

Board of Health Meeting Minutes
Monday, December 12, 2022
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; Neia Illingworth, Public Health Nurse

OPEN MEETING

- The meeting was called to order at 6:02 PM.

REVIEW/APPROVE MINUTES OF PRIOR MEETINGS

- On MOTION by Cilley and SECONDED by Sheckman, the Board of Health voted to approve prior meeting minutes from September 13th, October 11th, and November 8th, 2022. Roll call: Cilley (yes), Sheckman (yes), Hartmann (yes).

COVID-19 UPDATE – presented by Neia Illingworth

- Case data:
 - As of December 12, 2022, Swampscott has had 4105 lab-confirmed cases. Lab-confirmed case numbers do not include at-home tests
 - As of December 8, 2022, Swampscott's 14-day incidence rate is 16.1 per 100,000 residents per the MA Department of Public Health (MDPH)
 - As of December 8, 2022, the 7-day average of percent positivity is 7.85% according to MDPH's Covid-19 Interactive Data Dashboard
 - According to the CDC Covid-19 Data Tracker, Essex county is in the "red" and considered an area of high transmission. On a community level, Massachusetts is considered "low" based on the following factors: 1. new Covid-19 cases per 100,000 population (weekly total), 2. new Covid-19 admissions per 100,000 population (7-day total), and 3. percent of inpatient beds occupied by Covid-19 patients (7-day average)
 - Dominant variants:
 - BQ.1.1: 36.8%
 - BQ.1 – 31.1%

- BA.5 – 11.5%
 - BF.7 – 5.7%
 - XBB – 4.7%
 - BN.1 – 4.3%
- Vaccine updates:
 - As of December 9, 2022, children as young as 6 months can now receive an updated Covid-19 vaccine
 - The percentage of the population vaccinated in Swampscott as of December 7, 2022, is:
 - Individuals with at least one dose: 95%
 - Fully vaccinated individuals: 86%
 - Individuals with their first booster: 60%
 - Individuals with their second booster: 29%
- Testing updates:
 - Individuals can report positive at-home tests on makemytestcount.org to assist with more accurate case data

OTHER UPDATES

MONKEYPOX

- Now called MPOX
- The World Health Organization (WHO) and other health agencies are using this new name to reduce stigma and other issues associated with prior terminology
- While there are still Mpox cases occurring in the US, the number of cases has been decreasing and it has been reported that the US government plans to end the Mpox Public Health Emergency in January 2023

INFLUENZA (FLU)

- It was noted that influenza (flu) is one of the reportable diseases to local Boards of Health in Massachusetts and while not everyone gets tested when they have symptoms and/or influenza like illness, it was reported that there has been a noticeable increase in lab confirmed cases of the flu in the last month. It was also noted that RSV test results are not reported to local Boards of Health in Massachusetts.
- The Massachusetts Department of Public Health has another online dashboard called 'Weekly Influenza Update' that provides information regarding weekly influenza data, etc.
- For the week of 11/27/22 to 12/3/22, the current estimated severity of influenza in Massachusetts is very high
- The Swampscott Health Department created posters/flyers with information about staying safe during the fall, winter, and holidays. The flyers/posters were posted online before the Thanksgiving holiday and the plan is to update the flyers/posters so that these can be posted online again during the winter and upcoming holiday season.

TEXTILE RECYCLING UPDATE

- The Department of Environmental Protection banned textiles from going into recycling in November 2022.

- Simple Recycling began a partnership with the Town of Swampscott in the second half of 2020 for textile recycling. Residents can arrange home pickup via phone. A brochure with more details is available on the Town website. Jeff stated that they will take any textiles even if it is a single sock or shoelaces. The program has aided in the recycling of:
 - 11.25 tons in 2020 (6 months)
 - 11.57 tons in 2021 (12 months)
 - 5.21 tons in 2022 (11 months)
- Drop boxes are also available in multiple locations in Town such as the Whole Foods parking lot, behind the Senior Center, near the parking lot of Hawthorne by the Sea, and a trailer outside Stop & Shop.
- Cilley also reminded residents that local animal shelters accept sheets and bedding donations.

HEALTH DIRECTOR REPORT

- Jeff stated that many restaurants and businesses in Swampscott were using plastic utensils, bags, and etc. during early Covid. This is a violation of the bylaws of the Town, but it was acknowledged that it was difficult to obtain many products and supplies due to supply chain issues. However, as it is a violation of the bylaws and it is no longer as difficult to find non-plastic supplies, the Health Department will be conducting audits and giving warnings.
- Jeff informed the Board that Neia has started the process of permitting for the Health Department to be able to supply Naloxone to residents of Swampscott.
- The Health Department has been conducting restaurant inspections. A few will need/needed re-inspections. Hartmann asked how frequently restaurants are inspected. Jeff stated that they are currently inspected once a year by him as well as via regional grants.
- Jeff stated that a rehabilitated property on Fuller Terrace that the Town has been working on in partnership with the Attorney General's office is completed and looks beautiful.

OTHER BUSINESS/ITEMS NOT REASONABLY ANTICIPATED BY THE BOH

- Hartmann stated that the Chair of the Beverly Board of Health had invited all local BOH Chairs to a Zoom meeting to chat about Public Health matters and projects.
- Hartmann stated that Nahant has proposed a plan to euthanize coyotes via "sharp shooters". She discussed the impacts of this such as an increase in rat problems.

SCHEDULE NEXT MEETING DATE

- The next meeting has been scheduled for January 10, 2023

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 6:48 pm.

True Attest,

Brittney Jones