

## Town Administrator Report to Select Board – May 5, 2020

### TOWN OF DENNIS - COVID-19 UPDATES UNDER STATE OF EMERGENCY

The Emergency Operations Command Team continues to meet as needed and standing meetings remotely on Monday, Wednesday and Fridays to discuss the ongoing COVID Emergency Response actions by the Town, as well as review both Federal and State directives and Orders that are issued daily.

Currently as of May 5, 2020 - there are 961 confirmed cases of Covid-19 in Barnstable County, 54 of which are in the Town of Dennis. It's important to remember that most people who are confirmed to have COVID-19 recover. For more state data, visit [www.mass.gov/coronavirus](http://www.mass.gov/coronavirus)

We continue to remind people to take all precautions to flatten the curve:

- Stay home as much as possible;
- Practice social distancing when out of the home;
- Wear a face mask outside of the home;
- Wash your hands regularly

#### **Given the current ongoing COVID Emergency the Select Board has taken the following actions to date:**

- Any Capital Raise and Appropriate Projects that could be deferred, have been moved until a Fall Town Meeting
- Dennis Town Meeting has been postponed from May 5<sup>th</sup> until June 23, 2020
- Dennis Annual Town Election has been postponed from May 12<sup>th</sup> until June 30, 2020
- The Select Board voted a local option to extend the due date for Real Estate and Personal Property until no later than June 1<sup>st</sup>
- The Select Board voted to extend the due date for Exemption and Deferral Applications from April 1<sup>st</sup> to no later than June 1, 2020 This includes Clause: 37-blind, 41C-Elderly, 42-Surviving Spouse-Police, 43-Surviving Spouse-Fire, Veteran's 22, 22A, 22B, 22E, 22D and 22F
- On April 23, 2020 upon recommendation of the Town Administrator and Finance Director, due to the ongoing pandemic the Select Board endorsed a hiring and spending freeze; only essential expenses and those for public health and safety are to be made.

#### **1. Governor Extends Non-Essential Business Order, Stay at Home Guidance Until May 18**

Governor Charlie Baker announced last week that he is extending his order closing non-essential businesses and his stay-at-home advisory for residents until May 18. He also extended his ban on gatherings of more than 10 people until May 18. The Governor announced that he has created a re-opening advisory board to guide his decision-making about best to re-open while keeping people safe. Town buildings remain closed until further notice.

#### **2. Statewide Face Covering Order to Take Effect May 6<sup>th</sup>**

On May 1<sup>st</sup> Governor Baker signed an executive [order](#) requiring everyone to wear face coverings in public places. The Governor's order takes effect May 6, 2020.

3. **MMA Establishes Reopening Advisory Panel to Examine Municipal Needs During Reopening:**

Recognizing that cities and towns must be at the center of the state’s reopening planning process, the MMA is working with a cross-section of municipal leaders to identify the key issues that need to be addressed to ensure adequate guidance, authority and resources for local governments across Massachusetts.

I sat on a conference call with the Lt. Governor this afternoon and calls will continue weekly as we start to receive guidance on reopening.

4. **LOCAL MUNICIPAL GOVERNANCE DURING COVID EMERGENCY –**

At this time, we are working with Departments that have a seasonal component and are drafting procedures and protocols for various options for when the Town opens. Further information will be shared for the Select Boards review - once we receive guidance from the Governor and DPH.

**Seasonal Staff & Planning for the Summer Season**

At this time, I have instructed staff to move forward in recruiting limited essential seasonal staff, many positions will be subject to further guidance from state.

We know everyone is anxious about summer programs and the status of many seasonal summer activities in Dennis.

We know not having all the answers right now, is disappointing for the community; as well as children and families who look forward to gathering here in the summer, but we are making decisions based on the best information and guidance currently available. As soon as we have additional information on golf, beaches and programs status, we will provide an update here and through our Golf and Recreation email lists.

*Harbor*

The following are guidelines for boating and various other marine and inland waterway related activities during the duration of Governor Baker’s stay-at-home advisory and essential services order.

**Inland boat ramps and canoe launches:**

Inland boat ramps and canoe launches within state parks, forests, wildlife management areas, boating access facilities and other state-owned properties managed by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts remain open for use by boats being launched by vehicles registered in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, except where the access has already been closed due to parking restrictions or other restrictions.

All other inland boat ramps that are currently managed by municipalities remain open subject to the discretion of the city or town.

**Coastal Boat Ramps:**

For commercial, state and municipal uses, coastal boat ramps will remain open.

For recreational use, coastal boat ramps managed by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts remain open for use by boats being launched by vehicles registered in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

All other coastal boat ramps currently managed by municipalities remain open for recreational use subject to the discretion of the city or town.

### **For Hire Boating:**

For hire boating will not be permitted while the Governor's stay at home advisory and essential services order is in effect. This includes:

- o Charter and head boat fishing
- o Sailboat rentals and lessons
- o Canoe, kayak, and stand-up paddleboard rentals
- o White water rafting and river tubing rentals
- o Whale watches and other pleasure cruises
- o Any other operation or use of a vessel that is not registered to the passenger.

We have posted the full guidance from the state on boating on the Town of Dennis website.

