

Springfield Police Officers Evacuate Burning Multi-Unit Building Monday Morning

Commissioner Cheryl Clapprood and the Springfield Police Department are today releasing body-worn camera footage of first responding Springfield Police officers evacuating a burning, smoke-filled building, waking up and helping residents escape on Monday morning.

On Monday December 13th at approximately 4:20 a.m. Springfield Police Officers Carlos Ortiz, Luis Rojas, Michael Cruz, Gustavo Olivo, Jomaris Vazquez, Jeremy Rivas, Thomas Normoyle and Thomas Meleady responded to a fire at a multi-unit building on the 200 block of Fort Pleasant Avenue. The footage begins in the moments officers arrived on the scene where they observed smoke in the back of the building and were told people were still inside.

Officers entered the building, encountering smoke in the hallways and stairwells, and went door to door checking units to ensure residents were awake and assisting them in safely exiting the building as the fire continued to grow. In one unit, officers were able to rescue a dog (minute 1:55).

Aside from what can be seen in this footage, the officers cleared two additional floors in the building. Fortunately, many residents had already exited the building as a result of the smoke alarms.

“I am very proud of these officers who demonstrated their professionalism, courage and dedication to duty by diligently entering and checking units to ensure residents were out of the building,” said Springfield Police Commissioner Cheryl Clapprood.

“These are situations where instincts take over and the officers did not hesitate to enter a burning building, putting their own lives at risk, and were able to lead several residents out of the building.”

Mayor Domenic J. Sarno states, “What an amazing job our brave and dedicated men and women of the Springfield Police Department do, day in and day out. I am very happy to hear that everyone was able to get out of the building. These officers went above and beyond to serve and protect and I have no doubts that their actions that early morning saved lives. Commissioner Cheryl Clapprood and I are so very proud of these officers for their quick and lifesaving actions. Good job Blue and God Bless you and your families.”

The Springfield Fire Department arrived on scene and extinguished the fire. The cause remains under investigation.

OPINION: “COVID hit SouthCoast restaurant industry is hurting, if you aren’t going to tip, tell your server!”

“Some things I wish people knew about the restaurant industry and what it’s like to be a server.

Being a server is not all that bad, it’s a great job to keep as a side job, or a seasonal job, even as a full-time job. As

a server, we want to get the best possible tip so always try our hardest to give the best service as humanly possible, however, that's not always the case.

With the industry being one of the hardest hit by COVID it has left many restaurants short-staffed – something people should always keep in mind when going out to eat. I understand some people don't believe in tipping, that's fine and dandy, but if that's the case then you should let the server know beforehand that they will not be receiving a tip. Most restaurants have a tip-out policy.

How this works for some places is the server comes in already with a negative balance. Then at the end of the shift, a percentage of the gross sales is tipped out to the bar, and for some places cooks, sushi chefs, meat runners, bussers, etc.

Bad servers do not last. I repeat bad servers do not last at all in the industry. So if you for some reason receive bad service at a restaurant, there is usually a valid reason behind it.

The point being that if you think that leaving no tip or anything less than 18% is okay, please do all the servers of the industry a favor and let them know beforehand or tell them directly if there are any issues. Otherwise a majority of the time we end up paying out of pocket for your and your friend's/families' meals.

If your answer is to seek another job, well that's what a lot of great servers already did, and that my friends is why the industry faces the mess we have today.

Just some food for thought. No pun intended.”-Anonymous.

Southcoast Health Launches Enhanced Patient Service Center to Improve Access and the Patient Experience

Southcoast Health is pleased to announce the official opening of its new, state-of-the-art Patient Service Center, located on the Fairhaven campus. This advancement will gradually transition from numerous small, standalone call centers to one fully integrated Patient Service Center staffed by patient service advisors with specialized training and certification in their clinical specialty.

The Service Center will streamline the patient experience through a variety of offerings, including helping patients quickly schedule and register for their appointments and handling needs such as medication refill requests, appointment reminders and more.

The Service Center's opening comes following nearly a year of planning and build-out, marking another major milestone in Southcoast Health's efforts to make accessing care faster and more convenient for patients – part of its promise to deliver exceptional care from people who care. Other recent access improvements include expanded online scheduling capabilities and virtual care options.

