

Sudbury Board of Health

Virtual Meeting Minutes 5/19/2020

Attendees: Carol Bradford - Board Chair, Linda Huet-Clayton - Board Member, Susan Sama – Board Member, Bill Murphy – Health Director, Phyllis Schilp – Public Health Nurse, Bethany Hadvab – Social Worker, Beth Porter – Admin. Scott Nix – Police Chief, Jayne Dretler – Select Board, Jennifer Roberts – Select Board, Charles Russo – 30 Juniper Rd, Kay Bell – 348 Old Lancaster Rd, Ellie Gottlieb – Resident, Scott Smigler – 125 Plympton Rd

Meeting is called to order 4:03 PM

Phyllis Schilp: Public Health Nurse COVID-19 Update:

Deaths: 8 this week (Residents of Long-Term Care Facilities). 24 in total. **Confirmed in total** = 172 cases. **Probable cases this week** = 31. Contacts = 95. There have been 24 LTC facility deaths to date.

Long Term Care Facilities: Phyllis is seeing a decline in symptomatic residents in the homes. If another round of testing is done this could change her outlook. Residents who are symptomatic are sent to an isolation area within the home or to the hospital. There have already been several rounds of testing in many of the LTC facilities. Susan Sama warned that COVID will spread regardless of procedural mitigation.

Testing: Antibody positive test means that you need to get a negative Nasal Swab to ensure that you are not spreading the virus and can resume activities. If test results show high levels of the antibody resistance to the virus would be higher. If testing shows lower levels of the antibody, there is an elevated likelihood of contracting the virus. We do not have the number of all Sudbury residents that have been tested. We only have the information on those residents that have come back positive, and those who are presumptive positive. Negatives, unless ordered by this department, are not reported to us. Phyllis will try to get the totals of all residents tested.

Testing sites are rolling out in more locations. The more information that we have the more we may understand the virus.

COVID Test Positives Returning to Work: Individuals that have tested positive and have isolated and quarantined (no longer contagious) for the mandated period of time will need to be cleared to go back to work by local Health Departments. Phyllis has drafted a standard letter that will clear patients for going back to work. There needs to be clear and concise guidelines in order to finalize this letter.

CTC: Community Tracing Collaborative – the 8 cases that were remanded to the CTC and were returned to us for wrap up.

Children (limited percentage): 6 weeks after being diagnosed with COVID, some Children are experiencing inflammation of the organs. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is now calling this emerging syndrome “multi-system inflammatory syndrome in children (MIS-C).” More information on this condition is posted on the Sudbury Health Website.

<https://sudbury.ma.us/health/2020/05/22/coronavirus/>

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Fall Flu Clinic: Planning, logistically, how we will set up the Flu clinic to limit COVID exposure to both residents and Health Care Personnel will take careful planning. Stocking all necessary PPE may be a problem due to limited supply and cost(s).

Vaccine Revolving Fund: Reimbursement Funds from the 2019 Flu Shots have been coming in. We will be receiving more funds. This will enable the Nursing Department to increase Vaccine Orders for the fall Flu Clinic. The orders will be for the High Dose vaccine.

Camps: Phase 2 will include opening camps, but the guidance is muddled. No specific Guidance docs. It is projected that ratios of campers to counselors, groupings and overall acceptance numbers into the camps will be less in order to accommodate Social Distancing. Mandated face coverings and no contact are expected in guidelines. Webinar for American Camps Assn. 2 sets of requirements that will need to be met. How will camps accommodate campers if social distancing is achieved? PPE? June 8th would be earliest date of opening.

Remaining Vigilant: It is important to point out to all residents that until 70% of the general population has immunity we will not be out of the woods. We are 10% immune to date.

Bethany Hadvab – Town Social Worker – COVID Update:

Rise in Social Work needs: COVID will have a negative **Mental Health impact on 45%** of the population. There will be stress on mental and physical health. **Substance abuse** is increasing and access to resources is becoming limited. Suicide rates are going up. Homelessness is up 45%. Food instability has doubled since March (this is a 35% increase since the onset of COVID). Unemployed will have enough money to get thru the next 3 months. Many people who find themselves severely affected by COVID are challenged with self help resources.

