



To: Town Council
Fr: Paul Bockelman
Town Manager
Dt: October 9, 2020
Re: Town Manager Report for October 19, 2020

Town Manager Update:

- Halloween: The Town has issued Halloween tips for those who choose to participate in trick-or-treating. See the guidance at the end of this report from the Acting Health Director, Police Chief, Fire Chief, and Town Manager.
- COVID-19:
 - Hot Line: The hotline is now being staffed during the week and on Friday and Saturday nights from 4pm – 12 midnight.
 - Ambassadors: The ambassadors are now fully staffed and in the field. More information below.
- Racial Equity:
 - Community Safety Working Group:
 - I have established an Interview Team that includes Keisha Dennis of the Residents' Advisory Committee; Matthew Charity, Chair of the Human Rights Commission; Sid Ferreira of the Human Rights Commission and the ABC House Resident Director; Tim Nelson, Fire Chief; Alexandra Monesson-Olson, designated by the Defund 413 group; and Dr. Barbara Love, Professor Emerita, Social Justice Education, University of Massachusetts at Amherst and former chair of the Amherst-Pelham Regional School District. The Racial Equity Task Force declined to designate a member of the Team.
 - Interviews will begin shortly. All applicants will be offered an interview.
 - The Town has joined the Government Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE). GARE is a national network of government cohorts working to achieve racial equity and advance opportunities for all.
 - I will be meeting with the League of Women Voters Racial Just Task Force to hear about the research they have done in this area.
- Outreach:
 - Coffee with Town Manager: The next Cuppa Joe with Paul has not been scheduled.
 - In the Community: The Community Participation Officers and I were present at some of the Mobile Food Markets such as the Fort River School the last four Thursdays and the

Mobile Food Market on East Hadley Road the last four Saturdays. The CPOs are incredible at connecting with all members of the community.

- District Meetings: I attended the District 3 meeting on Sunday, October 4th hosted by Councilors Ryan and Pam.
- Community Chats:
 - We have relaunched the weekly Community Chats with special guests Acting Town Clerk Sue Audette and Facilities Manager Jeremiah Laplante.
 - The Community Chats are every Thursday for 30 minutes...and recorded so you can listen at your convenience.
- Talks: I was the guest speaker at the Rotary Club's virtual luncheon. I spoke on the Town during the COVID-19 pandemic and prospects for the future.
- Appointments: I continue to seek members to serve on the Agricultural Commission, Council on Aging, Public Art Commission, and Public Shade Tree Committee. Interviews continue with several of these groups.
- Community Participation Officers (CPOs):
 - Complete Count – United States Census: The deadline for filling out the census has passed. Amherst wound up with a disappointing 66.9% self-response rate. The State's average is 69.3%. There was tremendous outreach and programming to ensure this percentage was as high as it is. The COVID-19 pandemic and diaspora of college students presented unprecedented challenges to meet the requirements of the Census.
 - Zoom Crew: I have established a Zoom Crew, existing staff members who have the time and ability to support the Zoom meetings being held by Town committees.
- Town-Gown:
 - UMass: The Town and University reopening working group meets weekly.
 - The University continues its "knock-and-talk" program where University officials and Town officials jointly visit households that have generated complaints to the Town.
 - Off-campus students: The University is collecting data to determine the number of students who are living off-campus in Amherst and surrounding areas. Initial indications are that there are not as many students in off-campus housing as initially thought.
- Town Staff: With the start of remote schooling, many of our employees have been challenged to meet both the needs of their families and the demands of their work. We are exploring ways we can help these staff members meet their child care needs.
- Professional Development: The Finance Director and I made a presentation to the Massachusetts Municipal Management Association entitled "Budgeting in the Unknown" on October 14th. About 80+ people were in attendance for this virtual event.

Departments:

- Town Clerk:
 - Election: Early voting starts Saturday, October 17th at the Bangs Community Center!
 - Preparations continue for the general election. The Town Clerk's office has done a tremendous job of keeping up with processing the thousands of ballots being received daily. They have also organized, trained, and scheduled dozens of workers (with a stable of several dozen additional workers available if the need arises). And they have planned for the health and safety of voters and poll workers with the Facilities Manager.
 - Poll worker trainings have been conducted multiple times by the Town Clerk's office.

