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Sarah Etelman, Vice-Chair  
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Andrea Miles  
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Michael J. Sullivan  
Town Administrator

## **Town Administrator’s Report to the Selectboard September 2, 2020**

Honorable Selectboard;

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

### COVID 19 Update

LBOH Count - Events Per Disease and Classification in Jurisdiction

Classification: confirmed,contact,probable,revoked,suspect

Event Dates from 03/01/2020 to 09/02/2020

Jurisdiction(s) selected: SOUTH HADLEY

Jurisdiction(s) used for report: SOUTH HADLEY

The report contains confidential information. The data are current as of 09/01/2020 and are subject to change.

Disease	Status	Num of Cases
Novel Coronavirus	CONFIRMED	211
Novel Coronavirus	CONTACT	206
Novel Coronavirus	PROBABLE	9
Novel Coronavirus	SUSPECT	3

The chart to follow was copied from this site <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/community-level-covid-19-data-reporting>. It gives some detailed information about South Hadley regarding the pandemic. It starts with the total number of cases in South Hadley since the beginning of the pandemic - 209, interesting - but it is the 14-day average of 18 that I consider the more important number. How that is trending is reassuring - “lower” ....that’s good!

The challenge with stating how many people are positive in South Hadley really becomes a difficult because of the daily fluctuation of the number of cases being monitored over the ten day period where the Town of South Hadley is directed to monitor a case. Someone could test positive, isolate as ordered (or not) and not reply to any requests over that ten-day isolation period to provide the Health Department tracing access.

**South Hadley: YELLOW**

Total Case Count: **209**

Two Week case Count: **18**

Average Daily Incidence Rate Per 100,000: **7.10**

Relative Change In Case Count: **Lower**

Total Tests: **4,322**

Total Tests Last 14 Days: **1,243**

Positive Tests Last 14 Days: **23**

Percent Positivity: **1.85%**

Change In Percent Positivity: **Lower**

The total number of tests of 4,322 is interesting, but we also have to consider that one person could have had multiple tests.....still impressive. Over 20% of those tests coming in the last 14 days. It would seem to indicate testing is becoming more available, needed and citizens are taking advantage of the availability.

The testing over the last two weeks gives us a 1.85% positivity rating. it is better than the 2.5% we were a couple of weeks ago and certainly better that the 6.05% Lynn is experiencing.

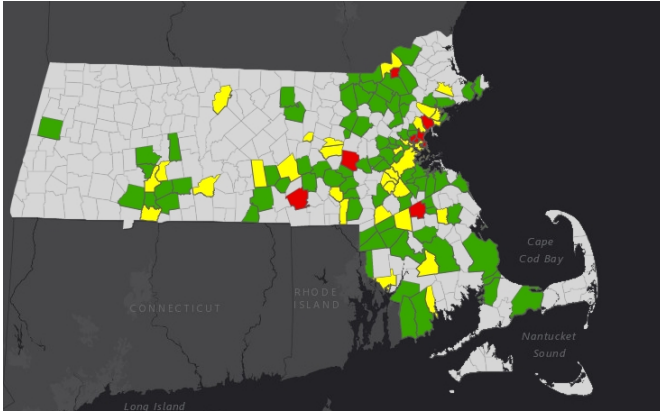
However, it is concerning we are higher than the surrounding communities of Chicopee 1.22%, NoHo 1.31%, Granby .7%, Amherst.1% (although it seems that will change with the return of more students), Holyoke 1.43%, Springfield 1.69%, and Easthampton 1.57%. Why is South Hadley at 1.85%? The good news, if you can call it that, is we are only slightly higher than the state positivity rate of 1.8%, although to find a higher rate than South Hadley I needed to travel to Sutton in Worcester County.

I understand there are a lot of numbers and measures - or matrix if you are younger than I - thrown at us, but the community positivity rate is the most effective to use as a measure as to how a town or city is doing over time and in comparison to other communities. This indicates we all need to try a little harder to help “bend the curve.”

It is true elders are more susceptible to the virus and we do have a higher per capita of over 65 in comparison to other communities across the state, but we need avoid trying to make excuses of why we are higher, accept the fact and work to drive it down.

We continue to encourage seniors to re-double their efforts to avoid crowds, cover their face, practice social distancing, avoid live performances, use good hand hygiene and consult their physicians if they are seeing any signs of COVID 19.

