



MEMORANDUM

TO: Board of Selectmen

FROM: John C. Curran, Town Manager

CC: Clancy Main, Cathy O'Dea

SUBJECT: Town Manager's Report, July 27, 2020

DATE: June 20, 2020

Masonic Temple

The Purchase and Sales Agreement has been sent to the Mason's attorney. Shirin Everett from K&P has received edits from Attorney Robert Peterson. She is incorporating those into the document and sending an amended version back. Some questions still need to be resolved but I don't anticipate these to be detrimental issues. The projected closing is September 1st.

BOS Public Meeting Format

This office had BATV come to Town Hall and see if they could provide a solution to allow for a hybrid in person meeting following social distancing protocol. Two main problems were identified. The first problem is the Zoom participants being able to hear the Board of Selectmen. The second issue was that there is no way to feed the zoom audio into the BATV broadcast. Paul Abrego the Production and Facilities Coordinator wrote an email that goes in depth about the issues we would face. Paul suggested we continue with Zoom meetings for the time being. This office will follow up with Sam Schauerman and Paul in the next few weeks to see how other Towns have handled this challenge. Paul's full email is attached to this report. The BOS should continue to conduct their meetings in a zoom format for the time being until another safe alternative can be found.

Howe School

The Filed Sub Bid results are tracking 9.3% under budget. However, July 27th the General Contractor bids are due & under Chapter 149, public bidding the GCs are not required to use the low bidder. Therefore, these bid results are only an estimate of where we are today. The fact that they are over \$300,000 lower in total is a positive sign.

Boat Launch

After the last Board of Selectmen meeting I sent an email & letter to the Office of Wildlife and Fisheries reaffirming our interest in the boat launch. I have also followed up with a phone call to the acting director, Doug Cameron, and informed him that I would be the point person as that is the role of the Town Manager and that is the practice with municipalities and state agencies. He was going on vacation, but stated that he would respond with a letter to the Board in August. He intends to address the concerns of the Town before moving forward.

Paving Update

Sewer Contract 36 (Needs Area 3)

The top course of pavement has been placed on all roads except Pond Street, Tamarak Street, and Challenger Road. Due to an issue with a defective sewer pipe at the intersection of Pond Street and Tamarak Street, the final paving in this area has been postponed until the pipe is repaired, re-tested, and the area is restored to the Town's satisfaction. Repair and restoration work is in progress and paving is tentatively scheduled for July 30th and 31st.

Roadway Management 2020

The Contractor is finishing work in the Tercentennial neighborhood. All streets with the exception of School House Lane and the north section of Nashua Road have been completed. Several of the roads that were planned for paving this year have been shifted to 2021.

Main Improvements 2020

Boston Road water main replacement is under way. During construction, northbound traffic has been detoured around the work area. Next week the Contractor will be working on the section between Pershing Street and Floyd Street. Traffic Detail Officers are maintaining access to businesses during construction. We anticipate that water main work will be complete by the end of next week with traffic loop replacements and final paving to follow.

Pond Street

I received a complaint about the state of the hydro-seed on Pond Street. Specifically, it has germinated to crab grass. The Engineering Department has already addressed this with the contractor and it will be corrected in the fall. This item is on the punch list

Rec Update from David Grubb

This week marks the Recreation Departments third week of summer programs. While this summer is undoubtedly different from a traditional summer, we are proud to be offering a handful of programs that are allowing an escape for those families who are comfortable participating. Overall, feedback and response has been very positive with the one challenge continuing to be centered on the lack of access to school facilities because of limitations imposed due to the pandemic. Specifically, prevents our programs from entering their buildings for shelter or to utilize restrooms. All participants and staff are doing a great job adhering to our safety measures, such as face coverings and frequent disinfecting. Please check out our Facebook page for daily program pictures and updates to see the fun we've been having!

Additionally, Youth Sports is slowly returning in Billerica as well. Little League and Billerica Girls Softball have been utilizing the fields for the last couple of weeks. I am very pleased with the amount of support and enforcement each organization has shown to our safety policies. Big thank you to Brian Roberts (Little League President) and Mike Donati (Softball President) for their frequent communication and willingness to be good partners as we all work together to minimize risk and increase safety at all town fields.