"We recognize that navigating healthcare can be a complicated, and sometimes frustrating process, and Southcoast Health is committed to changing that for our community," said Russ Onofrio, Director of the Southcoast Health Service Center. "This accomplishment would not be possible without the

collaboration, hard work and support of Southcoast providers, practice staff and other team members who are dedicated to improving our patients' experiences and outcomes."

For patients, the transition will be seamless. They will continue to call the same number they are used to calling when trying to access their Southcoast provider or practice. As more practices and staff transition to the Patient Service Center, patients will be made aware of additional capabilities and conveniences, including the ability to schedule appointments across different practices during one call.

"The Patient Service Center is an important step in our ongoing commitment to delivering exceptional service," said Yinka Oluwole, Southcoast Health's Director of Service Excellence and Patient Experience.

If you'd like to schedule an appointment to see a Southcoast Health provider, please visit Southcoast Health's website at www.southcoast.org.

Additionally, Southcoast Health is currently hiring personnel for the Patient Service Center and will continue to do so as it grows. Open positions include Patient Services Advisor, Team Lead and Service Center Operations Manager. Interested persons can view these positions on the Careers page of the Southcoast Health website at <https://www.southcoast.org/careers/>.

Boston To Require Vax Proof

To Enter Many Businesses

By Katie Lannan

State House News Service

Patrons and staff at indoor spaces in Boston – including restaurants, bars, nightclubs, fitness facilities and entertainment venues – will need to show proof they are vaccinated against COVID-19 starting next month, under a policy Mayor Michelle Wu announced Monday that marks a major shift from current practice in the city.

Wu, who also tightened the vaccine policy for city employees, was joined for her announcement by municipal officials from Salem, Somerville and Brookline. Wu's office said those communities, along with Arlington and Cambridge, are also working to advance their own vaccine requirements.

"This region requires Boston to take major steps and for us all to work together as a community amongst communities," Brookline Select Board member Raul Fernandez said.

Wu's announcement comes five days after the Boston Public Health Commission announced the city's first confirmed cases of the omicron variant of COVID-19, in three young adults over the age of 18 who were not vaccinated and experienced mild disease without needing to be hospitalized.

"This step will help increase our vaccination numbers, which we know is the best way to keep our community safe and thriving," Wu said. "Although Boston's vaccination rates have been high, we continue to see serious disparities by race and by age, allowing omicron and other new variants to spread in our communities. Vaccines are the most powerful tool in fighting this pandemic, once again, and they're the most powerful tool to allow us to recover as a city and to truly be together."

BPHC Executive Director Dr. Bisola Ojikutu said the number of COVID-19 cases in Boston has increased almost 90 percent compared to two weeks ago, with the city now averaging 369 new cases a day. She said hospital resources are “stretched thin” and that an estimated two-thirds of those hospitalized with COVID-19 in the city are unvaccinated.

Ojikutu, who issued the order establishing the proof-of-vaccine policy projected that the city’s case numbers will “rise significantly” in January based on the omicron variant’s transmissibility.

Under Boston’s policy for indoor dining, fitness and entertainment establishments, dubbed the B Together initiative, workers and patrons age 12 and up will be required to show proof of at least one dose of a COVID-19 vaccine starting Jan. 15.

Proof of full vaccination – acceptable forms include the CDC vaccination card, a photo of the card, “any official immunization record or digital image from a pharmacy or health care provider, or on any COVID-19 vaccine verification app” – will be required for those 12 and up as of Feb. 15.

For children age 5-11, the youngest age group for which COVID-19 shots are currently authorized, proof of a first dose will be required as of March 1, with full vaccination required starting the first day of May.

In August, Acting Mayor Kim Janey imposed a rule requiring the city’s 18,000 workers to get vaccinated or submit to weekly testing for COVID-19. Wu said Monday that the city will drop the testing option “along the same timeline” as the new proof-of-vaccination requirement, with a first dose by Jan. 15 and second shot a month later.

Boston officials said the city plans to create its own proof-of-vaccination app, modeled after the Key to NYC app in New York City. Wu said she has been in touch with New York

officials, where a similar vaccine requirement has been in place for months.

“Indoor vaccine mandates and mandates in general increase vaccination rates,” Ojikutu said. “After New York City implemented its indoor vaccination mandate, known as the Key to New York City program, citywide vaccinations increased by 9 percent in just one month, and the number of doses administered has risen steadily since the implementation.”