Organizations: Organizations are not shifting their priorities/approach to providing resources to a more hands on, assistance-based entity. Bethany only has the ability to provide residents with resources. She does not have the man power to council residents.

Interns: In this atmosphere it is essential that the interns that are brought into this office must have experience. Schools are in the process of changing internship guidelines based on the new issues associated with COVID. Because of the constraints that COVID issues will present to this office Bethany feels that she will get less productivity out of her interns.

Mental Health: Because COVID related problems have been escalating mental Health issues, it has already taken a toll on mental health programs across the country. Many people are using Emergency Rooms for Mental Health assessments and then they are sent home with referrals that are not readily available (which many people need). There are way too any gaps in this already vulnerable system.

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Food/Housing Insecurity: Jayne Dretler asked “What do these problems look like for a Sudbury Resident and how can the Town help?”. It would not look the same as a more urban location. Outreach is the best way to identify who is in need. Help in paying bills is the best assistance to stabilizing insecurity. Jayne Dretler asked if it would help to post Assistance organizations around town to make those in need and those who can help, more aware.

Bill Murphy – Health Director – COVID/Department Update:

Budget: Henry Hayes (Town Mgr.) Has tasked Mr. Murphy to forecast budgetary needs. There are many difficulties in forecasting the path and needs associated with a pandemic. The immediate needs that must be met are:

Nursing: Staffing, Supplies, Office Space, Training and Electronics. There are most likely many more gaps.

Re-opening: How to handle Compliance, Complaints, PPE supplies and disinfecting public areas.

Needed Manpower – COVID exposed gaps in staffing in the Health Department.

Nurses: the hire of a full-time nurse and part-time nurses will help in contact tracing and disease surveillance.

Social Workers: Ms. Hadvab is looking to interns and we have increased the Senior Outreach worker’s hours.

Inspectional Services: Septic inspections are being handled by Bob Landry (Health Contractor), Shaun McAuliffe is doing food inspections (Health Contractor). The Health Dept. is in need of a Camp inspector. We are in the process of drafting a contract for a Camp consultant.

Schools: Planning for Re-opening schools in the fall will need to be addressed. How will this be done and what will be the procedure if there is an outbreak? COVID positive students would most likely be investigated along the same guidelines as investigating Whooping cough. We will need to give careful consideration to Immune compromised students. Susan Sama announced that Schools Task Force will determine logistics and develop in depth policies. Carol Bradford said that the task force will work in unison with COVID, taking into account what has worked, what has not worked to date and how testing and outbreaks trend.

Jen Roberts asked, who ultimately decides if and when schools re-open? Mr. Murphy feels that it would be a trickle down from federal to state mandates. Schools will open to a new normal set of guidelines. Looking at the COVID trends (as of now) schools will re-open. If there is an uptick in positive cases as we approach the season this will be re-evaluated.

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Schools Continued...

It is important to note that it is critical to keep the contact tracing team (nursing staff) intact in order to efficiently and effectively handle cases as they arise in the schools. Time is of the essence in preventing the spread of COVID-19.

Other:

Kay Bell: Asked how temperature checks work in mitigating the spread of COVID? 100.4 degrees triggers an employee/patient being sent home, isolated and sent to an appointment for testing. Some establishments have set a lower threshold of degrees. They are also looking for other COVID related symptoms that may trigger the above-mentioned procedural steps. Doctor's and Dentist's offices are more apt to use thermometers as there is higher risk when there is direct contact with patients.

Scott Smigler: Does the Board of Health have the authority to shut schools down pre-emptively? The Board's response was that it is their job to keep the residents safe. Scott sees issues with the schools having to open and close based on COVID forecasts. Mr. Murphy said that this could possibly be the "new normal".

Ellie Gottlieb: Kids and young adults have been least impacted by COVID. Ellie asked how will kids, who will congregate (without Social Distancing and face coverings) going to be handled? Mr. Murphy asked Ellie "What would be the best way to communicate to kids and parents?". Would Social Media prove to be an important tool? We have asked Ellie for her input and if she would be willing to get back to us on the subject (as she is a teenager herself).

VOTE: to approve and post BoH Meeting Minutes from 5/12/2020 as written. Motion to pass made by Chair Carol Bradford, Seconded by Linda Huet-Clayton. Motion passed 3-0-0.

Meeting adjourned at 5:28 PM.