

Board of Health Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, May 4th, 2021
Virtual Meeting

BOARD OF HEALTH MEMBERS PRESENT

Marianne Hartmann, Emily Cilley, and Stephanie Goodman

MEMBERS ABSENT

None

OTHER TOWN OFFICIALS PRESENT

Jeffrey Vaughan, Director of Public Health and Neia Illingworth, Public Health Nurse; Allie Fiske, Director of Communications and Strategic Initiatives

The meeting was called to order at 6:01 p.m.

OPEN MEETING – ACCEPT/APPROVE PRIOR MEETING MINUTES

- No minutes to approve. Will be submitted next session when Diane returns.

OLD BUSINESS – DISCUSSION OF PREVIOUS MASK MANDATE EMERGENCY ORDER / OTHER EMERGENCY ORDERS

- Five orders issued since beginning of Covid (emergency, stay at home, mask, one replacing three prior, and one update)
- Mandatory mask zone order/element of order will be changed. State has taken away mandate of masks outside. Emergency management team does not oppose the dissolving of town “mandatory mask zones” except around the schools. Waiting for direction from town counsel, but if SB and BOH are in agreement then the town will issue a new emergency order.
- Cilley is in favor of taking away mandatory mask zones as vaccines are available to those who want them and the state is ok with it.
- Hartmann suggested that BOH join a SB meeting very soon to vote on the mandatory mask zone issue as SB is already planning to meet soon and the BOH meets less frequently. Allie suggested they attend the upcoming May 12th meeting if they are available and if the SB thinks it is a good plan. Also informed BOH that they can vote in an independent meeting and SB can vote in their own independent meeting.

COVID-19 UPDATE

- Neia gave a presentation on isolation and quarantine procedures, covering the different between isolating if you test positive and quarantining if you are exposed to/a close contact of someone who is positive. Covered the definition of "close contact, timelines for isolation and quarantine, expiration of orders to quarantine or isolate, and MA DPH guidelines/timelines. Different options based on if they have symptoms, if they take additional tests on set days, if they have had Covid in the last three months, and if they are vaccinated.
- Marianne said she is hearing from many parents at the school that some student's health care providers are giving different instructions. Neia clarified that her information is most current.
- Hartmann said that DESE (Department of Elementary and Secondary Education) has provided different guidelines for schools stating that close contacts are only those who are between 0-3 feet apart and students only have to test for Covid after a close contact if they are symptomatic. She is very concerned as 40% of positive people are asymptomatic and DESE is not a public health organization. She would like the board to recommend to school department to follow public health, CDC, and State health department guidelines. Cilley stated that the school department has not had anyone who was sent home for being a close contact at six feet away test positive and would not care to go below six feet. Goodman agreed that there is so little time left of school that they should not make any changes. Hartmann and Goodman do not think that DESE should be making guidelines or enforcing anything at the schools.
- Vote to make a formal recommendation to superintendent of SPS to continue to use the CDC and MA DPH definition of close contacts in schools and buses, defining a close contact as someone within 6 feet for a cumulative of 15 minutes or longer. Motion, Hartmann; seconded, Goodman.
- 1151 lab confirmed cases since beginning of Covid, 60 new cases in the last few weeks.

COVID-19 VACCINATION UPDATE

- Neia covered the three vaccines approved by the FDA and the timelines for which they are administered. She also covered risks to specific groups (women below 50) who receive J&J shot.
- Neia covered timelines for being considered "fully vaccinated": two weeks after second dose of a two dose series or single dose series. Also covered MA guidelines for those who are fully vaccinated.
- Neia stated that despite the vaccines being very effective, you can still test positive after being vaccinated and should monitor for symptoms after exposure.
- Vaughan updated on the regional effort with Salem, Danvers, Beverly, Lynn, Nahant, Marblehead, Peabody, and Saugus that began in January 2021 at the O'Keefe Center of Salem State University.
- Jeff announced that as of April 29, 2021 66% of Swampscott population has been vaccinated with one dose. Regionally, we are doing very well.

BEACHES/SPORT AREAS UPDATE

- Have not yet received guidance from the state. Will likely receive by the weekend. Will speak on it at a later meeting/the emergency meeting.

SOLID WASTE

- Cilley expressed concern regarding trash and recycling barrels, namely that the recycling bins do not have lids and inclement weather such as wind can sometimes create an issue with trash in the streets or otherwise outside of the barrels. Also stated concern with barrel limit for larger families.
- Vaughan stated that there is a public compost bin for residents and old barrels can also be used for recycling if a (free) recycling sticker available at Town Hall is affixed to it. He would like to make better efforts to inform residents of alternative options like the aforementioned recycling barrel situation and the DPW metal recycling resources (last Saturday of every month).
- The board discussed trash and public barrels at the beaches. Jeff stated that town management has established a “carry in, carry out” policy.

HEALTH DIRECTOR REPORT

- Jeff announced that the town will have a Hazardous Waste Day, scheduled for June 8th, 2021. It will be pickup rather than dropoff. This will be the Town’s fourth one since last September and they plan to continue doing it 4x a week. He thinks pickup is positive as the Town does not have to pay a set up fee and residents do not have to drive around with hazardous materials.
- Jeff has received multiple communications from residents regarding rodents as is expected with this time of year.

OTHER BUSINESS/ITEMS NOT REASONABLY ANTICIPATED BY THE BOARD

- Hartmann would like to dive deeper into social/racial determinants of health.

SCHEDULING OF NEXT BOARD OF HEALTH MEETING

The next meeting has been scheduled for June 1, 2021. All Board members are in agreement.

ADJOURN

Meeting adjourned at 7:09 pm.