MEMORANDUM

TO: City of Lowell Employees
FROM: Eileen Donoghue, City Manager
CC: Mary Callery, Human Relations Director
DATE: March 25, 2020
SUBJECT: Guidelines For Employees During Current State of Emergency

First, thank you for all your continued efforts during this State of Emergency.

We are, and will continue to be, the frontline service providers to the city and its residents during this national crisis. As such we remain essential services consistent with the Governor Baker’s Order today.

The past weeks have brought unprecedented challenges, and the weeks to come are predicted to bring even greater ones.

Unlike other employers in the City, we provide a vital of services to our residents: police and fire, clean drinking water, safe sanitation, garbage removal, and many more.

In order to best provide these services during this time of emergency, all City buildings were physically closed to the public, effective March 13th. While the City Hall was physically closed to the public, all employees continued to report to work, maintaining traditional levels of governmental services.

On Friday, March 20th, I announced that all non-essential employees who could temporarily work remotely, do so. This was yet another step to limit interpersonal contact and further efforts of social distancing. Although on-site staffing levels were reduced, all City Hall offices remain open and staffed.

Given these temporary workplace changes, I want to provide guidance on the following:

• **Worker’s Compensation and s.111F**: Employees who, in the course of their work, have direct contact and documented exposure to an infected COVID-19 person will be covered and treated as injured on-duty employees.
• **High Risk Employees**: If your doctor determines that you fall into the CDC category of High Risk individuals, you may work with your Department Head to either work from home, or in the event that isn’t possible, utilize your sick or accrued time during your absence.

• **EAP Services Available**: We understand that during this crisis employees may feel stressed and overwhelmed. This is a reminder that EAP services will be available for employees through HR. The EAP number is 1.800.451.1834.

• **Quarantined Employees**: Employees who are under a medically required quarantine (not resulting from an on-the-job exposure) may use their accrued sick time. In the event an employee lacks accumulated sick time, other available time (vacation/personal days) may be used. In the event that an employee has no accrued time, the employee will be allowed to be absent without pay.

• **Symptomatic Employees**: Employees who have experienced symptoms of COVID-19 (coughing, elevated temperature, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing) should not report to work in person. If this applies to an employee who cannot work remotely, the employee may use any accrued leave. In the event that an employee has no accrued time, the employee will be allowed to be absent without pay.

• **Travel Recommendations**: Employees are strongly encouraged to follow Governor Baker’s March 10th declaration of a State of Emergency which included ending all out-of-state travel for State employees and requested other employers follow the same course of action. City of Lowell employees who have traveled (particularly those that have traveled through airports and/or ferry/cruise ship services, and/or places or countries that are considered “hot spots”) are required to notify their Department Head in writing, disclosing where they traveled to and the dates of travel. Such employees will likely be required to stay home to monitor for symptoms during a 14-day period, or greater. In the event an employee lacks accumulated sick time, other available time (vacation/personal days) may be used. In the event that an employee has no accrued time, the employee will be allowed to be absent without pay.

Last, the Federal Government has passed new legislation regarding extended FMLA and sick leave benefits. It will take effect on April 2, 2020. The City is currently reviewing the legislation and will be sending an update over the next few days.