

Sudbury Board of Health

Virtual Meeting December 7th 2021

Attendees: Carol Bradford – BoH Chair, Linda Huet-Clayton – BoH Member, Susan Sama BoH Member, Bill Murphy – Health Director, Patty Moran – Health Nurse, Robert Lazo – Health Inspector, Beth Porter – Health Admin, Jen Roberts – Select Board Liaison, Janie Dretler – Select Board Liaison, Kay Bell – Council on Disabilities, Robert May – Resident, Stephanie Lombardi – Resident, Scott Lombardi – Resident, Len Simon – Resident

Meeting called to order at 4:06 PM

Open Comment: Kay Bell Council on Disabilities thanked Patty Moran for her COVID protocol guidance for a singing group and for assisting with a hybrid meeting where Kay used town space.

Patty Moran- Public Health Nurse – Update:

COVID Positivity Rates: COVID cases numbers increased due to post Thanksgiving surge. There were 99 confirmed and probable cases. Cases are climbing in the unvaccinated sector. 20 of the 99 cases were ages 10 and under. Parents are notifying the schools with positive home tests. Home tests results do not show up in MAVEN. Sama thanked the parents for staying at home and alerting the schools.

Contact Tracing: The State has redefined COVID contact tracing protocol. The PH nurses have been doing contact tracing for 22 months with strict aggressive tracing. There is a general understanding that this model is not sustainable. As more are vaccinated and symptoms and hospitalizations subside, contact tracing will eventually be a less effective mitigation strategy. The responsibility for contact notification will be shifted to the infected. If people are uncomfortable reaching out to those they may have infected, or if there is a major outbreak, nurses will step in to contact trace. Education and support will be the main roles. Sama noted that mitigation is essential until more people were fully vaccinated. Patty would like to keep contact tracing until we know the impact of Omicron and the numbers that come in post holidays.

Sports/Events: it has been established that sports and events are significant sources of infection.

Vaccinations: The schools have held COVID vaccinations clinics through State resources. 60% of SPS kids are now vaccinated. The overall vaccination rate in Sudbury is 90%. The state Vaccination rate is 82%.

Omicron Variant: Massachusetts has identified the first cases of Omicron. Patty is impressed with the global response to the variant and the quick detection of the new strain. Vaccines may not be as effective at preventing Omicron. We are starting to see an uptick in break-thru cases. Because of the rate of Omicron spread, it is important to remain vigilant by continuing to wear masks, wash hands and quarantine/isolate and test at the first sign of symptoms.

Schools and Businesses: Patty thanked the schools, preschools, daycares and businesses for contacting the Health Department with outbreaks in order to seek guidance.

Transitioning of Protocol: Trending graphs have shown COVID may be seasonal. Bill Murphy would like to align protocol with the projected COVID surges. The rises and falls will prompt changes in protocol, like mask wearing, contact tracing, isolation and quarantining. At home testing will need to be self-managed.

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Testing: Home testing is a good way to see if you are positive. A positive home test should be followed up with a PCR test. Susan Sama asked if the Health Department could procure home tests? Bill Murphy will look into it.

Masks: Stephanie Lombardi noted that Massachusetts schools are slated to lift the mask mandate January 15th 2022. She feels that this date is arbitrary, with no logic tied to the decision. She feels that there is political grandstanding with no positive effects. Bill Murphy stated that Sudbury is still in a high-risk area and that masking indoors remains an effective mitigation strategy. The BoH will continue to reassess.

Health Department Clinics: The Health Department will be holding a total of 3 COVID and Flu Vaccination Clinics in December.

Sewataro: The public has made inquiries about residents using the swimming pond on the property. There are 2 ponds one feeds the swimming pond. MDEP (Mass Dept. Of Environmental Protection) contacted Bill Murphy to discuss the ponds on the property. The swimming pond has a lined, concrete base with a drain. Periodic disinfection with chlorine must be discontinued. The state thinks it should be classified as a bathing beach.. Historically water samples that test for bacteria have been taken post chlorination. Tests will need to be conducted pre-chlorination moving forward. This has raised some concern.

Health Report on Purchase of Sewataro: Bill Murphy reported engineering and water quality studies were recommended at the time of purchase. Moving forward Bill would like to come up with a testing plan. The pond cannot be chlorinated – how does this effect camp usage? If it does not meet water quality standards the pond could be closed. Mr. Murphy is concerned about cyanobacteria (blue/green algae) that has affected other local ponds. This could result in toxic effects on swimmers. Board of Health is responsible for licensing and has regulatory jurisdiction: There will be postings “No Life Guard”. Linda Huet-Clayton asked when testing will begin? Bill would like to start as soon as possible to address any issues or problems they may find. Annual Board of Health testing throughout the season could be upward of \$5,000.00 just for the pond and not the pools.

Sewataro Stakeholders: Conservation Commission. will be walking the property on December 8th 2021 to assess the ponds. The Select Board has not made a decision about whether to open the beach to the public. The current lessee has a contract that will expire end of summer 2022. The Select board is in discussions about the length of the next contract. Questions regarding the pond evaluation and its impact on campers and the environment is critical moving forward.

Robert May – Resident commented that the pond that feeds the beach is spring fed. He would like to see camp continue in order to mitigate costs to the town. Even if the pond cannot be used, the pools could be utilized. The Board could appoint the camp to conduct and pay for water quality testing of the pond and the Health Director will review the results.

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Rob Lazo- Health Inspector Update:

Inspections: Food establishments – Takeout, schools, convenience stores, liquor stores and small retail stores have been inspected. Restaurants will be next priority for food inspections. Septic Inspections continue daily.

Bill Murphy

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Excellence Grant: Some of the funding has been deposited. The part-time PH nurse salaries will be drawn from this fund.

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Metro West Tobacco Control District has hired a new inspector. Michelle Caisapanta will be conducting compliance inspections for the Sudbury. **VOTE:** Susan Sama motioned to appoint Ms. Caisapanta as a tobacco control agent Board of Health. Sama Huet-Clayton seconded. Motion passed 3-0-0.

Minutes Vote: Linda Huet-Clayton motioned to approve BoH Meeting Minutes dated November 16th , as edited. Susan Sama seconded the motion. Motion passed 3-0-0.

Next BoH Meeting will be scheduled for Tuesday, January 11, 2022.

Meeting adjourned 5:18 PM.