

Sudbury Board of Health

Virtual Meeting April 21, 2020

Attendance: Carol Bradford – Board Chair, Linda Huet-Clayton – Board Member, Susan Sama – Board Member, Bill Murphy – Health Director, Phyllis Schilp – Health Nurse, Bethany Hadvab – Social Worker, Beth Porter – Health Admin., Scott Nix – Police Chief, Janie Dretler – Select Board Member, Jen Roberts – Select Board Member, Kay Bell – Sudbury Resident.

4:01 PM – Carol Bradford called meeting to order.

Phyllis Schilp – Public Health Nurse COVID-19 Updates:

Number of COVID-19 positive cases lowered in the past week. Ms. Schilp said that these numbers are not representative of a trend. Multiple days of decreasing positive cases will indicate an official downward trend. The curve does appear to be flattening.

Largest increase of COVID-19 cases have come from long term care facilities in town. Both health care workers and patients have tested positive. These communities are hardest hit because social distancing and isolation and quarantining are difficult. Staffing with part time employees also appears to be an issue.

Contact Tracing: Ms. Schilp has been working with 2 contracted nurses and 9 school nurses. She is thankful that she has had a competent nursing staff assisting her with this monumental task.

Contact Tracing Collaborative (CTC) Program is projected to be rolling out next week. It is a program run by a Partners- in Health that takes a multi-faceted approach to contact tracing of infectious diseases. The Governor initiated this privatized effort to assist cities and towns.

Camps: It is unsure whether Governor Baker will allow camps to convene this summer. It was announced today that suspension of schools, preschools and daycares will remain in effect to the end of the school year. This may weigh heavily in factoring the cancellation of summer camps.

Bethany Hadvab – Social Worker COVID-19 Update:

Ms. Hadvab reported residents/seniors are not using available resources. Residents are vulnerable to isolation, lack of medication and supplies.

Many volunteers will be returning to work and school leaving the volunteer base diminished. Volunteers will be needed during this critical time of transition back to re-opening.

Donations: \$21,000.00 has been raised in gift cards to local food establishments to be given to residents in need.

Neighbor Brigade is a volunteer-based organization that has been instrumental in servicing the needs of Sudbury residents by delivering thermometers and goods to those who are homebound.

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Interns: In going thru the process of interviewing for interns, Ms. Hadvab is speculating about the challenges of working with students remotely and how effective it will be. She is assessing these issues in attempts to maintain this important staffing infrastructure.

Mitch Sanborn: Senior Outreach Specialist has been working with the highest at-risk residents. These residents have disabilities and or do not meet eligibility requirements to secure other resources.

Scott Nix – Chief of Police COVID-19 Update:

Increase in Calls: Chief Nix has noticed an increase in domestic incidents, mental health and substance abuse and attributes these behaviors to Shelter-in-Place which can exacerbate unrest. Resources that are normally readily available are becoming increasingly difficult to reach.

Safety of Officers: Chief Nix is concerned for the safety of his officers when going on calls. Aside from exposure to COVID-19, he is concerned that in this atmosphere his staff can also be susceptible to depression and other mental health issues.

Bill Murphy – Health Director COVID-19 Update:

Face Coverings: Mr. Murphy is struggling with the issue of mandating face coverings. Some issues include the difficulties of enforcement, lack of clear science on effectiveness, managing resident feedback and lack of PPE. Mr. Murphy advises waiting to see if the Governor would act Statewide. It was recommended to take the issue under advisement at least for one more week. Grocery stores have reported estimated 90% compliance with face covering advisory. Bob Landry continues to inspect.

Schools/Camps: Governor Baker Suspended schools, preschools and daycares to the end of the school year. Decisions about whether camps will open will follow soon. It is best to prepare in the event camps are allowed.

Antibody Testing: Mr. Murphy addressed the public's interest in antibody testing. Susan Sama indicated that the presence of antibodies may not equal short term or long-term immunity. Sama advised Board not to make assumptions and assess the science moving forward to base policy decisions.

COVID-19 Testing: Board discussed COVID testing including false positives and negatives. Nasopharyngeal swab tests are done more deliberately and the results seem more accurate. Two tests are a better indicator of the absence of COVID-19.

Town Offices/Events: Re- Opening of town offices and events will need to be planned:

- Outfitting offices with plexi-glass windows
- Billing and payments made online
- Certain buildings open at different times.

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- Minimize staffing
- Senior Center/Community Center may open later because of lack of ability to social distance and vulnerable population.

Mr. Murphy will continue to advise the Board regarding reopening after advisement from Governors office

Town Meeting: June dates are being looked at, but it may be too early for a congregation of that size. Other possibilities need to be explored.

EEE: Larvicide spraying may begin this week based on weather. Notification was posted on the town website. Preventative posters and pamphlets for EEE and Lyme have been set up at the head of the Sudbury trails. There will be announcements posted online by the end of the month.

Vote to adjourn meeting. Motion to adjourn meeting made by Carol Bradford Board Chair, Motion seconded by Linda Huet-Clayton. Motion passed 3-0-0.

Meeting adjourned at 5:22 PM