

Sudbury Board of Health Virtual Meeting

January 12, 2021

Meeting called to order at 4:05 PM

Public Comment: None

Phyllis Schillp- Public Health Nurse Update:

COVID Vaccine Update: Sudbury Long Term Care Facilities will be completing first round of COVID Vaccine immunizations. Second round will commence shortly. First responders are beginning first round of COVID immunizations this week.

COVID Immunization Clinic Collaborative: Sudbury is taking part in a collaborative multi-community clinic Thursday January 14th, Friday January 15th and Saturday January 16th. All first responders for the town participating in the clinic will receive their first COVID vaccine dose. Concord has taken the lead in storing and running the clinic. Sudbury will contribute by supplying nursing and clinic staff.

Hospitals and Private Health Care Providers: will be collaborating in order to inoculate more Massachusetts residents without the need to travel to vaccination Sites.

COVID Mutations: A new strain of the virus has been encountered in Europe and the US. This version is believed to be more volatile and easier to transmit. Even after many US citizens have been inoculated there will continue to be a need to take low risk COVID precautions (washing hands, masks and social distancing).

Cases in Sudbury: Sudbury has remained a yellow community, remaining slightly under the critical line of infection. 2020 End of Year Reports: 414 Confirmed Cases, 632 contact and 50 probables. Families, sports, schools and work places continue to generate the highest numbers of positives.

Sports: Basketball and hockey gatherings continue to generate increasing infections. Each positive can create upwards of 20 – 25 contacts. Players are becoming exposed 2 to 3 times. Kay Bell asked if sports should be allowed given the huge amount of work that the nurses must output to tract each case? Sama noted that indoor sports tend to have the higher rate of infection, which contribute to clusters. Huet-Clayton asked how the coaches are not considered close contacts? It was noted by Mr. Murphy that if the coaches are maintaining COVID protocol that they could reduce exposure and infection. Sports is being allowed largely for social/emotional wellbeing of the students and a means of activity amongst many COVID restrictions. Mental health issues are more common as restrictions are contributing to isolation causing anxiety and depression .

LSRHS: is continuing to conduct pool testing as a means of identify COVID within the school community. Many cases have been promptly isolated quarantined. Spread within the schools has not been an issue to date.

Sudbury public Schools: Brad Crozier has discussed the possibility of pool testing. Chair, Bradford expressed concern for the number of nurses that would be needed to do contact tracing in order to keep classroom safe. Moving forward, students that are symptomatic will be tested and COVID protocol

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Phyllis Schilp- Public Health Nurse Update Cont.:

will be followed by the school nurses via an account set up at the schools that allows parents to communicate back and forth. Binax tests will be used for suspected positives.

CTC: Community Tracing Collaborative: is slow and inconsistent in contacting families and is causing frustration all around. Bradford declared that the CTC is not caught up to real time.

Nurses: There were 632 hours posted by the full and part-time nurses in November. There were 8 workplace clusters. Sudbury has lost 2 part-time nurses and has taken on two new part-time nurses, one who is already trained and certified and one who is currently training. Phyllis thanked and praised all of the school nurses that have contributed during COVID.

Phyllis Schilp: The Sudbury Public Health Nurse has taken a position at the Massachusetts Department of Public Health and will begin January 24th. Phyllis will be missed and has brought many new programs enjoyed by many residents to Sudbury during her tenure here. She will be sorely missed by all. Pat Moran will be stepping in as Public Health Nurse. Mr. Murphy is in the process of filling this position.

Bethany Hadvab-Social Worker Update:

Needs Increase During COVID: Day Cares have been closing for quarantine purposes for weeks at a time. This leaves financially vulnerable residents devastated by causing joblessness. This has been an ongoing problem throughout the pandemic.

Household Income: Many residents are several months behind with payments to landlords, insurers, credit, media... For those who are getting assistance(unemployment), households of 2 or more people are surviving in as little as \$1,000.00 per month. Many households are losing internet or phone services or both. This makes communicating with those who present the most need nearly impossible.

Connecting with Those in Need: The loss of internet and phone services pose the biggest obstacle to getting funds and services to those in need. Getting food or gift cards to people who are cut off from conventional forms of communication causes frustration from both the recipient and those who wish to help. Many attempts will be made to connect with those in need.

