

## Mayor's Update

### Current Cases

There are now 651 Newton residents who have tested positive for COVID-19 through Thursday evening (May 7), according to our preliminary data. This is a notable increase of 59 people since the case count of 592 through Wednesday, May 6 and the 585 cases on Tuesday, May 5.



Most of the 59 additional cases are from three weeks ago or so when a significant number of people were all tested on the same date. The Newton Health and Human Services (HHS) Department received the data only yesterday after a delay, due to when the lab reports were entered into the state database. Importantly, the patients and their healthcare providers received timely notification of the results so effective isolation and quarantine measures could be implemented. Newton HHS publicly reports confirmed cases once they are added to the statewide communicable disease database which is administered by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health.

We continue to share pandemic updates frequently and work closely with Newton-Wellesley Hospital. NWH has been a true partner. This week NWH shared with us the good news that 305 COVID-19 patients have been discharged from the hospital. We celebrate this milestone with all members of the NWH team.

### Newton Water Use During COVID-19

The Coronavirus pandemic has impacted the City's water and sewer use in some unusual ways. Boston College, historically the City's largest Water/Sewer customer, was forced to suspend in-person classroom teaching in mid-March and the campus emptied out. Water usage plummeted. Other larger water users, including Newton hotels and office buildings, have also been operating at limited capacities, and thus using less water.

Meanwhile many Newton residents have been working from home, using more water - including for washing their hands.

This morning, Newton's water supplier, the Massachusetts Water Resource Authority (MWRA), sent a report to its members showing how water use changed during the eight weeks of the Stay-at-Home period (March 18-May 6) compared to an average of the previous three years. Regional water use dropped 5.8%. Boston and Waltham (who both have a large commercial base) experienced the largest decreases at 13.7% and 13.1% respectively. Newton's water use dropped 2.8%, likely reflecting the offsets between institutional uses decreasing and residential sector increasing.

Keep up the handwashing; the Quabbin Reservoir which Newton draws from is filled nearly to its massive brim in Central Massachusetts. You can see the Quabbin live [here](#) from a camera at the Visitor Center in Belchertown.

## Percent Change in Community Flows 2020 (Water)



### City of Newton Recommended Budget Monday Night

I will present the City of Newton's Fiscal Year 2021 Budget to the City Council during a virtual Zoom meeting this coming Monday night, May 11. While important initiatives are being postponed, our essential services are protected now and for the coming years.

The Zoom City Council meeting begins at 7:45 p.m. Zoom in at <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/905404917> (meeting ID: 905 404 917) or watch a live broadcast on NewTV's government channel (Comcast 9, RCN 13, 614(HD), Verizon 33) or view a livestream on NewTV's Vimeo channel [here](#).

### Masks and Face Coverings

We're a few days into this new world where we're required to wear face coverings in public places when physical distancing is not possible, indoors or outdoors.

What do you need to do?

Both customers and employees in grocery stores, pharmacies and other retail stores open to the public and on public transit must wear face covering at all times, unless under the age of two and/or unable to wear one due to a medical or behavior condition.

When we are outside, all of us must also wear a face covering if we are within 6 feet of someone not in our household. This applies to pedestrians, bikers, joggers, construction workers and City employees. Always keep a face covering handy when outside so it is easy to pull on.

Remember that a person who declines to wear a face covering because of a medical condition may do so and is not required to provide documentation verifying the condition.

This is a period with a highly contagious disease that can come from presymptomatic and asymptomatic people. It's also a time of anxiety for all of us. I continue to hear from residents, particularly some who are older or have underlying medical conditions, who notice that while they're enjoying some fresh air, people without face coverings inadvertently come within the 6 foot range.

Let's all do our part. Please help everyone feel safe by wearing a face covering when physical distancing isn't possible and keep one handy so you can pull it on quickly when needed.

Warmly,

Ruthanne

P.S. The Makerspace, one of Newton Free Library's most popular in-person destinations, is now virtual. Newton's Librarians have created an impressive guide for makers and crafters of all ages and all skill levels using tools found at home. The Low Tech section focuses on drawing and fiber arts, the Medium Tech on cooking, gardening, and sewing, and the High Tech on 3-D printing, robotics, and web design. Youngsters will enjoy the painting, weaving, and puppet projects and others can tackle creating personalized Zoom backgrounds, temporary tattoos, and sewing projects. Visit the site [here](#).

P.P.S. What's happening with the new community center focused on older residents? During the past few months, the NewCAL project team has been hard at work developing and reviewing conceptual design options. Join in to take a look at the ideas and give some feedback at the next Community meeting on Thursday, May 21, at 6:00 p.m. The meeting will be held remotely, via Zoom and will be also be broadcast on NewTV. The Zoom meeting ID is 850 2713 2275. Check the project website [here](#) for updated information.

P.P.P.S. Thanks Councilor Lisle Baker for calling to our attention this beautiful tribute to our COVID-19 heroes - the nurses, physicians and all the dedicated people who are working selflessly at hospitals and other healthcare settings to get us through this crisis. Watch John Williams, Keith Lockhart and the Boston Pops Orchestra "Summon the Heros" by clicking the photo below.



P.P.P.P.S. Gov. Baker this week added flower shops to the list of businesses that can open with the proper safety measures - just in time for Mother's Day. Wishing all of the moms a joyful day on Sunday.

*(Photo: Keiran and Aidan Leary with their mom Andi at Ken's Flower Cafe, their shop in Auburndale Center.)*

