

Board of Health Meeting Minutes
Monday, November 29th, 2021
Virtual Meeting

BOARD OF HEALTH MEMBERS PRESENT

Marianne Hartmann, Emily Cilley, Dr. Peter Sheckman

MEMBERS ABSENT

None

OTHER TOWN OFFICIALS PRESENT

Jeffrey Vaughan, Director of Public Health and Neia Illingworth, Public Health Nurse

AGENDA

OPEN MEETING

- The meeting was called to order at 6:00PM

REVIEW/APPROVE MINUTES OF PRIOR MEETINGS

- No minutes were submitted. They will be voted on in the next meeting.

COVID-19 UPDATE - INCLUDING TOWN VACCINATION UPDATE

- Swampscott has had 1561 lab confirmed Covid-19 cases to date.
- Dr. Sheckman asked if there was any information on how many cases were “breakthrough” cases. Neia informed the board that the most accurate information on both breakthrough case numbers and “reinfection” numbers would be supplied by the state rather than each individual town.
- Neia updated that recently, our community has had a very high frequency rate both as a town and as a county.
- Neia provided an update on variants. On November 26, 2021, the World Health Organization reported a new variant originating in South Africa, the “Omicron” variant. There have been no cases detected in the US, but there have been cases detected in Canada. Neia said that the Delta variant was twice as infectious as the first strain of the virus and that the new “Omicron” variant will be just as contagious or more contagious than the Delta variant.
- Neia stated that regardless of vaccination status, it is recommended to wear a mask indoors in areas of high transmission. She also noted the importance of vaccination, hand washing, social distancing, surface cleaning and disinfection, ventilation, and avoidance of crowded indoor spaces.

- Jeff stated that he would like to see the Board of Health issue a press release or letter to the Lynn Item newspaper readers to remind them of the above recommendations. Dr. Sheckman stated that he would like it to be clear that this concern does not stem from the new variant, but rather dates back to the fact that we have been seeing high positive case counts again since August.
- Marianne asked if the Board of Health needed the Select Board in order to issue a mask mandate. Jeff stated that the Board of Health could issue a mask mandate without the Select Board.
- Neia gave an update on vaccinations: since the last meeting, everyone ages 18 and older is eligible to receive a booster dose regardless of occupation or original vaccine manufacturer. Pfizer is also now approved for children ages 5-18.
- 95% of Swampscott residents have received at least one dose of the Covid-19 vaccine.
- Swampscott had a vaccine clinic for children ages 5-12 on November 16. They are hosting vaccinations for the second dose on December 7.
- Neia updated that the MA Stop and Spread program has extended the length of the operation of the Beacon site in Lynn.

UPDATE REGARDING HEALTH DEPARTMENT PLAN FOR FUTURE POSITIVE CASE/CONTACT TRACING PROCEDURES

- Jeff stated that the Health Department needs to update the way that they are handling contact tracing as the responsibility will revert back to being local responsibility on December 1, 2021.
- Neia stated that the new proposal is that those who are a “close contact” will receive an automated voicemail directing them to the town website. This will reduce time spent by staff on the phone to each patient for the initial informing and free up their time to answer calls from callers that need more guidance or have more specific questions as well as host vaccine clinics.

SUBSTANCE ABUSE DISCUSSION – GUESTS

- Joyce Redford, Director of the North Shore/Cape Ann Tobacco Policy Program and Emily Hatchouel, Grants Coordinator for the MA Collaborative for Leadership and Learning attended the meeting to discuss substance abuse. Emily Hatchouel explained that the goal of the program was to prevent first use of substances and that this goal could be attained by pushing back the age that youth can use substances as well as by conducting data-collection surveys and providing preventative education. Emily Cilley suggested that parents should also take a survey.
- Emily Hatchouel will email board members the dates for upcoming planning meetings.
- Joyce Redford stated that they are performing inspections for “concealed items” at nicotine retailers. Items include flavored nicotine products, which are illegal.

HEALTH DIRECTOR REPORT

- 81% of Swampscott residents eligible for the Covid vaccine are fully vaccinated. 95% have received at least one dose. 56% of Swampscott children aged 5-11 have recently received their first dose.
- Jeff has been conducting compliance checks on restaurants.
- The Health Department received four tons of pumpkins at the recent pumpkin drop off event at the DPW yard.

OTHER BUSINESS/ITEMS NOT REASONABLY ANTICIPATED BY THE BOH

- None.

SCHEDULING OF NEXT BOARD OF HEALTH MEETING

- The next meeting has been scheduled for January 10, 2022. All board members are in agreement.

ADJOURN

On MOTION by Sheckman and SECONDED by Cilley it was VOTED by roll call to adjourn the meeting. Roll call: Sheckman (yes) Cilley (yes), Hartmann (yes).

The meeting adjourned at 7:40PM.

True Attest,