COA Re-Opening Update from Jean Bushnell

The COA reopened for limited programming on July 6th and is now in their third week. The COA is still running programs however the participants must sign up prior to the event. Some of the classes that are on-going include knitting, socially distanced social group, cardio boost, strength and balance class, Fitness room, General exercise, Tai Chi, Tap Dance, Walking Club, Yoga, Horseshoes, Line Dance, Zumba and SAIL fitness. The COA continues to carry a full array of health and wellness classes on BATV at Channel 8 for Comcast subscribers and channel 31 for Verizon subscribers.

Our Outreach department has seen an increase in calls from the younger senior segment and family caregivers, all seeking emotional support and guidance to access services and benefits during this very troubling period.

The COA vans are also still running for seniors to go to medical and non-medical destinations. The vans take one patron at a time and follow safety and sanitizing protocols before and after each rider. The COA is limiting participation to residents of Billerica because of limited opportunities caused by social distancing protocols.

Library Re-opening Update from Jan Hagman

Staff of the BPL were excited to reopen to the public on July 13th, 2020. In order to comply with state guidelines for libraries, phase 3, specifically concerning social distancing, we have instituted an appointment system. Basically patrons sign up a day in advance for an hour long appointment to browse our collections, use a computer, and copy or fax. On our first day offering this service we had 54 patrons choose to visit us and use these services. If patrons do not feel comfortable entering the library we are continuing to offer our very popular curbside appointment program where a patron can order books on line or by phone and a staff member will bring them out and place them in their car's trunk. An average of 77 curbside appointments daily are being filled. Besides these services, many others are continuing to be offered remotely thru our website. We have been receiving numerous daily phone calls from many patrons who were asking for access to the library and we are happy to finally be able to do so in a safe and effective manner during the pandemic.

Micro-enterprise Grant

The Town of Billerica's Community Development office applied for and received a grant from the Massachusetts Department of Housing & Community Development in the amount of \$225,000 to help small businesses with 5 or less employees that were adversely affected by the Coronavirus pandemic. While the majority of these small businesses in Billerica were deemed "non-essential" by the state, they still had the burdens of payroll, loans, rent, mortgages, and utility costs that did not stop with their mandatory closures. The money from the grant is capped at \$5,000 per business. There will be a future zoom meeting to go over the application process, and businesses with any questions can contact Rob Anderson at 978-671-0963.

Paycheck Protection Program

The Small Business Administration has released data on the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP). This program helped small businesses by offering forgivable loans designed to provide a direct incentive to keep their workers on the payroll. Many Billerica businesses and non-profits took advantage of the program with 490 receiving PPP awards of below \$150,000, and 148 receiving PPP awards of over \$150,000.

Subsidized Housing Inventory

The Massachusetts Department of Housing & Community Development (DHCD) has updated Billerica's subsidized housing inventory (SHI) numbers. The new percentage based on the housing unit number from the 2010 census is 11.52%, well above the state's goal of 10% affordable housing. Although new units will be added to the total number of housing units in Billerica as a result of the 2020 census, the hope is that strategic developments to maintain an SHI of over 10% will protect Billerica from unwanted 40Bs in the future.

Adult Use Marijuana

Community Care Collective was granted their variance for a retaining wall by the ZBA on July 8th. They have since submitted their plans to the Fire and Building Department. They have started the process of excavating for the foundation and have hauled away 3,000 yards of material. They have applied for a foundation permit and once granted will begin the process the following week.

Shared Streets and Spaces grant program

The Town received notice from Representative Marc Lombardo's Office that we have been awarded the following \$8,000 grant. MassDOT announced that the municipality of Billerica has been selected for the latest round of our Shared Streets and Spaces grant program. The Shared Streets and Spaces quick-launch/quick-build grant program will provide grants as small as \$5,000 and as large as \$300,000 for cities and towns to quickly implement or expand improvements to sidewalks, curbs, streets, on-street parking spaces and off-street parking lots in support of public health, safe mobility, and renewed commerce in their communities. The Town of Billerica has received \$8,000 in order to implement the following:

- The purchase of four large tents for outdoor dining. The tents will be placed in parking lots and on sidewalks and will be loaned by the Town to local restaurants. The tents will help separate the public space from dining space and will protect customers from inclement weather. Over the long term, the tents will be used by the Billerica Library, Council on Aging, and local schools.