- The Acting Town Clerk secured an important grant of \$34,051 from the Center for Tech and Civic Life, a nonpartisan non-profit that uses technology to improve the way local governments and communities interact. The grant is being used to offset added expenses for early and Election Day voting, to promote the election, and to supply personal protective equipment, among other things.
- Election Information as of October 15, 2020:
 - Amherst Registered Voters: 16,694
 - Total Absentee Ballot Requests: 612
 - Total Early Voting Ballot Requests: 7,877
 - Total Requests: 8,489
 - Total Absentee Ballots Sent: 608
 - Total Early Voting Ballots Mailed: 7,721
 - Total Ballots Mailed: 8,329
- Voting: There are several options to vote:
 - Vote-By-Mail: If you haven't already applied for a Vote by Mail ballot for November, you can submit your application online at www.MailMyBallotMA.com or you can submit an application by mail using a printable form available on the Town's website. **Requests for ballots** must be received by the Town Clerk by **October 28th** at 5:00 p.m.
 - Ballots will be mailed by the Town Clerk's office on or around October 9th.
 - To **return your ballot by mail** in the United States, your ballot must be **postmarked** by November 3, 2020, **and received** no later than 5:00 pm on November 6, 2020.
 - To return your ballot **by hand**, you can drop it in the ballot drop box on the Main Street side of Town Hall dedicated solely for ballots. Ballots must be received by **8:00 p.m. on Election Day** if delivered by hand.
 - I have designated two additional parking spaces at the Main Street entrance to Town Hall as 15-minute parking to make it easier for residents to drop off their ballots.
 - In-Person Early Voting: Voters may cast their ballot in person October 17th through 30th at the Bangs Community Center on the following days and times:
 - 10/17 from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm
 - 10/18 from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm
 - 10/19 through 10/23 from 8:00 am to 4:30 pm
 - 10/24 from 2:00 pm to 8:00 pm (last day to register to vote)
 - 10/25 from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm
 - 10/26 through 10/30 from 8:00 am to 4:30 pm
 - In-Person Voting on Election Day: Voting will take place on November 3rd from 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.
 - If you have not requested a vote by mail ballot before the deadline to submit your application, you may vote in person during early voting or on election day
 - Any voter who has returned a vote by mail ballot that has been accepted by the local election official cannot subsequently vote.

- Registering to Vote: The deadline to register to vote is October 24th. A voter registration affidavit must be received by the Town Clerk by 8:00 p.m. if in person, or by 11:59 p.m. if using the State online registration system here: <https://www.sec.state.ma.us/ovr/>
 - Staff will be available for voter registration during early voting on October 24th from 2-8 pm at the Bangs Community Center.
 - To determine your voter status, you can either:
 - Check your voting status online here: www.sec.state.ma.us/voterregistrationsearch/myvoterregstatus.aspx
 - Call the Town Clerk's office at (413) 259-3035, or email: townclerk@amherstma.gov
 - If you find you are in Inactive status, you may fill out an [annual Street List form here](#) and return it to the Town Clerk's office. Inactive voters are still eligible to vote but will be required to complete additional forms and show an ID at the polls. Save time by checking your status before voting.
- Public Safety:
 - Ambassadors: The ambassadors program continues its work and is now fully staffed.
 - Last week:
 - 140 Mask Required Zone interactions
 - 63 masks distributed
 - Photo opportunity with Representative Mindy Domb at Farmer's Market
 - Since inception:
 - 1,310 interactions
 - 52 white town masks distributed
 - 1,112 black UMass masks distributed
 - Visited 27 houses on Summer and Bridge Streets last week
 - Covid Hotline, staffed live on Friday and Saturday 4-12
 - 48 Hotline concerns reported (29 calls, 19 emails)
 - All calls answered live or returned by either Ambassadors or Community Participation Officers
 - The Police Department received a significant grant of \$400,207 multi-year grant to improve Criminal Justice Responses to Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, Sexual Assault, and Stalking.
 - Ambulance and emergency calls continue to be low with calls coming in at about half of what they are normally.
- Human Resources:
 - Donna-Rae Kenneally, the Town's new Human Resources Director, will begin her duties on October 26th. Human Resources Manager Joanne Misiaszek is serving as the Temporary Human Resources Director.
 - Emma Dragon, the Town's new Health Director, will begin her duties on November 2nd. Public Health Nurse Jennifer Brown is serving as the Temporary Health Director. She is being supported by the Assistant Town Manager for administrative issues. I have contracted with a neighboring health director to provide additional support during the transition.
- Public Works:

