



*MEMORANDUM*

**TO:** Board of Selectmen

**FROM:** John C. Curran, Town Manager

**CC:** Susan Aker, Cathy O’Dea

**SUBJECT:** Town Manager’s Report, May 18, 2020

**DATE:** May 15, 2020

**Masonic Temple Scope**

The Town has engaged LeftField to seek a qualified structural engineer to provide a proposal for a structural engineering report for the Masonic Temple. Included in the report would be a summary of the site visit and observations from a walkthrough of the building, determine the structural integrity of the building, what it would take to design and repair to bring the structure up to code compliance, the report should also contain an order of magnitude for engineering services, as well as the cost of required repairs. This procurement gives interested parties one week to submit proposals.

**Revenue Forecasts in COVID Climate**

Real Estate revenue collections are at 84.5%. This is encouraging considering the dates were pushed back. There is no forecasted cash flow issue for the Town of Billerica. I expect there to be budget turn backs at the end of the year which will help the free cash number.

	Real Estate Collection Rate		Excise Collection Rate
	FY2020	FY2019	FY2020
5/8/2020	79.45%	92.25%	82.79%
5/11/2020	80.64%	92.81%	83.24%
5/13/2020	82.67%	93.04%	83.67%
5/15/2020	83.58%	93.35%	83.95%

**Town Staff Returns (May 18<sup>th</sup>)**

While the buildings will still remain closed the Town staff in all departments will return on Monday, May 18<sup>th</sup>. The Town will be accommodating employees with Childcare issues through the Family First Corona Virus Act. The Town will be reimbursed through Federal dollars for this program. Significant social distancing and safety protocols have been implemented to prepare for employees return to work. Some of them are listed below:

- Sneeze guards at all reception areas.
- Hand sanitizers at all reception areas.
- Hand sanitizer dispensers throughout public buildings.
- Mask and hand sanitizing signage throughout the buildings.
- Queuing markings throughout building.
- Temperature and wellness screening at each building.
- All employees to wear masks.
- Masks are available.

## **Billerica Mall**

RD Management filed their plans Wednesday afternoon with the Planning Board. They are currently under review by the Planning Director.

## **Report from the DPW Director**

The department of Public Works has managed to provide services without interruption. Solid waste collection was not affected and additional 2 bags of trash were allowed per house hold where residents did not have to purchase any additional bags.

Wastewater, Water & Highway Divisions operated by splitting staff to work on different days to minimize contact and promote social distancing, only one person in the truck to avoid contact.

Projects that may have impacted services and/or the availability of water were put on hold. Only emergency work was allowed. Both water and wastewater treatment plants were fully operational. Engineering, Parks, and Cemetery divisions were minimally impacted. Sewer and roadway projects continued, parks were continued to be maintained along with burial at the cemetery were not interrupted.

All DPW employees were advised to follow safety measures and social distancing.

## **Report from the Building Commissioner**

Thanks to the staff of the Building Department and their willingness to adapt and change to an ever evolving situation I am pleased to report that the Building Department has remained productive and has seen a very small impact from the shutdown. For the time period of 3/13/2020 through 5/15/2020 we have issued 479 constructions permits. Collected \$76,658.00 in permit fees and conducted 439 construction inspections.

There has been a huge influx of phone calls from residences, inquiring about sheds, swimming pools, and proposed projects. We have also seen a large increase in complaints. Both of these can be attributed to most residents being home and following the emergency lockdown.

Another plus is that the Board of Health and Building Department have worked closely with one another due to the situation and this is something I see continuing into the future. The cooperation between the two departments has been outstanding.

Lastly I would be remiss if I didn't acknowledge the outstanding work of Joanne White and Olivia Canario. Both of these women have been absolutely outstanding to work with. They are valuable assets for the Town and without them we would not have the success that we have had in dealing with this crisis. These two women have been in the office everyday dealing with a frightened public, concerned contractors and inquisitive residents. The volume of phone calls and concerns they have handled is staggering, and it was all done with a smile and an empathetic ear. As a Department head I am extremely grateful to have them representing "Permit Alley".