COVID-19 Update:

The Town is currently maintaining a rate of 2 cases per day over a 7 day average. Our lowest 7 day average was 1 per day. There have been no new deaths as of the last report. The Board of Health has also begun to record race and ethnicity as required by the State. Our rate of infection appears generally stable for now and it mirrors the statewide experience. As I can personally attest, there is definitely still a presence of community spread and all of us must remain vigilant and maintain social distances and good hygiene practices.



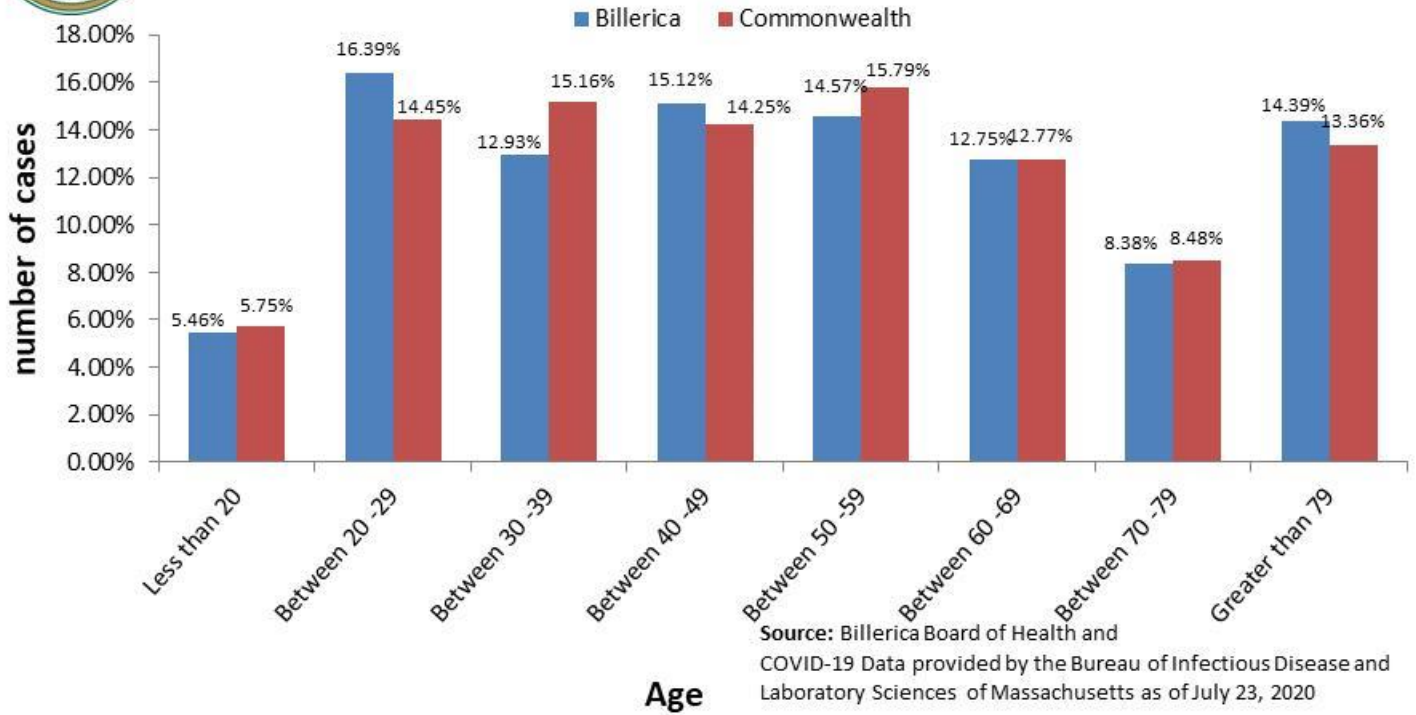
Long Term Care Facilities	95
Middlesex House of Corrections	53
Health Care Workers	79
Apartment Complexes	53
Deaths	29
Active Cases	15
Recovered Cases	505
Total Cases to Date	549