- Downtown: DPW crews are realigning and restriping parts of downtown on South Pleasant Street to create additional outdoor areas. This work is being paid for by the Department of Transportation grant.
- Paving: Paving is completed on North East Street and Station Road. Final work is ongoing including line painting.
- Finance:
 - COVID-19: The finance department continues to submit reimbursements for COVID-19 funding from FEMA and the Federal CARES Act.
 - Ambulance: I will be seeking approval of funds for a new ambulance. The lead time for ambulances is months long, and we have need to purchase an ambulance sooner than later.
- Sustainability:
 - The Municipal Vulnerabilities Preparedness (MVP) Action Grant: The Energy and Climate Action Committee is holding a series of subcommittee meetings with Community Leaders and stakeholders. There are four Task Groups holding a series of three meetings each through September. Additional community outreach meetings are scheduled, the next one being October 30th.
 - The Town received a \$125,998 grant from the Department of Energy Resources Green Community Division to update lighting at the Munson Library, Police Station, and Town Hall and to implement idle reduction technology for Town vehicles.
- Community Services:
 - Unhoused Population:
 - The Director of Senior Services has taken the lead for issues revolving around homelessness policies and activities taking over from the retired Health Director. She will be supported by the Assistant Town Manager.
 - Craig's Doors is not going to be utilizing the First Baptist Church as a shelter for the upcoming shelter season.
 - Craig's Doors – with Town support – has met with the Unitarian Universalist Society of Amherst at 121 North Pleasant Street (adjacent to the Post Office downtown) and there is an agreement that the Society will rent their space as a 24-hour a day shelter. There is permitting and other work to be done, but we are confident this will be a viable option beginning November 1st. The Board of Health has granted a waiver for the provision of shower facilities and work still needs to be done on this front.
 - Craig's Doors – with Town support – is in discussion with the owners of another site which they hope to secure, as well.
 - The Town is working with Northampton and others to secure Isolation and Quarantine facilities for those who are homeless or unable to quarantine successfully in their homes.
 - Much credit is due to Craig's Doors staff for the creativity, cooperation, and dogged determination they have brought to make all of these things happen.
 - Leisure Services:
 - Halloween events sponsored by LSSE include:
 - Do your Mask Contest – October 5-19 (no registration required)
 - Halloween Window Painting - 2 Sundays in October 18th and 25th 9:30am-11:00am (Registration Required)

- Halloween Car Parade (Trick or Treat my Ride) - Saturday October 31st 3:00pm-4:00pm (Registration Required)
 - Fall programming includes clinics for youth football, tennis, ultimate Frisbee, cross country, track, and soccer. Staff have also organized a “Girls on the Run” program.
 - Cherry Hill revenues for the month of September were one of the highest in recent history.
 - Town staff are working with the School District to develop options for child care under the Governor’s recent order making it easier to provide this essential service to the Town’s staff and community at large.
 - The LSSE strategic planning process is coming to a close. They have identified the following as priorities:
 - Communication and interaction with the public, including changing the name of the department to the Town of Amherst Recreation Department.
 - Responding to emerging needs, with a focus on the new reality presented by the COVID-19 pandemic.
 - Improving communication and access to programming, including upgrades to the department’s website.
 - Building and maintaining strong collaborations with local organization, recognizing the local organizations complement and expand the work of the department.
 - This work is now being put into a time line for implementation over the next 6-12 months.
- Senior Center: The Senior Center’s new newsletter, The Senior Spirit, is out and has been mailed to all seniors in the Town. It can be found here: <https://www.amherstma.gov/ArchiveCenter/ViewFile/Item/12511>
- Health Department:
 - The Town offered flu clinics to our employees.
 - Health staff are conducting targeted flu clinics as they have done in the past. These efforts have been complicated by the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Economic Development:
 - Alcoholic Beverages Fee Reduction: I submitted a request to the Board of License Commissioners to adopt a one-time reduction in fees for on-premises alcoholic beverages licenses. At its meeting on October 15th, the Board voted a one-time 40% reduction in fees. This will support our local restaurants in these difficult times. The reduction in fees was anticipated in our budget projections.
 - Heaters: Town staff have worked with the Business Improvement District to install heaters at various restaurants.
 - A significant grant from the Massachusetts Department of Transportation was secured to fund the heaters.
 - Town staff installed 12 heaters at six different locations as recommended by the BID based on expressed interest by the businesses: Arigato, Bistro 63, Vespa, La Veracruzana, Fresh Side, and Mission Cantina. The heaters were installed and secured at the restaurants in the public way.

