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MEMORANDUM

TO: Thomas A. Golden, Jr., City Manager 

FROM: Lisa Golden, Director of Health and Human Services

CC: Mark Young, Executive Director, Wastewater Utility

DATE: January 11, 2023

SUBJECT: MOTION RESPONSE – 5/17/22 - C. Robinson - Req. City Mgr. Have Proper Department Provide An Assessment Of The Infrastructure And Staffing Needed To Conduct Waste Water Evaluation For COVID As Well As Other Health Related Conditions That May Be Assessed Via Waste Water Surveillance.

Wastewater monitoring has proven to be a valuable resource in understanding the prevalence of COVID-19 in communities throughout the pandemic. While the City of Lowell has not yet implemented wastewater surveillance, data collected from the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority, which serves the Boston area, has been informative in monitoring the prevalence of the virus in our region. This tool is increasingly valuable as more residents rely on at-home tests through which results are not reported public health authorities, resulting in case data becoming a less accurate indicator of transmission trends.

Biobot Analytics, a wastewater epidemiology company, was selected by the CDC to expand the [National Wasterwater Surveillance System](#) (NWSS) program. The company informed Wastewater Utility that Lowell has been selected to participate in this program. Participation in wastewater surveillance through this program is free of cost for the City.

The program would require Wastewater to collect a 24-hour composite sample of raw wastewater influent using a sampling kit provided by Biobot twice per week. Each sample must be shipped back to Biobot, which analyzes the sample for SARS-CoV-2, and submits data through to the NWSS. The Health Department will be given access to the data as soon as it is produced to support the City's COVID-19 response. Results are also available to the public through the CDC's online COVID data tracker.

The Health Department is working in collaboration with Wastewater Utility regarding this opportunity.