will be, and have been, working closely with Health/Emergency Management Director Sharon Hart, and Public Health Nurse Marge Bernard. The Chief of Police and the two fire district chiefs are also very involved and aware of the developing process for returning students at MHC.

The campus-only restriction will not allow students to visit the Village Commons for the initial period of campus quarantine (14 days). The final measures are still being worked out internally at the college, but the attention to detail and MHC's clear understanding of protecting students and protecting the community is central to the policy development.

Senior Center Update



The Senior Center on Dayton Street continues to take shape and given all the challenges is staying on schedule for the most part. It certainly looks like the contractor will be able to get the building enclosed and be in a good position to do interior work during the late fall and winter.

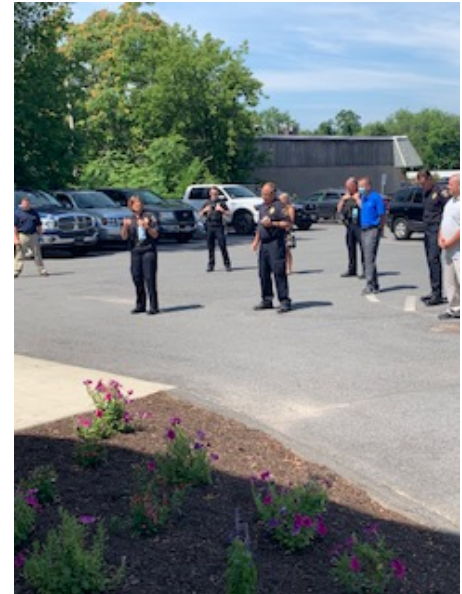
The project also continues to be working within the original funding and there have been no substantial cost overruns which would cause this project to seek additional funds. We continue to monitor needs which may arise to address issues related to the pandemic.

However, we do want to avoid changes which may significantly cause cost increases, particularly if those changes will not be critical long term for the center. The trajectory over the coming months will influence everything related to the center from programing to scheduling to staffing. Everything will be done to protect the safety of the most vulnerable demographic for any community.

Recent Police Department Swearing-in

On July 16, Town Clerk Carlene Hamlin swore in Officer Emily Tebow who just completed six months at the training academy. Her family and colleagues were on hand as she officially became a member of the South Hadley Police Department.

Officer Tebow is certainly no stranger to the department as she has served for eight years as police dispatcher in an exemplary manner. She will be a welcome addition as we continue to make every attempt to create a diverse department within the regulations of Civil Service and other requirements. The chief made some brief but important remarks about the importance of building relationships with the community and how the South Hadley Police Department is dedicated to that principle.



This was also an auspicious day in the career of

Officer Doug Percy as he was promoted to sergeant. He scored the highest on the civil service list for the promotion, he performed well in the interview process, and he has a solid history serving the South Hadley community as a police officer. The chief is fully engaged in evolving the department to meet and exceed the evolving standards of training, opportunity, and inclusion for all members of the South Hadley Police Department.

August 2019 Main Street Pump Station Upgrade

You may recall we unfortunately had an unauthorized release of raw sewage into the Connecticut River in 2019 due to an equipment failure of the contractor (Sherborn). There was a cuff connected to a high-pressure hose which failed. The sewage started to back-up in the pump pits inside of the station.

We had the choice of releasing the effluent into the river or



116 MAIN STREET, SUITE 109, SOUTH HADLEY, MASSACHUSETTS 01075-2896

allowing it to back-up in the basements of the buildings in the Falls. I authorized the plant operator to open the release valve to the river. I did not make the decision lightly. The contaminated effluent went into the river untreated.

As required, the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) must have a hearing any time there is an unauthorized release into the river or a tributary. We attended the hearing virtually last week and I am confident there will be a reasonable resolution. The DEP recognizes the Town of South Hadley was investing in continuing a clean water legacy – a legacy in which South Hadley can be very proud. They also clearly saw this was just an unfortunate accident, there was a responsible design of the project, an experienced and well-regarded contractor, and an engaged community.

However, they will still likely assess a penalty commensurate with the release. This is nearly always the practice no matter the circumstances. The bright side is DEP is very much willing to cooperate in respect to any monetary penalties to have them expressed in projects related to improving the WWTP operations and protections of the river and its tributaries in South Hadley.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael J. Sullivan
Town Administrator, South Hadley