



An Open Letter to our Residents and Business Community



The City of Springfield is committed to keeping our residents and business community informed about the latest developments on the Coronavirus (COVID-19). We will continue to monitor the situation and adhere to any and all public health and safety measures recommended by the health experts, the Governor's Office, the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, the CDC and other state and federal agencies.

As we all deal with the onset of the coronavirus (COVID-19), I wanted to reassure you that our proud city team has been tested and true through a number of natural and man-made disasters. I'd like to give special thanks to our Commissioner of Health and Human Services Helen Caulton-Harris, who has done the yeoman's work as our city's point person.

On March 13, 2020, I declared a state of emergency in the City of Springfield to help mitigate any potential spread of the coronavirus. This action is taken out of an abundance of caution and to avail our city to all state and federal relief and recovery assistance needed.

Again, I would ask you all to please adhere to and follow all of the preventative and recommended health measures – though they seem simple and common sense these efforts will help meet and defeat this challenge before us. Our goal is to re-establish a safe, healthy environment and the sense of normalcy.

I want to encourage our residents and businesses to continue to check in for any updates and new developments on our city's website at www.springfield-ma.gov or call our 311 Call Center at (413) 736-3111.

As your humble and thankful mayor, I will continue to have our city team and medical experts, keep you updated on what has or has not occurred and what we are proactively doing about it. As my administration has done before with prior challenges and just as important – we will get through this together and for the better as one. May God Bless you and your families.

Mayor Domenic J. Sarno

City of Springfield COVID-19 (Coronavirus)

Situational Updates

Wednesday, March 25, 2020

Mayor Domenic J. Sarno, in the best interests of our residents and business community, continues his daily morning meetings with his cabinet heads as they work 24/7 to facilitate and coordinate with all of our local, state, federal, and public and private partners in response to the COVID-19 situation.

“First of all, I’m very proud of our city team from cabinet heads to rank and file – they are tested and true in crisis management situations. Like me, many are veterans in dealing positively with our past natural and manmade disasters – EF3 June 1, 2011 tornado, freak pre-Halloween late October 2011 Nor’easter, and post-Thanksgiving November 2012 downtown natural gas explosion – we know what to do.” Mayor Sarno said. “I know it has been difficult for all of us to be away from our loved ones and friends, but spiritually we’re never far apart. As we have done before, we will get through this challenge together as one and for the better.”

All city buildings are continuing to be staffed under a modified schedule where the personnel present are limited to the minimum number needed to maintain city services and operations for the public and within the public health guidance of social distancing.

These facilities are staffed by the least amount of personnel needed to provide a presence to not only provide needed city services but also to provide a continuing presence for the buildings to deter potential vandalism, monitor the facility and grounds for any maintenance needs, and of importance to keep our city employees working - while many within the private sectors are facing the unfortunate situation of having to let their employees go.

All city buildings and facilities are still closed to the public until April 7, 2020, at which time the situation will be reassessed. All public schools remain closed until May 4, 2020 per Governor Baker’s Order.

All city services continue to operate and serve the public’s needs. Imperative City services go beyond public safety and health care. Birth and death certificates still need to be issued, municipal lien certificates still need to be produced in order for house closings, payroll and benefits still need to be administered for City employees, IT services need to be available to assist employees working remotely.

Those things considered, all city employees continue to provide essential city services under modified schedules, which include working remotely, alternating days working on site, or any combination, which has been determined as appropriate by the department head where services can continue with minimum interruptions.

The public is encouraged to utilize alternative means of conducting city related business by phone, email, or online.

Below are the most recent updates as reported from each City Departments.

Mayor's Office

- Continues to provide leadership in coordinating the city's response to adhere to all state and federal public health emergency recommendations and orders.
- Coordinates with all cabinet and department heads to assure city services for our residents and business community continue with minimum interruption.
- Coordinates with all cabinet and department heads to assure that the safety and health of all city employees are monitored and addressed to the best that possibly can be done.
- Continues to provide and share news, updates and information between our local, state and federal government officials.
- Continues contact with cabinet heads and department heads on the city's continued response and measures being taken to address the COVID-19 situation for the public health and safety of our employees, residents and business community.

Health

- Providing updates to Mayor and cabinet heads on the status of COVID-19 in the city, state and across the nation.
- Continue contact and communication with local medical facilities including Baystate Health and Mercy Medical
- Monitoring the COVID-19 status and situation across the city and any contingency plans that may be needed
- Working with all city departments, and public and private partners to coordinate action plans and response actions that might be needed
- Continuing meeting and coordinating with local, state, federal, and public and private on multiple platforms to address the needs that might arise due to the COVID-19 situation including but not limited to: homeless population, elderly population, families, mental health, medical needs, food needs, following and practicing the recommended public health emergency guidance and orders, etc.

