

Board of Health Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, May 4, 2022
Virtual Meeting

BOARD OF HEALTH MEMBERS PRESENT

Marianne Hartmann, Peter Sheckman

MEMBERS ABSENT

Emily Cilley

OTHER TOWN OFFICIALS PRESENT

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

OPEN MEETING

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

REVIEW/APPROVE MINUTES OF PRIOR MEETINGS

- The Board did not approve any prior minutes at this meeting.

COVID-19 UPDATE

- Neia gave a presentation on Covid-19 updates.
- There have been 182 new lab confirmed cases since the Board of Health's last meeting. Neia reminded attendees that this number does not include home-tests or probable cases. Marianne asked if there is any method to determine the "true burden" in the community based on lab-confirmed case numbers. Neia said she does not know of any such ratio.
- Marianne suggested that those who have tested positive on a home-test and have future plans to travel should seek a PCR test as having lab-confirmed and dated results may be of benefit to them as people can continue to test positive for a period following infection.
- Incidence rate in Swampscott is 40.9. This is an increase. The 7-day average positivity rate in Massachusetts is over 5%.
- There is a new BA.2 sub-variant that is growing about 25% faster than its parent virus, BA.2. BA.2 still continues to be the dominant variant.
- The CDC has guidance on groups who are eligible for a second booster dose.
- The Board of Health has held two Booster Dose clinics in the past two weeks.
- The FDA has announced a tentative Advisory Committee meetings scheduled for June to discuss updates to the Moderna and Pfizer-BioNTech EUAs for their COVID-19 vaccines to include younger populations and whether the SARS-CoV-2 strain

composition of COVID-19 vaccines should be modified, and if so, which strain(s) should be selected for Fall 2022.

- Rapid antigen (at-home) tests are now covered by insurance, as required by the federal government. Medicare is now covering tests as well, an update from last meeting.
- Masks are no longer required on public transportation or airports in Massachusetts.
- Masks are still required in healthcare facilities, congregate care facilities, correctional facilities, and human service transportation vehicles.

DISCUSSION WITH TOWN MODERATOR TO DISCUSS TOWN MEETING

- No significant changes have occurred since the last meeting. There was nothing to discuss.

DISCUSSION ABOUT OPT-OUT OF MGL C.252 – AERIAL SPRAYING

- Jeff stated that the Town may opt-out of aerial spraying for one year.
- Jeff provided a review of what EEE (Eastern Equine Encephalitis) is. EEE – a rare and serious disease caused by a virus spread through the bite of a mosquito. There is currently no vaccine.
- Mosquitos carrying EEE are incredibly rare in Swampscott due to the environment. 110 cases have occurred in MA. Outbreaks have historically occurred every 10-15 years and the most recent outbreak was in 2019.
- Opt-out requirements:
 - Review of the historic regional risk level classification
 - Provide the Energy and Environment Board of an alternative mosquito management plan
 - A copy of a certified vote that includes the date and time of a public meeting, confirmation that a public comment was allowed, indication that the Town is opting out of all spraying, acknowledgement that the vote will only be considered if all documentation is submitted before the due date, which is May 27.
- Dr. Sheckman stated that mosquitos most commonly contract EEE from horses and that the reason that Swampscott does not have an environment conducive to EEE positive mosquitoes is because Swampscott also does not have a large horse population.
- Jeff stated that he would like the Mosquito Board to attend the next Board of Health meeting.

HEALTH DIRECTOR REPORT

- June 15, 2022 will be the next hazardous waste collection event.
- The Town has a new pilot program for the recycling of boat shrink-wrap. 50 kits will be available for boat owners in Swampscott for free and kits will be enough for a 30 foot boat. Kits include a large plastic bag, directions, and a zip tie They became available beginning today at Town Hall. Once a boat owner is finished with the wrap, they can bring it to the DPW yard.

OTHER BUSINESS/ITEMS NOT REASONABLY ANTICIPATED BY THE BOH

- A resident asked if there is any chance Town Meeting will be virtual instead of in person. Marianne stated that as we are no longer in a state of emergency, we are using a room with a capacity for 800 participants to host 250-300 people, that masks will be allowed,

and that most other towns are holding in person Town Meetings, she does not expect that Town Meeting will be virtual. Dr. Sheckman agreed.

- Marianne asked if the Town has a way to provide education and recommendations to residents regarding dealing with rodents without the use of pesticides. Jeff stated that there is information available on the Town website under the Health Department page. Jeff stated that the Health Department also has mailers that are sent to residents in areas of high impact.
- Jeff provided a reminder of things that attract rodents: trash, bird feeders, construction, lifted sheds, etc.

SCHEDULING OF NEXT BOARD OF HEALTH MEETING

- The next Board of Health meeting has been scheduled for June 2, 2022 at 6 PM.

ADJOURN

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

The meeting adjourned at 6:50 PM.

True Attest,

Brittney Jones