Processing Paperwork to obtain services: Stress has crippled those who need to assemble large amounts of paperwork that is required with the submittal of applications from resources that can supply financial and need based assistance. Volunteers cannot be used because of COVID constraints and they are not vetted or trained as case workers.

Food: Many restaurants and supermarkets have stepped up and are offering gift cards and food to those in need.

Health Intern: Bethany will be getting an intern to assist with website editing. Updating program links requires attention. Ms. Hadvab would like the intern to work in the Health office on tasks that can be delegated with no contact and no training.

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Bethany Hadvab – Social Worker Update Cont.:

COVID: Ms. Hadvab expressed concerns that those who currently have limited access to social media may be at a disadvantage of getting COVID vaccines and being aware of programs that exist in the community. She is exploring ways to ensure social and ethnic equity.

Bill Murphy – Health Director Update:

Hiring of New Public Health Nurse: There are many challenges with hiring for this position. Lower pay scale will attract a lesser qualified or lesser ambitious candidate. Mr. Murphy will review and revise the job description to current duties. One example would be Emergency Shelters. Shelters should be financed by the town and not run by volunteers. This would take some of the burden off of this position. The pandemic has spotlighted the important roles that Public Health nurses play in the community. Sama would like to see this position filled as quickly as possible. Bradford and Huet-Clayton asked Mr. Murphy about the benefits of waiting to fill the position until after the public health crisis. The collective decision was made to proceed with filling the position.

COVID Vaccine: What is the Health Department's role in vaccinating? How do we estimate the amount of vaccine to commit to? How soon will CVS, PCP's and Hospitals start the process of vaccinating, taking the burden off of the town? Staffing for an extended period of time is the largest challenge.

School nurses: Are being bombarded with calls from parents for guidance and clearance for students to return to school. Mr. Murphy asked the Board to appoint school nurses as Health Agents so that they have the ability to make the final decision and expedite the process.

VOTE: Sama Motioned to appoint Sudbury School Nurses to be Health Agents to the Sudbury Board of Health, Bradford seconded the motion. Motion passed 3-0-0.

Revolving Vaccine Account: In Fiscal year 2021 the Board of Health authorized use of \$30,000.00 from the fund for Flu Vaccine and supplies. Mr. Murphy would like to increase the allowable maximum to \$40,000.00 based on the probability that the Health Department will be doing COVID and Flu vaccines in fiscal year 2022.

VOTE: Huet-Clayton motioned to increase Revolving Vaccine Fund allowance to \$40,000.00 for fiscal year 2022 in order to purchase FLU and COVID Vaccines and supplies of which \$3500 could be used for tobacco control. Bradford seconded the motion. Motion passed 3-0-0.

VOTE: Bradford motioned to allow Mr. Murphy to sign the warrant on the Boards behalf. Huet-Clayton seconded the motion. Motion passed 3-0-0.

Budget: The Health Department budget has been submitted. Forecasting 2022 budget needs is difficult as we continue in the State of Emergency. COVID infection will continue to fluctuate. Moving into fiscal year 2022, it is suggested that this budget account for additional nursing hours. Mr. Murphy is working with the Finance Dept. for that nursing support.

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Bill Murphy – Health Director Update Cont.:

Tobacco: Sudbury Farms has forfeited their tobacco permit leaving 9 left. Sperry's liquors closed reducing the number of available permits to 8.

Health Inspector: Mr. Murphy will put interviewing Health Inspectors on hold until the Public Health Nursing position has been filled. The Department will continue to use the services of Contractor, Bob Landry.

Rotation of Board of Health Chair and Vice Chair: Many Boards of Health rotate the positions of Chair and Vice Chair to alleviate the responsibility of falling on one member. Mr. Murphy asked if the board was interesting in instating such a rotation? Sama would like a description of responsibilities drafted. Sama believes that the Chair should be accessible and available to the Health Department, other Boards and committees, and residents. Huet-Clayton asked if it is a burden to the individual who is constantly in the Chair's position? Sama would like to table the discussion until the next election.

VOTE: Sama motioned to table the discussion of rotating the positions of Board Chair and Vice Chair until post-election. Bradford seconded the motion. Motion passed 3-0-0.

Farewell to Phyllis Schilp: Mr. Murphy, The Board and all in attendance thanked Phyllis for her hard work and years of service. She built/created many clinics and programs. She will be missed. We all wish her the best of luck in her future endeavors!

Meeting Adjourned at 5:35 PM