Public Safety

- **Fire**
 - Continue to operate under modified operations and deployment while maintaining full public safety services
 - Emergency Communications fully staffed
 - Emergency Management continuing to monitor Federal communications, and opportunities to procure safety and medical gear
- **Police Dept.**
 - Continue to operate under modified operations and deployment while maintaining full public safety services
 - One police officer per vehicle
 - Cruises and vehicles continue to be cleaned on a daily basis
 - Number of first responders on the street were given safety and precautionary equipment such as safety goggles thanks to Smith & Wesson.
 - Arrest are still being made and anti-crime measures are still taking place.
 - Recent arrest made on a warrant for a person wanted for murder

A & F

- Established and monitoring new fund to track all COVID spending within the City and School Department, necessary for potential reimbursement and/or three year repayment period
- Established specific pay codes in order to tracking all employee time related to COVID
- Extended due date for trash fee by one month
- Communicating with DOR in regards to special legislation specific to municipal finance and end of year accounting, extension of tax due dates, interest and demand fees
- Adjusting projections for all revenue collection and expenses through the end of the fiscal year
- Monitoring and managing the reimbursement and drawdown requests on grant funds
- Developing FY21 departmental budgets with provisions in place to allow for flexibility when the State's budget is eventually finalized

311 Call Center

- Call reps have been divided between to different physical locations - City Hall and Tapley
- Call reps continue to take calls for city services

Assessors

- Minimum staffing to continue services needed to process abatements, address changes, and other assessing needs

Clerk

- Minimum staffing to continue services needed for birth certificates, death certificates, etc

Collector

- Minimum staffing to continue services needed to process tax and fee payments, and municipal lien certificates

Building and Code

- Minimum staffing to continue services needed to provide essential building and code needs

DPW

- Trash and recycling continue to be picked up
- Changes made for the Bulk Pickup Collection of mattresses and box springs – which must now be placed in plastic mattress bags
- Yard waste is scheduled to be picked up starting April 7th
- Pot hole operations will begin soon
- Minimum staffing to continue to provide essential DPW services
- Has reduced the number of occupants per vehicle to just the driver

Eco Dev

- Released the “Prime the Pump” grant program for our local restaurants to provide immediate financial relief to help with the transition to the take out service model.
- Continues to update a dedicated COVID-19 business assistance and resource webpage
- Minimum staffing to continue services needed to provide essential business resources and assistance

Housing

- Minimum staffing to continue services needed to provide essential housing needs

HR

- Minimum staffing to continue services needed to maintain HR functions
- Continued contact with the city’s 24 unions that represent the large portion of the city’s workforce
- Continue to monitor an process changes in state and federal laws as they apply to our employees
- Continue to work with our partners in handling worker’s compensation matters and are evaluating moving to a tele-medicine platform for evaluating minor injuries in the workplace.

IT Department

- Minimum staffing to continue IT needs and services for the City of Springfield.
- Staff separated into multiple locations
- Employees encouraged to contact IT remotely for any IT assistance
- Establishing two conferencing platforms for city internal use and needs
- Coordinating with department heads to help employees work remotely with proper resources and equipment if needed.

Law

- Minimum staffing to continue services needed to maintain legal services

Mayor’s Office of Consumer Information

- Minimum staffing to continue services in support of the Attorney General’s mission of serving local consumer needs and concerns.

Parks

- Minimum staffing to continue services needed to provide essential park, building and facility maintenance and upkeep.
- Providing deep cleaning services for all municipal buildings including police and fire stations, and all vehicles and playgrounds are routinely cleaned and disinfected.
- Parks remain open and residents are encouraged to visit our parks for walking, jogging, biking, dog-walking, and casual recreational activities
- Field permits are not being issued and the basketball (hoops taken down) and tennis courts are closed as to adhering to social-distancing policies and to discourage players from congregating in groups greater than ten individuals

Schools

- Minimum staffing to continue services needed to provide educational needs.
- Beginning today, Boland School has been added as a meal site for Springfield youth.
- Free breakfast and lunch are available every weekday for all Springfield students during the current school closure. The meals are grab-and-go and are available between 11 a.m. and 1 p.m. Monday – Friday and food for the weekend is provided on Fridays.
 - The meals are served at the following 16 locations: Boland, Bowles, Brookings, Chestnut Middle School, Commerce, Dorman, Glickman, Indian Orchard, Kensington, Liberty, Lincoln, Rebecca Johnson, South End, Talmadge, Warner and Washington schools.

No identification is required, and parents, guardians or grandparents may pick up meals for their Springfield students.

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- Served over 10,000 meals to date with the programs popularity growing each day.
- Remote teaching aspects continue to expand through technology and hard copy kits are available at all meal site locations

Veterans

- Minimum staffing to continue services needed for our veterans