- Fire and Inspections staff met with each establishment to provide an owner’s manual, review safety information, and provide instructions on how to use the heaters safely.
- Conservation and Development:
 - Grant: Working with the Department of Public Works, Chamber of Commerce, and Business Improvement District, the Town was awarded a Shared Streets grant of \$129,472.20. The grant will pay for increased pedestrian and cyclist safety with lighting improvements and ADA improvements, expanded outdoor dining areas and lengthening the time for dining (heaters), promoting bus ridership with customer-activated heated bus shelters, and creating an inviting streetscape with improved landscaping.
 - Smart Growth Forum: The Planning Department hosted its 4th and final community forum to discuss potential new zoning and affordable housing opportunities to promote a diversity of housing choices under smart growth principles. The forum was well attended with several members of the Town Council in attendance.
 - Emergency Rental Assistance:
 - The Town has dedicated \$250,000 in taxpayer funds to support income-eligible renters in meeting their rental requirements during the COVID-19 pandemic. Information can be found here: <https://www.amherstma.gov/CivicAlerts.aspx?AID=2672>
 - The Town and the Municipal Affordable Housing Trust Fund announced the availability of Round Two for short-term emergency rental assistance available for Amherst renters experiencing a loss or reduction of income due to COVID-19.
 - Rental assistance is available for up to 3 months.
 - Information can be found here: www.communityaction.us/amherstrentalassistance
 - Licensing:
 - On September 10th, the Governor extended the period for outdoor table service by licensees licensed for on-premises consumption from November 1, 2020, for any period up to sixty (60) days after the end of the state of emergency. The LLA may issue extensions automatically to all licensees, or may do so on request from individual licensees.
 - I submitted a request to reduce alcoholic beverages license fees. A reduction in fees was approved by the Board of Licensing Commissioners last night.
 - ADA Transition Plan: Consultants are finalizing a draft of the transition plan.
- Information Technology (I.T.):
 - TechTalk: Two members of the I.T. team have introduced a new program for Town staff called “Tech Talk”. Dozens of Town employees participated in this virtual session
 - I-Net: I.T. is moving forward on a contract to construct a replacement I-Net loop to replace the current Comcast loop which the Town must abandon in compliance with the contract we have with Comcast. Delays in obtaining the fiber due to the COVID-19 pandemic has delayed this project.

Delegated Authority (September 2020):

- Short-Term Event Uses of Town Commons: None
- Short-Term Parking Requests: None
- Short-Term Road or Sidewalk Closures: None

Major Capital Projects:

- DPW/Fire: No developments
- Schools: The first meeting of the Elementary School Building Committee is scheduled for October 27th at 7:30 a.m. via Zoom
- Library:
 - July 2021 – The MBLC will award Amherst a provisional grant
 - December 2021 – the date by which the Town will have to vote to approve its share of the project cost – but there is still nothing preventing Town Council from voting on the project before December 2021.