Ojikutu had to raise her voice during her remarks to be heard over protesters who arrived at City Hall while she was speaking. The group chanted, used whistles and at one point sang the “The Star-Spangled Banner” as officials described the new policy and their reasoning behind implementing it.

“Welcome to the people’s building,” Wu told the crowd of shouting demonstrators. “I just want to emphasize, there is nothing more American than coming together to ensure that we are taking care of each other, that each and every one of our community members is safe, is healthy and has access to the future and opportunities they deserve.”

A group called Boston First Responders United, which opposes vaccine mandates, criticized Wu’s policy ahead of her announcement, issuing what it described as “a call to action to our brothers and sisters in all law enforcement unions.”

“We especially remind our fellow members of law enforcement that civil rights and worker’s rights cannot be suspended, abridged, or revoked in America,” the group said in a statement, which also said any ongoing contract negotiations should be suspended.

Wu said Boston officials are “in conversations with all of our city unions to proceed along all the processes that are required.” She said more than 90 percent of the city’s workforce is fully vaccinated and that she is “confident that that number will continue to grow as we host on-site clinics

in partnership with each of our departments.”

Sen. Will Brownsberger, a Belmont Democrat whose district includes parts of Boston, was on hand for Wu’s press conference, as was City Councilor Lydia Edwards, a candidate for an open state Senate seat. On Twitter, House Ways and Means Chairman Aaron Michlewitz, a North End Democrat, called the vaccine-proof requirement “a bold and necessary step for many of us to feel safe when going out and dining out in Boston.”

Republican gubernatorial candidate Geoff Diehl, meanwhile, called the policies “clear violations of the civil rights of anyone who lives in, works in, or travels to the city” and said they “will make it even more difficult for Boston’s economy to recover from the pandemic.”

Diehl’s campaign also distributed a photo of him inside Boston City Hall, saying it was “taken this morning during the Boston First Responders’ Rally.”

The Boston Public Health Commission order – which says it will remain in effect until the executive director rescinds it – calls for “all reasonable efforts” to be made “to secure voluntary compliance,” including outreach, education and written warnings. It also allows for fines of \$300 per violation “and orders of the BPHC to cease and desist.”

Christopher Carlozzi, state director for the National Federation of Independent Businesses, called it unfortunate that “private businesses are being placed in the unenviable position of having to enforce another government health directive.”

“City officials should take every step imaginable to ensure consumers know this is a city policy, and are aware business owners and their workers are simply being forced to abide by these latest rules,” he said.

Boston's planned outreach and support efforts for businesses include a series of webinars and what Wu's office described as "a weeks-long campaign to educate residents and businesses about the new policy, utilizing city outreach workers and inspectional services."

Temple Gill of the Huntington Theatre Company, an organization that requires vaccines for its staff and artists and has been checking its patrons for proof of vaccination or a negative COVID-19 test, said the new city policy "means that arts organizations don't have to shoulder the responsibility of these decisions alone."

According to the mayor's office, 68 percent of Boston residents were fully vaccinated as of Dec. 14, and 79 percent had received at least one dose.

Massachusetts Fire Marshall prompts warning on cannabis cultivation after fire incident

Foxborough Fire Chief Michael Kelleher, Foxborough Police Chief Michael A. Grace, and State Fire Marshal Peter J. Ostroskey said today that this week's fire on Central Street was caused by an unspecified electrical event in the building's basement, where firefighters discovered lighting, a dehumidifier, and other appliances utilized in connection with a large marijuana growing operation.

"We're extremely fortunate that this building had working

smoke alarms,” said Chief Kelleher. “Electrical fires were the second-leading cause of fire deaths in Massachusetts last year. Overloading an electrical system with multiple appliances, regardless of their purpose, presents a hazard. Powerful lights are heat sources, and combustible items should be kept away from them to avoid a fire.”



Foxborough Fire Department photo.

Because some cannabis processing methods utilize toxic, flammable, and explosive materials, a state Hazmat team was called to the scene along with Bomb Squad personnel, additional Hazmat technicians, and others who are cross-trained to assess and mitigate these hazards.