## **BOH Professional Recognition**

Here are a few words to show an appreciation for the staff who have been helping out and managing the COVID-19 response within the Board of Health. Managing this pandemic at the local level in Billerica has been challenging but I have seen the Board of Health team accomplish excellent work by coming together and working for the greater good of the community. Each staff member continues to go above and beyond working toward preventing the spread of COVID-19 within the community.

Our Public Health Nurse, Christine West is simply outstanding. She has been managing and following up with a huge case load of ill residents. It's a difficult task remaining consistent with the CDC and

DPH requirements and ensuring the residents needs are being addressed, she continues to astound me with her dedication to this community.

Our Health Agents, Phavy Pheng and Shelagh Collins continue to amaze me, from interfacing with the public and businesses we usually do not regulate. Their goal is protecting public health and applying it the safe operation of a business. They have surprised me with their abilities to enforce orders with a sense of compassion.

Our clerk, Joanne White, seems to be the voice of the Health Department, she has been answering all the concerned residents call and even manages to tactfully handle difficult calls.

And a special note thank you to the Building Department clerk, Olivia Conario, has also stepped up and has been handling overflow of calls and various tasks. She too has been a key player in the Board of Health efforts to prevent the spread of COVID-19 within the community.

Though this pandemic has challenged everyone, it has been a positive experience managing the Board of Health team and our response to the community we serve, we'll continue strive to prevent further spread of COVID-19 within the community.

#### **Report from the Fire Chief –**

The Billerica Fire Department has fared well during the COVID-19 pandemic. I would like to begin by commending our firefighters and fire alarm operators that have come to work and put themselves in harm's way to maintain the services that have always been provided to the Town.

Subsequent to the March 10<sup>th</sup> declaration of a state of emergency by Governor Baker many policies have been implemented that addressed personal protective equipment (PPE), station and apparatus disinfecting, manning and overtime. Through purchasing and donations the department has an adequate supply of PPE and we are in the process of procuring additional stock to remain prepared for any future needs.

The department suffered 5 exposures that led to positive contraction of COVID-19 and self-isolated. All members have been cleared by the Board of Health and are back to work. Several other members that were exposed were out the required 14 days, but did not contract the virus. Thankfully, lack of manpower has not been an issue during the crisis.

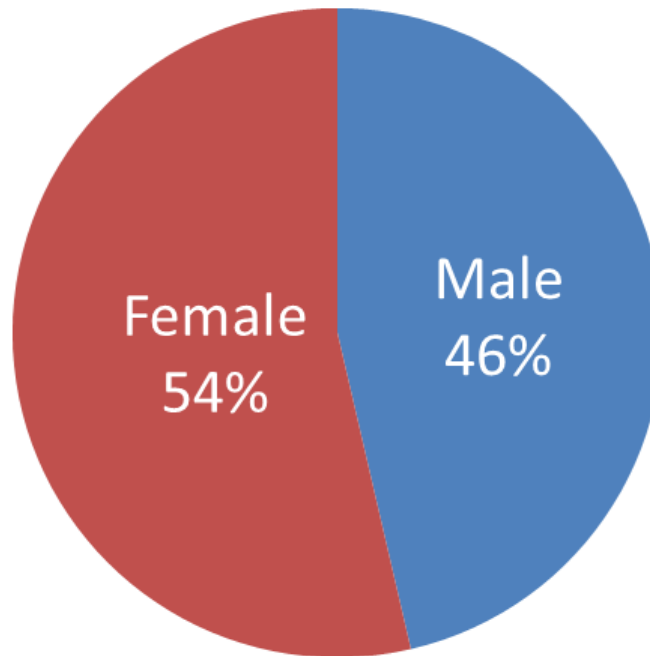
Since March 10<sup>th</sup> the department has responded to 1229 calls. This is down from 1417 that were responded to during the same period in 2019. There have been 467 medical responses which are up about 2.5%, 20 fire responses and 26 motor vehicle accidents which are about even with 2019.

