

Sudbury Board of Health

Virtual Meeting COVID-19 May 5, 2020

Attendees Carol Bradford – Board Chair, Susan Sama – Board Member, Linda Huet-Clayton – Board Member, Bill Murphy – Health Director, Phyllis Schilp – Health Nurse, Bethany Hadvab – Social Worker, Beth Porter – Admin, Scott Nix – Police Chief, Janie Dretler – Select Board Member, Jennifer Roberts – Select Board Member, Kay Bell – Commission on Disability, Ellie Gottlieb – Sudbury Resident

4:02 Carol Bradford called Meeting to Order.

Phyllis Schilp – Sudbury Public Health Nurse – COVID-19 Update:

Review of Sudbury Cases: 21 New cases (most in Long Term Care facilities). There have been 7 deaths in total. Each LTC facility has had at least one death. Residents and staff at these facilities have tested positive.

Long Term Care: Some of the ongoing issues that contribute to the spread of COVID in these facilities are lack of PPE, limited staffing, inability to social distance due to structural limitations. Sudbury Health Department has been working with these facilities to supply them with PPE and resources. MEMA has been helpful in giving some supplies to the Health Department.

Symptomatic Positive cases are to remain in isolation for 10 days. CDC increased length from 7 days to 10 days. There were findings that cases were still shedding after the 7 day isolation period.

CDC is expecting a spike in COVID Positive cases by the beginning of June.

Increase in illness amongst children. Symptoms include swelling of the organs.

CTC - Community Tracing Collaborative: Has been having problems with roll out. The question is to wait until all of the problems have been worked out before using them? Other Health Departments have had the same concerns.

Staffing Nurses: Sudbury School Nurses have been instrumental in helping with contact tracing and the department will only have use of their services for another 6 weeks. At this point CTC will be a crucial resource.

Flu Clinic: Purchasing supplies, by projecting turnout, for the Flu Clinic is costly and difficult. There are many outstanding issues and questions that will not be understood, with clarity, until we get thru the summer months.

Bethany Hadvab – Sudbury Social Worker – COVID-19 Update:

Staffing Needs: Concerns that even with staffing, with the expected influx of Resident's Needs, will impact the efficacy of the Social Workers office dramatically. Burnout is a concern. Also, if interns are working remotely the opportunities to teach are not as frequent or effective.

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Office Space: With the limited amount of office space it will be difficult to work with and train interns while adhering to COVID-19 safety measures. Social Distancing and the health of everyone is a concern.

Ms. Hadvab has had 483 Case Management Contacts since the onset of COVID. 18 cases were addressed last Friday. Domestic Violence, Elderly food insecurity, Elderly support, no daycare, mental health, unemployment and overall financial needs are the most prevalent issues.

Neighbor Brigade: Will see a decline in volunteers as people return to work. More residents in need will require the assistance of this organization and it will potentially be under staffed.

Two Major contributing organizations will (very Soon) no longer be serving Sudbury.

Scott Nix – Sudbury Police Chief:

Contact Tracing: Offered the use of his medics to help with contact tracing.

Bill Murphy – Health Director COVID-19 Update:

Staffing: Mr. Murphy has pointed out that covering Septics, Wells, Food Establishments, updating and writing orders, regulations and enforcements has become overwhelming during the pandemic. Because buildings are closed the use of Tax Work-off workers, who were helpful in filing and doing small projects, are no longer able to do these jobs.

Contractors: As a result of the Pandemic, re-allocating contracted resources to cover basic needs of the department and community is paramount. Bob Landry has been doing multiple jobs throughout the community. School Nurses have been working with the Health Department for Contact tracing. Would it be possible for the nurses to volunteer their time or be compensated by the municipality to continue their work beyond the original closing date of schools?

CTC: As it functions now, negates the efficacy of mitigating COVID-19. Contact with positive patients are not made until days later, giving positive patients the opportunity to unknowingly spread infection. It is difficult to rely on this agency until these problems have been addressed.

Re-Opening Advisory Board has been instituted by Gov. Baker. The Board will outline a roll out of how we will re-open schools, parks, businesses, restaurants, beaches etc... Mr. Murphy thinks that the town should have a similar board/task force that will oversee the opening of the schools and other locally based entities. This will help to ensure that protective precautions are adhered to and that the town has the resources and supplies required for a successful, risk free reopening.

PPE: Supplies continue to trickle in. Costs continue to rise due to demand. The health Department has been helping to supply LTC and other health agencies with PPE, but it is increasingly more difficult to replenish PPE supplies that the department should have on hand.

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Budget: All of the above mentioned, bring us back to budgeting. The Health Department will outline short term and long term needs, and the costs associated with running the department during a pandemic and in general (outside pandemic related costs)

Face Coverings Mandate: Since publishing the mandate the Health Department has received spirited feedback. Some residents would like outdoor face covering mandated. Many residents do not understand that there are people from other towns, who are shopping at Sudbury establishments, that are not aware of the mandate. Also there are jobs where wearing a face cover would be a hazard (working the grill at a restaurant). Other people may have respiratory problems where face coverings would pose difficulties with breathing. There was one establishment that was not following directives. The Health Department issued a Cease and Desist Order. Having a police presence is supportive to this effort.

Beth Klein – Sudbury Town Clerk – Update on Elections:

Elections: State and Federal Statutes on elections make it difficult to work around COVID-19 obstacles. The most prevalent problems:

- Low number of Volunteers. Most people who volunteer are elderly – highest risk demographic.
- Social Distancing – where to set up the polls to afford more space. Covering for bad weather.
- PPE – Enforcement of voters and workers. Who supplies PPE?
- Residents with Disabilities: Polls need Handicap accessible locations. Some disabled residents need to go to the polls to vote. They cannot vote by absentee ballot.

Mail in Ballots/Absentee Voting: Ms. Klein believes that if COVID-19 persists, that many will choose to vote by Mail-in or Absentee Ballot. If a large percentage of the Sudbury residents choose to vote in this manner, it will help to negate the risk. The process would include an application being mailed to the home.

Suggestions: **ROBO** call to residents asking if they would like to be sent an application for Mail-in/Absentee ballots. If a return date is put on the ballots, it will ensure that ballots will be mailed back in a timely manner. **June 23rd** for an election date affords time to see what COVID will look like. **Research** what other communities are doing for elections.

In order to make inform decisions about Town Meeting and Elections, the town will need to analyze the progression of COVID-19 (additional waves of infection?), the State's Re-Opening strategy and learn more in general about the Virus.

Once more is known about COVID-19, the state roll out to re-opening and the likelihood of another wave of infection, we will have the ability to make more informed, safe decisions about how to proceed with meetings and elections.

Meeting Adjourned: 5:29