“Cannabis extraction methods that use propane, butane, and similar substances are illegal in residential settings because they’re extremely dangerous,” said State Fire Marshal Ostroskey. “The vapors are highly flammable. If they

accumulate in a basement or any enclosed area, they can be ignited by a furnace pilot light or spark, causing a devastating explosion.”

The Dec. 15 fire on Central Street was jointly investigated by the Foxborough Fire and Police departments and the State Police Fire & Explosion Investigation Unit assigned to the State Fire Marshal’s office. The investigation determined that it began in a room within the basement located near the front of the building. It grew and spread to the building’s attic before being fully extinguished by Foxborough firefighters.

Massachusetts real estate broker pleads guilty to real estate deposit scam

Defendant stole approximately \$1.8 million in deposit checks including for properties not for sale.

A Quincy real estate broker pleaded guilty today to operating a scheme in which he falsely marketed properties that were not for sale, or had already been sold, and then stole the buyers’ real estate deposits.

Michael P. Flavin, 38, pleaded guilty to two counts of wire fraud and two counts of aggravated identity theft. U.S. District Court Judge Allison D. Burroughs scheduled sentencing for April 12, 2022.

Between 2017 and April 2020, Flavin solicited deposits on real estate transactions by marketing numerous real estate properties that were not actually for sale. In each case,

Flavin executed purchase and sale agreements and received deposit checks from or on behalf of the potential buyers, even though the actual owners of the properties had not agreed to sell their properties or to sell them to those buyers. Flavin forged the signatures of the sellers on the purported purchase and sale agreements. Over this period of approximately three years, Flavin cashed more than 60 deposit checks totaling approximately \$1.8 million.

The charges of wire fraud each provide for a sentence of up to 20 years in prison, three years of supervised release and a fine of \$250,000 or twice the gross gain or loss, whichever is greater. The charges of aggravated identity theft each provide for a mandatory sentence of two years in prison to be served consecutive to any other sentence imposed, up to one year of supervised release and a fine of \$250,000. Sentences are imposed by a federal district court judge based upon the U.S. Sentencing Guidelines and other statutory factors.

Acting United States Attorney Nathaniel Mendell and Joseph R. Bonavolonta, Special Agent in Charge of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Boston Division made the announcement today. Assistant U.S. Attorneys Victor A. Wild and Sara Miron Bloom of Mendell's Securities, Financial & Cyber Fraud Unit are prosecuting the case.

Arraignment of New Bedford cold case from 2001 postponed again

This is an update of a previous article.

The Fall River Superior Court Clerk's Office has just informed prosecutors from our office that David Reed has been exposed to Covid-19 and due to "close contact" protocols, tomorrow's scheduled arraignment has been postponed. A new date for the defendant's arraignment has yet to be scheduled by the court. Once a new date is set, our office will send out a media advisory.

The defendant will be arraigned on an indictment charging him with Murder and Armed Robbery in connection to the previously unsolved March 2001 killing of Rose Marie Moniz in New Bedford.

The defendant, who is in custody, has already been arraigned in connection to the 2003 assault and robbery of Maribel Martinez-Alegria in New Bedford. He was arraigned in October on indictments charging him with Armed Assault with Intent to Murder and Armed Robbery. Judge Gregg Pasquale found him dangerous after a Superior Court Dangerousness Hearing was held in early November, meaning the defendant is held without bail.

The Murder arraignment will be handled by Deputy District Attorney William McCauley and Assistant District Attorney Caleb Weiner.

**Mattapoissett
Department**

**Police
announces**

promotion of Chief Jason A. King

"On behalf of the men and women of the Mattapoissett Police Department we would like to congratulate Chief Jason A. King on his promotion.

Chief King began his career with the Mattapoissett Police Department as a Patrol Officer in 1994 before being promoted to the rank of sergeant in 2003. Over the years Chief King took on many roles such as Detective Sergeant, Unit Commander of SEMLEC Detectives, grant writer, marine patrol officer, and patrol supervisor, to name a few.

In 2018 Chief King was promoted to the rank of Captain where he not only managed the everyday operations of the police department but remained active and involved with criminal investigations.

Throughout his career, he has attended a great deal of training in all areas of law enforcement. Chief King received a Bachelor of Science and Administration of Justice from Roger Williams University. In 2012 Chief King received a Masters Degree of Science in Criminal Justice from the University of Massachusetts Lowell. He also possesses his certification as an Emergency Medical Technician and holds a license as a Maritime Captain.