Project Update:

- Kendrick Park Playground: No updates.
- Performing Arts Shell on the Town Common: No developments.
- Parking Structure on Town Land at North Pleasant Street Parking Lot: No developments.
- North Common Restoration/Main Street Parking Lot: Staff are reviewing the plans developed by the architectural and engineering firm to determine if the work can be modified to move forward with an additional appropriation from the Community Preservation Act fund. Staff will make a presentation to the Town Council at its November 9th meeting.
- Hickory Ridge: No developments.
- East Street School: No developments
- North Amherst Library: With the Town Council's positive vote, we have contracted with the architect to move to the next phase of design. We will be utilizing a new form of public involvement to engage the community in a different way, because I don't anticipate we will be able to have public meetings on this – or any other – project for some time.
- Solar on the Landfill: Slow, steady progress continues to be made as we work through the permitting and interconnection approvals. We are projecting construction to begin in November of 2021 and operation to begin in April of 2022.

Upcoming Meetings and Events:

- November 9th – Financial Indicators Presentation
- November 9th – Town Council Meeting
- November 11th – Veterans Day Holiday
- November 16th – Town Council Meeting
- November 19th – Public Forum on the Budget
- November 26th – 27th – Thanksgiving Holidays
- December 7th – Town Council Meeting
- December 21st – Town Council Meeting
- December 24th-25th – Christmas Holiday
- January 1st – New Year's Holiday

Other events:

- October 22nd – District Two Neighborhood Meeting

Town of Amherst

Halloween Safety Tips for COVID-19

October 2020

Halloween will be different this year. Our highest priority, as a community, is the health and safety of our children.

The best way to stay safe is to stay home!

However, we all understand that Halloween is an annual event that provides the opportunity for fun and creativity. Not everyone will be able to participate in Halloween this year. Many households will not participate by handing out candy this year. The household may have vulnerable members living there and should not have visitors at their doors.

The Town's LSSE Department is offering several activities to serve as an alternative or supplement to trick-or-treating.

We are providing the following guidance to help residents plan for Halloween that is consistent with the best public health and public safety advice. Spread the love, not the virus!

Trick or Treating

- If you feel sick, please, stay home.
- Costume check:
 - ✓ Wear a face mask that covers your mouth and nose (even over or under your Halloween mask. (Costumes masks are not enough protection.)
 - ✓ Wear reflective material so that car drivers can see you easily
 - ✓ Carry a flashlight if you are out after dark for greater visibility
- Plan your visits:
 - ✓ Enjoy Halloween outside. Do not attend indoor events.
 - ✓ Talk about safety expectations before you leave the house.
 - ✓ Plan your route so everyone knows where you are going and so you can remain socially distanced from other families who are out at the same time.
 - ✓ Wash your hands thoroughly before you leave.
 - ✓ Keep your outings shorter than normal.
 - ✓ Travel only with members of your own household.
- While out:
 - ✓ Walk on the right side of the road and stay on a sidewalk whenever possible.
 - ✓ Maintain 6 foot social distancing from other families out trick-or-treating.
 - ✓ Use hand sanitizer frequently especially after touching doorbells and knocking on doors.
 - ✓ Don't reach into communal bowls of candy – stay six feet away from candy givers.
 - ✓ Respect households whose front lights are off. There are lots of good reasons why certain people cannot take part in normal Halloween activities this year.
- When you return home:

- ✓ Wash your hands thoroughly as soon as you return home.
- ✓ Parents/guardians should inspect the candy before any is handled or eaten.

Households / Candy Givers

- **Porch light off** = the residents aren't able or choose not to participate in trick-or-treating this year. Please do not disturb them.
 - ✓ Do not hand out candy if you are feeling sick.
 - ✓ If you are elderly, live with elderly people, have a pre-existing condition that puts you in a high-risk category, we ask that you not take part in the Trick-or-Treating part of Halloween.
- **Porch light on** = yes, we are offering candy to trick-or-treaters
 - ✓ Wear a face mask that covers both your mouth and your nose. A costume mask is not sufficient.
 - ✓ Use a flat platter instead of a bowl to hand out candy.
 - ✓ Provide hand sanitizer next to your treats.
 - ✓ Place a table between you and the trick-or-treaters.
 - ✓ Offer pre-made goodie bags spaced out all over your lawn or entry way. Touch-free treats would be best!
 - ✓ Consider using your driveway or front entry to keep people away from the surfaces of your home.
 - ✓ Wear gloves to touch the candy.
 - ✓ Wash your hands frequently. Or use hand sanitizer if you don't have access to handwashing.

