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To: All Town Employees
From: Charles J. Aspinwall
Town Administrator
Date: March 24, 2020
Re: Town COVID -19 Response

**MESSAGE FROM THE OFFICE OF THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN
REGARDING THE TOWN'S RESPONSE TO THE COVID-19 CORONAVIRUS**

Dear Colleagues,

It has been a week since the Board of Selectmen Declared a State of Emergency in Canton due to the pandemic. The Board continues to follow developments on a local, state, and federal level. Town Offices are closed to the public to avoid community spread but are either staffed by essential employees or employees visit their office to check mail, paper work and packages and work from home. Public safety (Police & Fire), Building Inspection, Board of Health, certain Administrative & Finance staff, certain Park & Rec staff, and certain DPW staff continue working, albeit some with different schedules. The Fire and Police departments continue to respond to calls and have developed operating procedures in conjunction with the Board of Health to reduce the chance of exposure to the COVID-19 virus. Water Treatment Plant Operators continue on the job to provide safe, potable water. Non-essential staff were sent home to reduce exposure, some of whom are working remotely or are on call. The MIS department has given us a crash course in remote meeting technology which has allowed Boards and Committees to meet in a safe environment. The Board of Selectmen has formed a working group of committee members and staff to ensure that communication is facilitated and coordinated.

We appreciate the work you are doing both on and off site to provide needed services to Canton residents and to promote a sense of normalcy

The economic fallout of business closures and reduced foot traffic, especially to restaurants and pubs, remains to be quantified. Park and Rec. personnel, along with School Department Staff, have closed playgrounds, playing fields and sport courts in order to reduce the chance of spreading the disease. Recreation programming and Senior Center

programming have been temporarily cancelled. The Governor just yesterday ordered the closure of additional personal care businesses including barbers, hair dressers, massage therapists, body art establishments, and fitness centers. Public safety staff, in consultation with the Board of Health, will be monitoring compliance with the Governor's Order.

Elections and Town Meeting may be affected by the pandemic. Yesterday the Legislature sent a bill to the Governor providing authority to towns to move their election date. He signed the bill today. The Board of Selectmen will take the matter up at their next meeting but members have already expressed a concern with our ability to provide a safe and healthy workspace/voting space for our poll workers and voters on the original election date, April 7th. With the passage of the bill the Legislature will next move to address town authority to move the date of the Annual Town Meeting. We are conducting a preliminary analysis to determine whether any of our revenue assumptions for next year must change.

The Senior Center is being staffed by the COA Director, Outreach Worker and volunteer staff. The COA continues to provide "to go" meals to seniors who formerly went to the Sr. Center for lunch. The Meals on Wheels program continues and volunteers have made shopping trips, bank trips, and pharmacy trips for needy seniors. The Board appreciates the work done by the COA staff and the volunteers to meet the needs of our senior population.

The Food Pantry is open Tuesdays and Wednesdays from 9 AM – 11 AM at the rear of the Rodman Administration Building.

Looking forward, I am sure all of us would like to know when we will return to normal operations. School is out until April 6th. Subject to approval by the Board of Selectmen this date is likely the earliest town employees would return to a regular schedule. There are many factors which can change that date so please keep in contact with your Supervisor for further information. A regular press release will start this Friday to update the public on new COVID-19 developments. For more information see the Coronavirus Information Webpage which can be reached via our main town webpage <https://www.town.canton.ma.us/>. Regular wages and overtime are being paid as they are submitted. Accrued time balances are not being charged for this time out of the office because the Town invoked the Emergency Closing Policy. Employees should remain available to work during their normal schedule if their position is deemed essential to operations.

I have served through many calamities in 39 years in government including blizzards, floods, hurricanes, and financial crises. I want you to know that I am proud of the way you have responded to the pandemic and how you have come together as a team and how you have helped each other. Your work is without compare. Keep up the good work!