

Sudbury Board of Health

Virtual Meeting February 8, 2022

Attendees: Carol Bradford – BoH Chair, Linda Huet-Clayton – BoH Member, Susan Sama – BoH Member, Bill Murphy – Health Director, Patty Moran – Public Health Nurse, Bethany Hadvab – Social Worker, Beth Porter – Health Admin, Kay Bell – Comm on Disabilities, Joe Madden – Resident, Brian ? – Resident, Martino Center – Resident, Stephanie Lombardi – Resident, Richard ? Marlboro Resident, Kristen Drummy – Resident, Dennis Reid – Resident, Jonathan Sullivan – 99 Poplar St. Diana Warren – 32 Old Framingham Rd.

4:00 PM Meeting is called to order.

Public Comment: Kay Bell inquired as to what the metrics were that facilitate changing mandates, advisories and protocol.

Patty Moran – Public Health Nurse Update:

COVID: There was a surge of 880 – 940 positive cases in January. The data can fluctuate on the state website due to duplicate entries. The state is currently in the process of cleaning up the data base. The surge in cases is attributed to families traveling and congregating during the holidays. Some days Patty reported over 100 new positive cases. The majority of positives were from reported PCR tests. Rapid tests are not reported so it is believed that the numbers were much higher. Not all people were called, but cases were triaged by need. Elders had the lowest number of cases. Residents that were not fully vaccinated made up the majority of cases. These cases would be school aged children. School nurses put protocol in place and stepped up to the challenge. Current data reflects a decline in cases.

Contact Tracing: Protocol changed and there is no longer contact tracing.

Home Tests: Many people are home testing and managing illness at home. For unreported cases Patty would like to get messaging out to residents about staying safe and providing the most up to date information for treating illness.

Nurses: Patty and Bill Murphy praised all of the nurses (School and Town) for all of their hard work and perseverance. January had numbers that we have not seen since the onset of COVID.

Positivity Rates: In January Sudbury percentage went as high as 17%. It was a challenge to respond to these numbers. Bill Murphy intoned that we don't have the ability to forecast variants and their impact.

Joe Madden Resident: Asked of the 900+ cases reported in January how many were hospitalized and or deaths? Patty does not get this information for months. This delay in reporting this data is due to the backup in testing and reporting.

Martino Center: Asked about weekly positivity rates. The Town by town data is released every 14 days. Sudbury's last reported positivity rate was 7.7% almost 2 weeks ago.

COVID Mitigation and Protocol: Carol Bradford recapped the COVID events, strategies, mitigation and workload.

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Sudbury Mask Mandate:

Bill Murphy spoke to the vast influx of emails and calls that the Health Department received for and against the mask mandate that the Board instated in September of 2021. Because of the high vaccination rate in town Mr. Murphy proposed to transition from the mask mandate to a mask advisory. For Children ages 4 and under the Advisory would be immediate. Town wide will transition to an advisory on March 7th (one week after school winter vacation).

The Board Members shared their thoughts on the proposal.

Linda Huet-Clayton agreed that the mandate should transition to an advisory and stated that vaccines and home tests are now readily available which should help with mitigating COVID transmission. She noted that we are now seeing the results of Long COVID.

Susan Sama felt that the Mask mandate coincided with the start of school in the fall and the objective was to get kids back to school and to keep them in school. Vaccination rates are high. New variants will continue to present new challenges.

Carol Bradford shared the sentiments of her board members. She added that Omicron amped up the need for masking but cases are now declining.

Public Comment on Mandate

Stephanie Lombardi Sudbury Resident: Would like to see the mandate lifted for all age groups effective immediately.

Richard from Marlboro would like mandate lifted for all and believes that people can decide for themselves whether they feel the need to wear masks.

Kristin Drummy Mossman Rd: thought that lifting the mandate before vacation made sense and reinstating it if numbers went back up.

Dennis Reid 22 Wyman: Wants the mandate lifted for all.

Jonathan Sullivan 39 Poplar St.: His child was sent home from school after testing positive (asymptomatic) he had to take time off from work to care for his child. He feels pool testing should stop.

Diana Warren 32 Old Framingham Rd: Believes that the mask mandate helped to keep seniors safe.

ZOOM CHAT Questions:

Q: Why are asymptomatic children tested in the schools? A: Schools have a high rate of transmission.

Q: Why vaccinate if you can become infected? A: Because vaccinations mitigate hospitalizations and deaths.

Q: Why the date of March 7th to initiate mask advisory? A: After December Vacation the schools yielded record positives. The superintendents felt it was justified to keep the mandate in place until after February vacation.

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VOTE: Carol Bradford Motioned to modify Mask Mandate to a Mask Advisory. Immediate for ages 4 and under. Town wide mandate will become an advisory on Monday March 7th, 2022. Linda Huet-Clayton seconded the motion. Motion passed 3-0-0.

Bill Murphy would like to see residents be sensitive to those around them. Carol Bradford acknowledged the frustration felt by many on both sides of the Mask Mandate.

Grant Funds: Bill Murphy and Bethany Hadvab have been working on establishing expenditures for these funds. They worked with Jen Roberts and Janie Dretler. The Select Board allocated \$50,000.00 of ARPA Funds and \$50,000 of MetroWest Foundation Funds for test kits. Bill would like to distribute the test kits to Sudbury Housing, Elderly, Employees etc. The first installment will enable the Health Department to purchase a large quantity of kits from Marlboro. The BoH approves of this plan.

Bethany Hadvab – Social Worker Update:

Interns: Helped with ARPA Proposal.

Case Load: There has been a steady increase in cases from 2019 to present. Bethany has been triaging calls. January 2022 proved to be a high volume month. To cover the demand Bethany has added interns to cover calls, provide support and references. She has empowered organizations in the community to provide services to those in need. The office and Hope Sudbury distributed \$5,000.00 to residents with emergency and basic needs just in January. \$20,000.00 was been dispersed in 2021. 24 Hope Sudbury Applications were processed. \$22,000.00 has been distributed to residents for rent and utilities.

Housing Trust: Bethany worked in conjunction with the Sudbury Housing Trust to release funds. 64 applications were processed and \$155,000.00 was added to the \$75,000.00 that the state provided to the housing insecure residents of Sudbury.

Bill Murphy – Health Director Update:

Nurses: Bill thanked all of the nurses for their tireless work and dedication. They did a tremendous job in keeping up with the enormous workload presented to them in January and throughout the pandemic.

View Permit: The Health Department is in the process of working with IT to get permitting for Food Establishments, Septic Haulers, Septic Installers, Trash Haulers etc. on line. Progress is being made.

Shared Services Grant: The Health Department has hired a grant coordinator, Kelly Calo. She will start her position in April. The Health Department is in the process of setting her up with IT Equipment.

Approval of Documents: There are no Minutes to approve this month. Town report needs Board member's signatures. The Health portion of the town report needs to reflect not only the impact of COVID on the town and Health Dept. but it needs to reflect the enormous amount of work that increased in our department because of home sales, improvements and repairs. 100% of Sudbury properties are on a septic.

Motion to adjourn meeting made by Carol Bradford. Motion Seconded by Susan Sama. Motion Passed 3-0-0.

5:30 PM Meeting adjourned.

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