We also will be upping our encouragement for everyone to get a flu shot, although we will not be hosting a “Flu Clinic” this year. The vaccine is available at local pharmacies, through doctors’ offices, and if seniors are seeking safe access to get a flu shot I would recommend they contact the Senior Center for their assistance.



The goal is simple: we went from Red to Yellow, we need to go to Green to get to Grey. Everyone has worked so hard now is not the time to give up!

I would ask all citizens to comply with the guidelines on our website and widely circulated in the media. Thank you for your cooperation thus far!

Below are some pictures of the turf field area. This is just a sampling of the signage we have up in this and other parks encouraging people to comply with face covering and other safe practices. Love the fact that someone placed hand sanitizer on the fence - thank you for your thoughtfulness.



As I am writing we did have a report of employees without face coverings who were in an accident. I want to assure you we addressed it immediately. All South Hadley employees are wearing a face covering indoors when they will be coming in contact or in a work area of a fellow employee. Coverings must be worn in all common areas or when you cannot maintain a 12-foot distance from a fellow employee. Outdoors employees must wear a mask when they are within twenty feet of another person (co-worker, citizen etc.).

**State Primary Voting**

	A	B	C	D	E	TOTAL
<b>Total Ballots Cast</b>	1048	1263	1179	786	1178	5454
<b>Total of Registered Voters</b>	11894					
<b>VOTER TURNOUT (%):</b>	45.86%					

On Sept. 1 the State Primary was held in South Hadley. Overall, the cooperation from voters was very positive. The vast majority conducted themselves responsibly and with courtesy, however we do live in an “exceptional” time.



There was 45.86% of 11,894 registered voters who turned out to vote - an incredible turnout for a State Primary, and in comparison to what we are hearing from other cities and towns.

The turn around time for the Presidential Election will seem short, with “Early Voting” starting on Oct. 17 and lasting to Oct. 24. The last day to register is Oct. 24. It is only a month and half before we start the process again.

There are a few things we sincerely hope people will consider. The issues surrounding voting in a pandemic are not going away. It will be colder, maybe even snowy, and the state and certainly the Town Clerk is going to extreme measures to provide voters with opportunity to have their vote cast through the various methods - mail-in, early and traditional.

It is noted that some prefer to vote in person and you certainly have that right. However, given the number of things out of our control that could work against that right, we hope you will consider voting early by mail or in-person during early voting. There will be more information as to times and other essential updates about voting published on the Clerk’s page <https://www.southhadley.org/Clerk>. We encourage you to visit the site for the latest developments. However, and for whomever you vote, thank you!

### **MVP Grant**

Congratulations to Conservation Director Anne Capra and thank you to the Baker Administration for providing a \$105,000 grant to South Hadley. The Municipal Vulnerability Program or MVP is designed to help cities and towns to make improvements which will help better prepare communities to deal with the changes we are experiencing related to climate change.

Kara Runsten, the Director of the MVP, recently notified us of the award. It will be used to invest in culverts and other drainage systems to modulate flows and better control and abate run-off and other challenges associated with significant rain events.

### **Town Hall**

I would like to remind people that Town Hall is not open for public access at this time and will likely remain closed through January 1, 2021 due to the pandemic and consistent with Governor Baker’s guidelines. Staff is working, in some cases in a non-traditional schedule (nights, weekends, early mornings) and remotely to accommodate child-care, care of adult dependents or if there is some other situation due to COVID 19 which makes it a threat or impossible to work in the building.

We recently installed a new phone system and we all are getting used to it. It has several features which once mastered will assist us in improving services. We will soon adopt the new Zoom platform for public meetings and will have policies and tutorials for committees very soon.

We appreciate and continue to encourage residents utilizing more of the online services including paying taxes and fees. I want to say if you received a bill in April and you are calling in August to make a plea to forgo a penalty, please consider that a record amount of excise tax was collected on time and it would be unfair to every one of those conscientious citizens to even consider any concessions, even though we have very little ability under state law to make adjustments. Thank you sincerely to the more than 96% of residents who pay their taxes on time, even in these trying times. Thank you!

Respectfully submitted.

Michael J. Sullivan  
Town Administrator, South Hadley