Chief King's training and experience in all areas of law enforcement will be beneficial to the Mattapoissett Police Department and the community.

The men and women of the Mattapoissett Police Department are looking forward to a great future with Chief Jason A. King as our new leader.

Congratulations Chief Jason A. King!!"

Massachusetts State Police arrest two for trafficking heroin

“At around 2 a.m. on Sunday Trooper Scott Boutell, assigned to State Police-Shelburne Falls, along with Trooper Daniel Carmody, a recent graduate of the 86th Recruit Training Troop, were patrolling Route 91 in Greenfield.

While passing the 40-mile marker they observed a blue Toyota sedan entering a construction zone while traveling approximately 70 miles per hour. The speed limit in the construction zone is 55 miles per hour. After exiting the construction zone the Troopers activated the cruiser’s blue lights and stopped the vehicle in the area of Exit 50.

After stopping the Toyota both Troopers approached it and identified the operator as VICTORIA THOMPSON, 28, of Cavendish, Vt., and a 31-year-old male passenger. While speaking to them Trooper Boutell observed a large illegally possessed firework in the rear seat area. Trooper Carmody returned to the cruiser to conduct an electronic inquiry of the passengers in the vehicle. He discovered that THOMPSON’s driver’s license was not valid. THOMPSON was removed from the vehicle and placed under arrest, then seated in the rear of the cruiser. The passenger was removed from the vehicle in order for it to be towed from the scene.

While conducting a required inventory of the vehicle’s contents prior to it being towed, Troopers discovered a large amount of narcotic paraphernalia along with a small amount of a substance suspected to be Crystal Methamphetamine.

A follow up search of the trunk yielded a large amount of individually packaged baggies of a substance suspected to be Heroin. The seized narcotics were later weighed totaling approximately 80 grams. At this point the passenger was also placed under arrest. He initially provided a false name and date of birth to the Troopers, but was eventually identified as MARSHALL GAGNE, 31, of Springfield, Vt. It was discovered GANGE had an extraditable warrant for his arrest out of Vermont.

THOMPSON and GANGE were both transported to the Shelburne Falls Barracks for booking. A bail commissioner was contacted and set bail at \$75,000 for each. They were scheduled for arraignment at Greenfield District Court for the following offenses.

VICTORIA THOMPSON:

1. Possession of a Class B Drug;
2. Trafficking in Heroin;
3. Conspiracy to Violate Drug Law;
4. Unlicensed Operation of a Motor Vehicle;
5. Illegal Possession of Fireworks;
6. Possession of Open Container of Alcohol in Vehicle; and
7. Speeding.

MARSHALL GAGNE:

8. Possession of a Class A Drug;
 9. Trafficking in Heroin;
 10. Conspiracy to Violate Drug Law; and
 11. Providing False Name to Police."
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Boston Police drug trafficking investigation leads to arrests, seizing of firearms, drugs, \$230,000.00

“At about 1:13 PM on Thursday, December 16, 2021, officers assigned to the Boston Police Drug Control Unit arrested Robert Morrison, 56, of Hyde Park in the area of 15 Hamilton Street in Hyde Park and Greg Bogarty, 58, of Dorchester in the area of 13 Laurel Street in Roxbury. Both arrests come after a month long investigation into Drug Trafficking in the area of The Dudley Triangle, Massachusetts Avenue and Melnea Cass Boulevard.

Officers executed a search warrant at 204 Neponset Valley Parkway and as a result of the search warrant, officers recovered a loaded Smith & Wesson firearm, 254 Grams of Crack Cocaine, various packages of Fentanyl and Suboxone. Also recovered was approximately \$230,000.00 in USC. An additional search warrant was executed at 27c Dimock Street in Roxbury where Crack Cocaine was seized.

Robert Morrison was arrested and charged with Unlawful Possession of a Firearm, Unlawful Possession of Ammunition, Trafficking Class B, Drugs and Possession of Class B, Drugs. He is expected to be arraigned in West Roxbury District Court.

Greg Bogarty was arrested and charged with Distribution of Class B, Drugs. He is expected to arraigned in Roxbury District Court.”