I would like to thank all of the citizens and businesses, of which there are many, that have donated medical supplies and meals to our members. It is much appreciated.

#### **COVID-19 Update:**

Attached are a few graphs that give an expanded picture of the current coronavirus situation in Billerica.

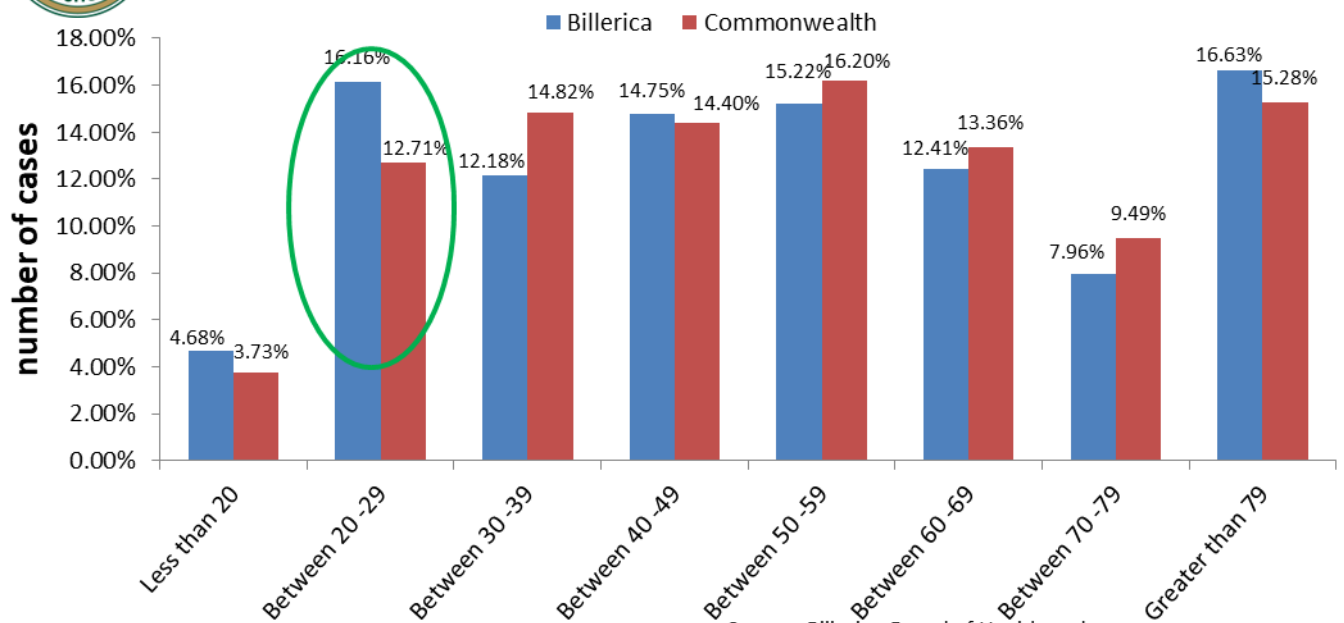
## COVID-19 Cases by Gender



Source: Billerica Board of Health



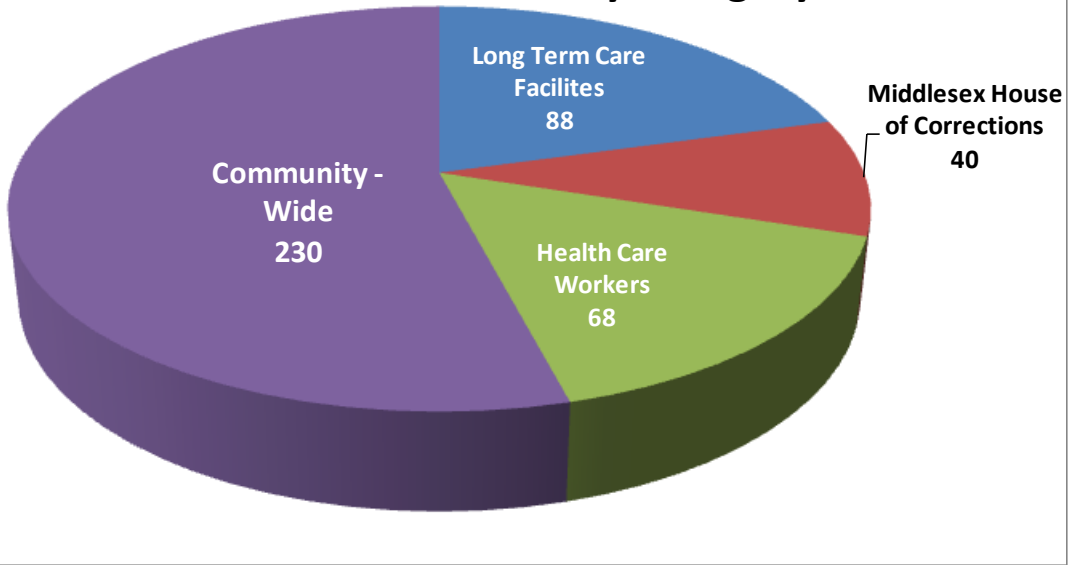
## Billerica vs. Commonwealth Frequency of COVID-19 by Age



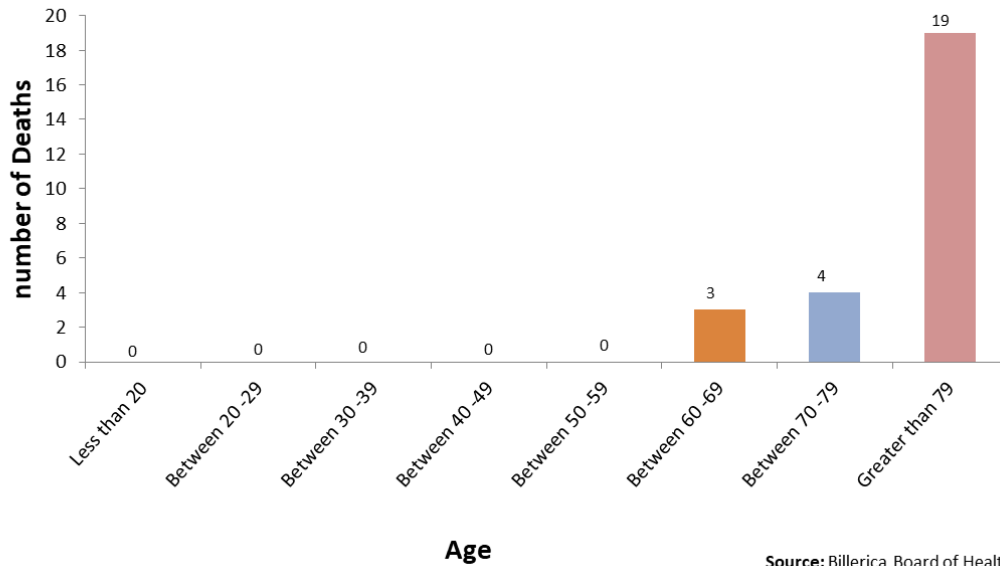
Source: Billerica Board of Health and COVID-19 Data provided by the Bureau of Infectious Disease and Laboratory Sciences of Massachusetts as of May

Age

## Town of Billerica Number of Cases by Category



## Town of Billerica COVID-19 Deaths by Age



Source: Billerica Board of Health



Long Term Care Facilities	88
Middlesex House of Correctio	40
Health Care Workers	68
Apartment Complexes	46
Deaths	26
Active Cases	88
Recovered Cases	313
Total Cases to Date	427

Friday, May 15, 2020

Source: Billerica Board of Health