

# TOWN ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

## MARCH 30, 2021

### **1. COVID-19 UPDATES FROM THE HEALTH DIRECTOR –**

COVID-19 cases continue to rise in Barnstable County. 311 new cases were reported Friday 3/26-Sunday 3/28. Seven of the 15 Towns have returned to the highest risk red community status. Dennis is now in our third wave of new confirmed cases; monitoring 59 active cases at this time. MDPH along with CCHC has deployed additional testing resources to the Mid Cape area. Hospitalizations have increased from last month and continue to steadily climb with a 3-day average of 34 patients - up from 17 last month. This new surge in cases began around the second week of March, and is likely associated with the arrival of the PI variant which has shown to be significantly more transmissible.

Beginning Monday April 5th, 2021 - Individuals 55 years of age and older and individuals with one certain medical condition will be eligible for vaccination. Barnstable County continues with the regional vaccination clinic at CCCC as well as several smaller regional sites on an intermittent basis as vaccines become more readily available.

The COVID vaccine is only one component of outbreak control, and everyone must continue to do their part to contain the spread of this virus. Continue to socially distance, wear a face covering, wash your hands, avoid large gatherings and stay home if you feel sick.

Kristen Keller  
Health Director

### **2. TOWN MEETING –**

Due to the continued presence of the COVID-19 virus in the community and safeguards in place state-wide, the Select Board after consulting with the Town Moderator, has voted to hold the May Annual Town Meeting -- again outdoors at the Wixon School Parking Lot on **Saturday, May 8, 2021** under a tent. The meeting will begin promptly at **1:00PM** and continue until our business is completed.

As with the previous Special Town Meeting in October and the last Annual Town Meeting, a working group consisting of the Moderator, Members of the Select Board, the Town Administrator, Town Clerk and various Town Employees have worked on arranging an environment that will permit Town Meeting to be held safely, while at the same time ensuring that Town Meeting Voters may participate meaningfully.

### **3. PLANNING BOARD HOSTS TRI-BOARD MEETING –**

At the end of the last legislative session the Legislature enacted the Governor's COVID Economic Stimulus Package. Incorporated into this legislation at the last hour were parts of the long discussed Housing Choice legislation as well. The Housing Choice pieces addressed a number of State Zoning Act changes that staff is working to get a full understanding of. On Monday March 15<sup>th</sup> the Planning Board hosted the Zoning By-law Study Committee, Community and Economic Development Committee and Dennis Municipal Affordable Housing Trust to discuss a portion of these changes. Discussed were:

- Changes made to the Town Meeting voting requirement as the act now provides a laundry list of zoning amendments that can help meet the state's housing goals that can be approved by simple majority at Town Meeting.
- Changes that directly affect the on-going discussions and framework for the creation of an Accessory Dwelling Unit By-law for a future Town Meeting.
- And, changes to the Town Meeting adoption of, and Planning Board permit approval of mixed use and multi-family housing projects in "eligible locations", i.e. village and economic centers.

State agencies have spent a lot of time reviewing these aspects of the Economic Stimulus package. Additional changes have been made regarding Chapter 40R Smart Growth and Starter Home Districts, Open Space Developments being approved by-right rather than by Special Permit, Transfer of Development Rights and Natural Resource Protection Zoning that staff hopes to brief appropriate Boards on as more information becomes available.

#### **4. MASSACHUSETTS MUNICIPAL ASSOCIATION SUMMARY ON AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN**

Dear Members of the MMA Board of Directors-

I hope this email finds you well.

I am sharing some additional information on what the American Rescue Plan Act, signed into law by President Biden a short while ago, means for the cities and towns of Massachusetts.

The Coronavirus Local Fiscal Recovery Fund section begins on page 583. Here are some key areas to review:

1) On page 584 - \$45.57 billion distributed to "Metropolitan Cities," generally known as "CDBG entitlement communities" through a modified CDBG formula (there are 37 such entities in Massachusetts) and \$19.53 billion distributed on a per capita basis (as pass-through funding to the states) to all cities and towns that are not entitlement communities (there are 314 such entities in Massachusetts);

2) On page 589 - \$65.1 million distributed to all counties in America on a per capita basis (there are 14 counties in Massachusetts, each receiving approximately \$193.94 in per capita aid);

3) On page 590 - If counties are not units of general local government (Massachusetts has seven abolished counties), the state shall distribute the counties' share to the local governments in the county on a per capita basis (Note: MMA, NLC and the Massachusetts Congressional Delegation were all essential to securing this provision in the law);

4) On page 591 - The population numbers used to determine the distribution in the ARPA shall be based on the most recent data available from the U.S. Census Bureau (the estimates used by Congress have been from the Bureau's 2019 census data);

5) On page 592 - The funds will be delivered in 2 tranches, with the first coming 60 days after enactment for entitlement communities or 90 days after enactment for non-entitlement communities (due to the state pass-through process), and the second coming 12 months after the first delivery;

6) On page 593 - Use of funds is limited to costs incurred by December 31, 2024 for the following allowable uses:

- a) Responding to the public health emergency or its negative economic impacts, including assistance to households, small businesses, or aid to impacted industries such as tourism, travel and hospitality;
- b) Premium pay to eligible workers performing essential work to maintain continuity of operations of essential critical infrastructure sectors and additional sectors as determined by the chief executive officer as critical to protect the health and well-being of the residents of the local government (capped at \$13 per hour);
- c) Replacing revenue reductions due to the pandemic, to the extent that these revenues are used to provide services (the base year to determine revenue losses is fiscal 2019) (the Treasury Department's guidance will be needed to fully understand this); and
- d) Necessary investments in water, sewer or broadband infrastructure.

7) On page 594 - This ARPA aid cannot be deposited in pension fund accounts; and

8) On page 595 - The U.S. Treasury Department will require periodic and detailed accounting of the uses of the funds, and shall recoup all funds spent in violation of ARPA.

There's a lot here, but I wanted to get this out to you ASAP. We will be providing details, analysis and programming over the next several months to help our members make the best and highest use of this remarkable legislation.

With deep appreciation for your leadership,  
**Geoffrey C. Beckwith, Executive Director & CEO**  
**Massachusetts Municipal Association**

## **5. TRANSFER STATION TEMPORARY CHANGE IN HOURS–**

The Town of Dennis Transfer Station will be closed Easter Sunday, April 4, 2021 and Monday, April 5, 2021.

It will re-open on Tuesday, April 6, 2021 at 8am, and resume normal winter business hours: 7am to 4pm Wednesday; Thursday thru Saturday, 8am to 4pm, and Sunday 8am to 5pm until Memorial Day Weekend.

For more information, please contact the Transfer Station at (508) 760-6230.

## **6. I'M VACCINATED – NOW WHAT?**

As the number of individuals who have been vaccinated continues to rise, it can be tempting to change behaviors. While the CDC says it's safe for vaccinated people to gather in small groups with other vaccinated individuals without masks, you are advised to continue to take care to protect others and yourself. Health officials do not yet know if vaccinated people can spread Covid-19 to others who are at high risk or have not been vaccinated. Therefore, when you are around others, please keep wearing your mask and maintain distance. We're almost to the finish line but we're not there yet. We thank you for continuing to do what you can to help keep Dennis safe.

Have a great rest of the week - please do everything you can to stay well!!

Respectfully,

Elizabeth C. Sullivan  
Town Administrator