

Board of Health Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, September 21, 2021
Virtual Meeting

BOARD OF HEALTH MEMBERS PRESENT

Marianne Hartmann, Emily Cilley

MEMBERS ABSENT

None

OTHER TOWN OFFICIALS PRESENT

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

The meeting was called to order at 6:08 p.m.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None

REVIEW/APPROVE MINUTES OF PRIOR MEETING

- The Board voted to approve the minutes from the August 17, 2021 Board of Health Meeting. On MOTION by Cilley and SECONDED by Hartmann it was VOTED to accept minutes, Cilley (YES), Hartmann (YES).

COVID-19 UPDATE - INCLUDING TOWN VACCINATION UPDATE

- Neia Illingworth presented a slide of COVID-19 Updates and incidence rates. As of September 21, 2021, there have been 1,321 lab confirmed cases in the town.
- Marianne asked to define "incidence rate". Neia explained that it is the number of cases calculated over 14 days. See website detailing incidence rates for Swampscott and surrounding communities, Massachusetts and the Town of Swampscott are both in the red.
- Neia provided an update from the DESE and MDPH (Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, and the Department of Public Health) pertaining to masking regulations in schools.
- Neia presented a CDC update detailing what we know about the DELTA variant which was first detected in the United States in March 2021 and is currently the most predominant variant of the virus in the US. This variant is more contagious and spreads faster than the early forms of SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19.

- Neia outlined the CDC guidelines for “when you’ve been fully vaccinated”. See details on the town website. She also shared the reopening update which was lifted by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts on May 29, 2021. It is recommended that those who are immune compromised, unvaccinated, or in high transmission areas continue to wear a face covering to protect themselves and others. Face coverings are still mandatory for all individuals who use public and private transportation including rideshares, livery, taxi, ferries and MBTA facilities and in all healthcare facilities. Governor Baker ended the State of Emergency on June 15, 2021.
- Emily inquired as to whether the vaccines have been tailored to include the DELTA variant. Neia addressed this stating there is currently no vaccine for the DELTA variant. The booster will be comprised of the original COVID strain but may be tailored for DELTA at some point.
- Marianne inquired about vaccination for children. Neia stated that the Pfizer vaccine will be available for children 5-11 by the end of October of this year and that the J&J and Moderna vaccines are not yet approved for emergency use. Pfizer is also the only approved vaccine for the third booster shot (noting that the booster and a third dose of vaccine are different). The third shot should only be given to immune compromised individuals and the booster is still under consideration. We are awaiting word on when first responders will be eligible to receive a booster dose.
- Since January 2021, the Swampscott Heath Department has been participating in a regional effort to vaccinate; along with Salem, Beverly, Danvers, and the Marblehead Health Departments to offer vaccines to those eligible at the regional vaccination site located at Salem State University’s O’Keefe Center.
- The percentage of population fully vaccinated in Swampscott is as follows: 83% of 12–15-year old’s, 90% of 16–19-year old’s, 88% 20–29-year old’s, 93% of 30–49-year old’s, 88% of 50–64-year old’s, and 92% of 65–74-year old’s (see data on website).

MASK MANDATE – TOWN OF SWAMPSCOTT

- As of Monday, August 9, 2021, masks will be required in all municipal buildings regardless of vaccination status. This includes Town Hall, Library, Senior Center, Department of Public Works, Police and Fire Stations.
- On August 17, 2021, the Swampscott Board of Heath voted to make a recommendation to the Swampscott Public School District recommending face coverings be worn indoors for all students, teachers, and staff regardless of vaccination status for grades Pre-K through grade 12, and on August 24, 2021, Education Commissioner, Jeffrey C. Riley, was granted authority to mandate masks for all public K-12 students and staff though October 1, 2021, to ensure schools fully reopen safely.

EXPANDING MASK MANDATE BEYOND TOWN BUILDINGS DISCUSSION

BOH APPOINTEE UPDATE

- Marianne mentioned that there have been five candidates that have submitted resumes to fill the vacancy with the Board of Health. She is putting together a panel to interview the candidates. This panel will include herself, Jeff, and a liaison for the select board.

The panel will make a recommendation to the Town Administrator who will make the final decision. Marianne will send the resumes to Emily for her review.

HEALTH DIRECTOR REPORT

- Jeff Vaughan gave an update of Mosquito control in the Town. They have hired a mosquito control group to drop tablets in storm drains to deter mosquitos. They have also trapped mosquitos in which one mosquito tested positive for West Nile and a week later had another mosquito test positive for West Nile. Jeff mentioned that once the temperature reaches 32 degrees or 27 degrees Fahrenheit the mosquito population will begin to diminish. Also, he mentioned that as of September 18, 2021, 120 mosquitos out of 7, 804 mosquitos tested positive for West Nile Virus and 0 tested positive for Triple E and that seven humans tested positive for West Nile virus north and west of 128.
- Jeff mentioned the rodent problems that have been plaguing the town and the entire north shore area stating that this is the worst he has seen it in his 20 plus years of service. Marianne asked why the situation is so bad, Jeff seems to think it could be a three-year cycle or something similar. The following is very important in the elimination of this rodent problem. Keeping Trash stored in rodent proof containers and keeping lids tightly secured. Keeping debris from bird feeders off the ground and removing dead vegetation from gardens.

OTHER BUSINESS/ITEMS NOT REASONABLY ANTICIPATED BY THE BOH

- Marianne suggested that the Board of Health meet with the Select Board to discuss a town-wide mask mandate. Emily mentioned that perhaps a mandate will help businesses set masking guidelines, making it easier for them to enforce a face covering policy.
- Emily inquired as to who was responsible for power washing the sidewalks in relation to businesses (mainly Humphrey St.) noting that the sidewalks in these areas are a mess with spilled and stuck on debris. Jeff mentioned that he will send a letter to the businesses making them aware of their responsibility to keep the sidewalks in front of their businesses clean. Emily did make note that the trash barrels in these public areas are being emptied regularly and are no longer overflowing onto the sidewalk and street.
- Marianne would like to give a big shout out and thank you to our ACO, Dan Proulx, who will no longer be the Animal Control Officer for the Town of Swampscott. She and Emily wish him the best of luck in his new endeavors. And appreciate all that he has done for the town.

SCHEDULE NEXT MEETING DATE

The next meeting has been scheduled for Wednesday, October 20, 2021. All Board Members are in agreement.

ADJOURN

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

Meeting adjourned at 7:18 p.m.

True Attest,

Diane E. Folan, Administrative Assistant