Special Events Offered by the Town

The Town's Leisure Services Department (LSSE) is offering free events during October:

- Do your Mask Contest – October 5-19 (no registration required)
- Halloween Window Painting - 2 Sundays in October 18th and 25th 9:30am-11:00am (Registration Required)
- Halloween Car Parade (Trick or Treat my Ride) - Saturday October 31st 3:00pm-4:00pm (Registration Required)

Paul Bockelman - Town Manager
Jennifer Brown, R.N. – Acting Health Director
Scott Livingstone – Police Chief
W. Timothy Nelson – Fire Chief

UMass Amherst COVID-19 Mitigation Activities
Prepared by the University of Massachusetts at Amherst

October 14, 2020

The University of Massachusetts Amherst believes the health and wellbeing of our students, faculty, staff, and the broader community is of the utmost importance. To safely open for the fall semester, we implemented extensive testing, contact tracing and quarantine/isolation protocols. We extended the operations and support to off-campus students, whether they are accessing the campus for in-person classes or they are fully remote. We have communicated broadly to students and to the Amherst area community concerning expectations for behavior and compliance. We have worked extensively with leadership in the town to address concerns as they arise.

Opening Message to Off-Campus Students

- Students living off-campus were strongly encouraged to stay home for the fall semester, rather than coming to Amherst:

In sharing the Fall Reopening Plan, the university stated, “In the interest of public health, we also strongly urge our off-campus students whose coursework is remote to refrain from returning to the Amherst area for the fall semester, for they, too, will not have campus facilities at their disposal.”

- As expected, many students, having already signed leases and obligated to pay their rent, chose to return to the Amherst area.
- The campus aggressively planned for and messaged to all students concerning expectations for following public health and testing protocols.
- The decision to conduct extensive surveillance testing of students, at the expense of UMass Amherst, far exceeds the normal public health procedures of universities, both inside and outside of Massachusetts.

Testing, Contact Tracing, and Quarantine and Isolation Protocols

- The campus quickly established a new Public Health Promotion Center (PHPC) to provide asymptomatic testing, contact tracing, quarantine and isolation services, and support for on- and off-campus students.
- A team of 50 staff supports the PHPC and includes students from the College of Nursing and the School of Public Health and Health Sciences.

- The testing center is open from 9 a.m. – 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday.
- The contact tracing and quarantine/isolation teams work seven days a week to support students on and off campus.

Testing:

- Off-campus students – whether they were accessing the campus or not – were required to get tested at the start of the semester.
- Off-campus students who are accessing campus are required to get tested twice a week.
- Students living off-campus and not accessing the campus are directed to submit to asymptomatic testing twice a week.
- We believe that UMass Amherst has one of the most aggressive testing protocols for off-campus students in the country, especially for those whose classes are fully remote.
- All asymptomatic testing has been free of charge to the students.
- Students living on- or off-campus who are symptomatic can access testing at University Health Services.
- As of October 14, 2020:
 - o Over 85,000 tests have been conducted for students, faculty and staff since August 6, 2020.
 - o Of those tests, 60,000 were students living in the Amherst area.
 - o We have had 144 positive results with a cumulative positivity rate of 0.17%.
 - o 7,746 undergraduate students have been tested at least once, including both the approximately 1,100 students who live on-campus and those students who live in the Amherst area.
 - o We have conducted nearly 19,000 tests for students who are accessing the campus for in-person classes and living in the Amherst area.
 - o We have conducted more than 34,000 tests for students who are not accessing the campus but are living in the Amherst area.
 - o We have conducted 17,000 tests on faculty and staff who live in the Amherst area.

Contact tracing:

- The UMass Amherst Public Health Promotion Center’s median response time is 2.3 hours for all positive cases. The team receives notification directly from the lab when a test is positive, either from the Broad Institute or University Health Services. This allows our case investigations and contact tracing to be initiated within hours to days before any of this data is automatically sent to MAVEN. The Commonwealth of Massachusetts [Community Tracing Collaborative: Standard Operating Procedures for LBOH](#) (p. 6) states the Community Tracing Collaborative (CTC) receives confirmed cases daily from MAVEN. This daily extract occurs at approximately 10 a.m. with a contact tracing standard of 24–48 hours. The robust UMass Amherst Public Health Promotion Center Team, combined with our direct access to the laboratories, results in a rapid response that far exceeds standards for case investigation and contact tracing.

