Memo: Coronavirus and Flu Prevention

Date: March 11, 2020

To: All employees

From: Teresa L. Belanger, Human Resources Director

Although the threat remains low in MA and there are no confirmed cases in Tewksbury we continue to monitor closely the emergence of the “coronavirus disease 2019” (COVID-19). At this time, no one knows how severe this outbreak will be. Given this uncertainty, and the fact that the seasonal influenza (flu) virus is also widespread, we are taking proactive steps to address a number of business and individual concerns. First and foremost, we want to maintain a safe workplace and encourage and/or adopt practices protecting the health of employees, customers, visitors or others. We also want to ensure the continuity of business operations in the event of a pandemic.

We ask ALL employees to cooperate in taking steps to reduce the transmission of communicable diseases in the workplace. Employees are reminded of the following:

- Stay home when you are sick.
- Wash your hands frequently with warm, soapy water for at least 20 seconds.
- Cover your mouth with tissues whenever you sneeze, and discard used tissues in the trash.
- Avoid people who are sick with respiratory symptoms.
- Clean frequently touched surfaces.

The Town will provide alcohol-based hand sanitizers throughout the workplace and in common areas. Cleaning sprays and wipes will also be provided to clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces such as telephones and keyboards. In addition we will be bringing in professional cleaning companies to thoroughly clean each location.

It is critical that employees do not report to work while they are experiencing respiratory or flu like symptoms such as fever, cough, shortness of breath, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headache, chills or fatigue. Currently, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends that employees remain at home until at least 24 hours after they are free of fever (100 degrees F or 37.8 degrees C) or signs of a fever without the use of fever-reducing medications. Many times, with the best of intentions, employees report to work even though they feel ill. We provide paid sick time and other benefits to compensate employees who are unable to work due to illness. Employees who report to work ill will be sent home in accordance with these health guidelines.

While we currently do not offer formal telework arrangements, the Town Manager will consider, on a case-by-case basis, requests from employees to work from home during this time. While not all positions are conducive to telework, those positions with primary job duties that can be effectively performed remotely will be given consideration.

The Town Manager is implementing the following steps to maximize preparedness and minimize risk:

- All work related travel is to be discontinued until further notice. Employees should not attend external work-related conferences, seminars.
- Conferences, seminars and other discretionary gatherings, scheduled and hosted by the town involving external parties are to be held virtually or cancelled. Regular internal business shall continue including but not limited to mandated public hearings and board meetings.

Please contact the human resources department with any questions or concerns.