Friday, July 24, 2020

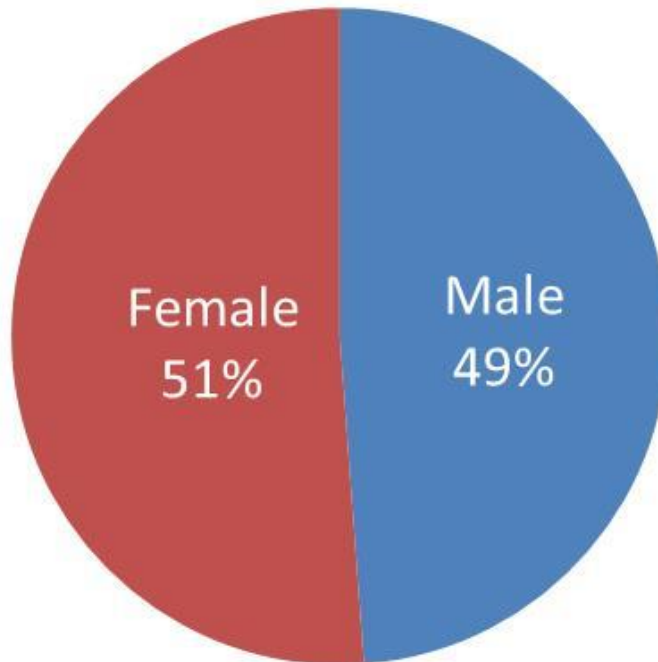
Source: Billerica Board of Health



Billerica vs. Commonwealth Frequency of COVID-19 by Age



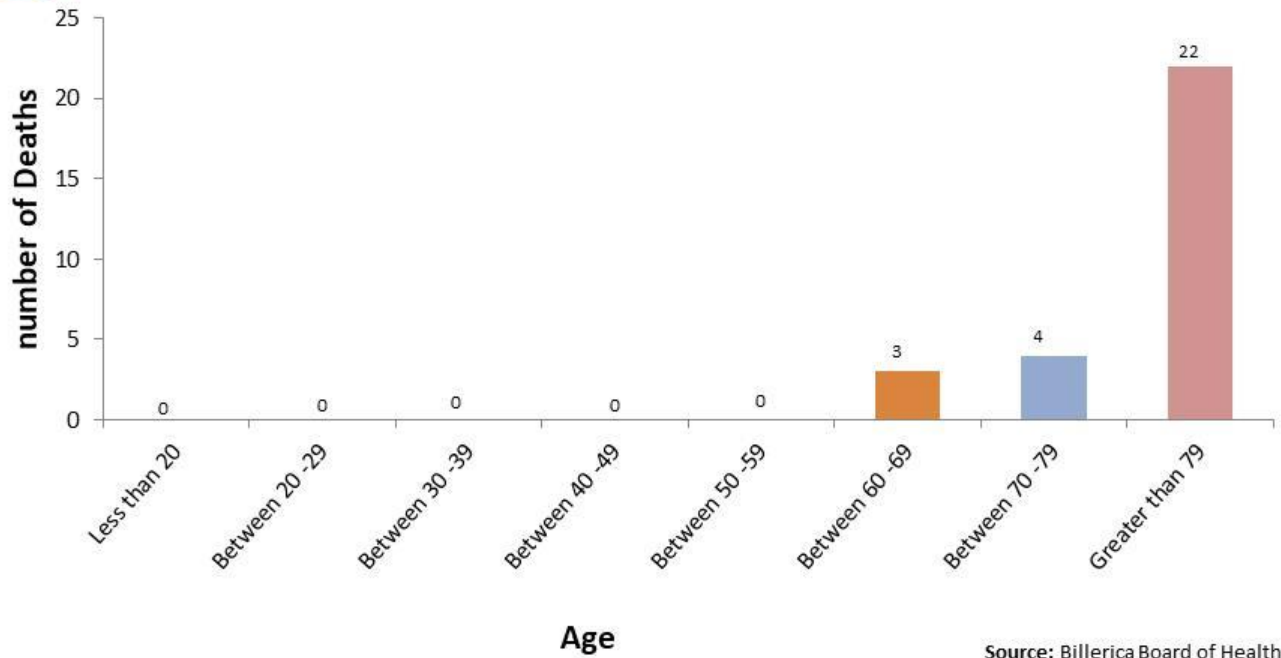
COVID-19 Cases by Gender



Source: Billerica Board of Health



Town of Billerica COVID-19 Deaths by Age



Source: Billerica Board of Health

Town of Billerica Cases by Race/Ethnicity since recording