- The PHPC team – and not the local health departments – conducts contact tracing for off-campus students who live in the Amherst area.

Quarantine and Isolation:

- When quarantine or isolation is required, the PHPC conducts a detailed case investigation following Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH) current standards and protocols. This process includes gathering information about their living conditions (bathroom access, shared spaces, access to food, etc.) and advising on best practices.
- We offer quarantine/isolation space on-campus free of charge for all students, although many who live off-campus choose to either stay in their apartment or go home to their families.
- If the off-campus student's space is not adequate for quarantine or isolation, we strongly encourage them to use campus space or to go home.
- Four meals a day are provided to students utilizing campus quarantine or isolation space.
- For students in quarantine or isolation (either on-campus or off-campus), the PHPC team conducts a daily wellness check via phone.
- The students are given a student-focused quarantine/isolation information packet that includes material about what it means to be in quarantine/isolation and how to access university support and services, including academic support.

University Public Health Messaging Campaign

- The university has developed an extensive public health campaign with the taglines “It’s Hard But It Helps” and “It’s Weird But It Works.” The messages – geared towards on and off-campus students – focus on the importance of social distancing, face coverings, testing, contact tracing, etc.
- Posters with this messaging are displayed in the residence halls and dining commons and were distributed to off-campus apartment complexes.
- The campus is also utilizing social media channels, digital monitors on campus, and signage on campus and in town.
- As students come in for testing, the messaging is reinforced through giveaways, including hand sanitizers, masks, stress balls, etc.
- A second round of messaging is being produced to educate students about that a negative test does not prevent you from contracting the virus, to inform students about what contact tracing is and why it is important to answer when such a call comes in, and to reinforce the importance of staying vigilant by wearing face coverings, not hosting parties, and social distancing.

Outreach

- A team of Town of Amherst staff and UMass Amherst staff and students are conducting outreach to students living off-campus through a series of “knock and talks.”
- This effort includes staff from the UMass Off Campus Student Center, community relations, and student public health ambassadors, as well as representatives from the Amherst Police Department and the town inspection services.
- The team talks with students about public health guidance, gathering in small groups, the importance of wearing face coverings and social distancing, testing, etc.
- The team distributes bags with important public health messaging.
- They focus on areas with high concentrations of students, houses having received noise complaints, etc.
- They have visited approximately 20 neighborhoods/streets, talking with hundreds of students.
- The team has also met with students and landlords from four Amherst neighborhoods via Zoom.
- The team meets regularly with house directors from fraternities and sororities, and has held face-to-face meetings with three Greek chapters.
- Staff from University Relations have attended Amherst Town Council meetings to share information.
- Staff from University Relations have also joined three district meetings at the request of Town Councilors and answered questions and concerns from residents.
- A meeting with a fourth district is scheduled for later this month.

Violations of the Code of Student Conduct

- Students living on-campus or accessing campus for in-person classes were required to sign the [UMass Agreement](#), outlining expectations for behavior. Students living in the Amherst area and not accessing campus were strongly encouraged to sign the Agreement.
- The Agreement is bound by the provisions of the Code of Student Conduct, and violations of the Agreement or Code are handled by the Dean of Students Office.
- Regardless if the student signed the UMass Agreement or not, the Code of Student Conduct applies to behavior and incidents on-campus **and** off-campus.
- As of October 1, 2020, 195 disciplinary cases were handled by the Dean of Students Office. Aggregate information about the violations and any sanctions will be available in the coming weeks.
- Consistent with best practices advocated by leading public health experts across the country, the university has taken the position that it is detrimental to contact tracing

and other compliance efforts to emphasize discipline in its messaging to students. National research supports this approach, and we know from our own extensive empirical experience, students react positively when they are given the opportunity to be a part of the solution, as opposed to top-down, aggressive messaging and punitive threats.