### *Golf*

The Golf Director together with the Health Director, Administration, and HR, have been working on protocols for when the golf courses are allowed to reopen by the State. We are developing safe opening scenarios that are fluid and can be updated or changed at any time. We are currently evaluating and adjusting which protocols work best and remain hopeful that Golf will get the full green light to reopen after stay at home order is lifted by the Governor.

Though the courses have been closed to the public, both maintenance facilities have been undergoing spring routine maintenance with only a few staff members onsite. That said, the Highlands Aeration has been completed and we are on to the Pines. Aeration now will eliminate the need to close again to complete this task. The staff should be commended on their hard work and diligence to the course conditions given this uncertain time.

### *Beaches*

Our Beach Director has participated in zoom meetings with many of the Cape Beach departments, and including the south shore as well. Many Towns are planning to wait until the end of June to open. One of the main concerns is that staff will not be able to enforce social distancing and by having them there it will create major problems. Some Towns are considering reducing the beach parking lot numbers of 50%. Our local delegation is also working and we have been told the Governor is going to announce some guidelines for summer camps, parks and beaches this week. We will bring any guidance forward and then ask the Select Board and Board of Health to weigh in.

Additionally, the Cape Managers have requested respectfully request the Reopening Advisory Board recommend guidelines for beach operations based on the best available public health information and practical considerations so that there is some consistency from one municipality to the next. We would like to be able to point to a state consensus in explaining our decisions regarding the beaches.

The Beach Director together with the Health, Police, and HR, have been working on protocols for when the beaches are allowed to reopen by the State. We are drafting safe opening scenarios that are fluid and can be updated or changed at any time

In order to be best prepared, we are indeed moving forward with hiring the seasonal staff that will be needed to oversee the beaches with the hiring subject to opening.

### **Dennis Public Library -**

The Dennis Public Library in coordination with the CLAMS network has been working hard to expand digital offerings while libraries are closed. They have added collections of magazines, audiobooks, and exercise videos that are always available through Libby/OverDrive!

Check out the Always Available Digital Collections on the Dennis Public Library website.

### **Select Board Meets Tonight at 5PM**

The Select Board will meet virtually on Tuesday, May 5, 2020 at 5PM. The agenda includes an update on COVID-19 and discussion about the Annual Town Meeting Warrant review, updates on Board Goals and several other items. The full agenda can be found here,

[https://www.town.dennis.ma.us/sites/dennisma/files/agendas/board\\_of\\_selectmen\\_5-5-20.pdf](https://www.town.dennis.ma.us/sites/dennisma/files/agendas/board_of_selectmen_5-5-20.pdf)

and meeting can be accessed remotely via calling 646-558-8656 meeting id# 781-301-5968.

### **Crowes Pasture Access Road Annual Maintenance -**

DPW will be grading Crowes Pasture Access Road next week as requested by DNR. DPW performs this task on an annual basis as needed.

Grading will take approximately 2-4 days to complete. The road remains open to all commercial shell fisherman; however, work is scheduled to have minimal impact on the shell fisherman according to tide schedule.

The general public are discouraged from using the road during this brief time during the work day due to the heavy equipment involved.

### **5. Town of Dennis Employees**

As we began to close buildings to the public on March 16, 2020 and then later restricted buildings to employees whose duties are critical to on-going Town operations on March 23, 2020, the I recommended and the Town allowed employees to be paid their normal weekly salary even with some employees working a restricted or flex work schedule from their office or from home. Additionally, as stated in the COVID-19 Response Procedures, if employees are paid for work remotely, Department Heads receive weekly updates from staff detailing work performed.

As COVID-19 continues to progress, we now have to acknowledge that it is financially responsible for the Town to consider paying employees only for work performed, whether in their office or at home.

To that end, I have asked Department Heads to review their current departmental situation while we conduct cost exercise scenarios for if there were a need to reduce staffing due to budget constraints.

We will update you over the next few weeks on further updates. We are not changing any policy at this time; however, we are reviewing the current practices.

This is a very difficult task, as you can imagine. We are review numbers with regards to unemployment and group insurance, as must adequately determine how much the Town could save if we were to conduct furloughs or layoffs. Any reduction in the workforce would be subject to policy direction from the Board. **At this time, I am not recommending any changes but I will bring the cost analysis forward to the Board.**

**6. COVID-19 Food Assistance for Families and Individuals in Need**

Dennis Council on Aging - COVID-19 RESOURCE LIST FOR

The Dennis Council on Aging/Senior Center (DSC): The Senior Center is one of the best resources to provide seniors as well as families access to programs and services. Our website includes a link from COA with food and pantry services.

DSC also offers social support via phone: 508.385.5067

**7. Town of Dennis Facilities COVID-19 Safe Work Protocols – employee and public**

At some point in the near future Dennis facilities will open up to the public again, presumably, while still under some public health orders, possibly for months. Please know, the town through Health, Administration, Human Resources and Facilities are actively working on plans related to operations, services, events and activities for reopening and we are developing mitigation efforts to keep employees and the public safe. These plans will be fine-tuned based upon public health data, and further guidance that is scheduled from Governor Baker.

Thank you to all the local government employees and officials that are providing so much support during the COVID-19 pandemic.

I wish you a good rest of the week. Please do everything you can to stay healthy.

Elizabeth C. Sullivan  
Town Administrator  
Town of Dennis