

Board of Health Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, February 1, 2023
Virtual Meeting

BOARD OF HEALTH MEMBERS PRESENT

Marianne Hartmann, Emily Cilley, Dr. Peter Sheckman

MEMBERS ABSENT

None

OTHER TOWN OFFICIALS PRESENT

Jeffrey Vaughan, Director of Public Health; Neia Illingworth, Public Health Nurse

OPEN MEETING

- The meeting was called to order at 6:03 PM.

REVIEW/APPROVE MINUTES OF PRIOR MEETINGS

- On MOTION by Cilley and SECONDED by Hartmann, the Board of Health voted to approve prior meeting minutes from May 20, 2020, May 27, 2020, June 3, 2020, June 17, 2020, June 24, 2020, and July 8, 2020. The motion passed unanimously.
- On MOTION by Cilley and SECONDED by Sheckman, the Board of Health voted to approve prior meeting minutes from December 12, 2022. The motion passed unanimously.

COVID-19 UPDATE – presented by Neia Illingworth

- Case data:
 - As of February 1, 2023, Swampscott has had 4238 lab-confirmed cases. Lab-confirmed case numbers do not include at-home tests
 - As of January 26, 2023, Swampscott's 14-day average daily incidence rate is 13.7 per 100,000 residents per the MA Department of Public Health (MDPH)
 - As of January 25, 2023, the 7-day average of percent positivity is 9.35% according to MDPH's Covid-19 Interactive Data Dashboard
 - According to the CDC Covid-19 Data Tracker, Essex County is in the orange and considered an area of substantial transmission. On a community level, Massachusetts is considered "medium" based on the following factors: 1. new Covid-19 cases per 100,000 population (weekly total), 2. new Covid-19 admissions per 100,000 population (7-day total), and 3. percent of inpatient beds occupied by Covid-19 patients (7-day average)

- Dominant variants:
 - XBB.1.5 – 61.3%
 - BQ.1.1 – 21.8%
 - BQ.1 – 9.3%
 - XBB – 2.8%
- Vaccine updates:
 - The updated boosters are called “bivalent” because they protect against both the original virus that causes Covid-19 and the Omicron variant BA.4 and BA.5. Pfizer and Moderna have developed updated COVID-19 boosters.
 - The CDC recommends one updated bivalent booster dose for:
 - Everyone aged 5 years and older if it has been at least 2 months since your last dose.
 - For children aged 6 months-4 years who completed the Moderna primary series and if it has been at least 2 months since their last dose
 - Note: There is no booster recommendation for children aged 6 months–4 years who got the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine primary series.
 - The percentage of the population vaccinated in Swampscott as of January 25, 2023, is:
 - Individuals with at least one dose: 95%
 - Fully vaccinated individuals: 86%
 - Individuals with their first booster: 61%
 - Individuals with their second booster: 32%
- Testing updates:
 - As of January 2023, Cataldo Ambulance is providing COVID testing at 2 State Street in Lynn on Wednesdays from 12-8pm and Saturdays from 8-2pm. The Stop the Spread program has been extended through March 31, 2023
 - Rapid antigen (at-home) tests may be found at a pharmacy, retail store, or online and are still covered by insurance
 - Covidtests.gov was restarted on December 15, 2022
 - Individuals can report positive at-home tests on makemytestcount.org to assist with more accurate case data
- On January 26, 2023, the FDA panel recommended a move toward streamlined vaccine approach, possibly annual vaccines.
- On January 27, 2023, the FDA halted authorization of Evusheld, a treatment for Covid-19
- On January 30, 2023, it was announced that the United States plans to end the Public Health Emergency on May 11, 2023. This could mean that many Americans could have to start paying for Covid-19 testing and treatment. It would also shift the development of vaccines and treatments away from the direct management of the Federal Government. Medicare and State Medicaid programs will have to continue covering Covid-19 tests ordered by a physician and vaccines at no charge. Those with private insurance could face charges for lab tests and treatments.

OTHER UPDATES

- FLU: As of January 27, 2023, the current estimated severity of influenza is low
- To stay safe from illness during the winter months, individuals should:
 - Get vaccinated/boosted if eligible (Covid and flu vaccines)

- Get tested if they are feeling sick/symptomatic or will be around family/large groups/anyone immunocompromised
- Wear a high quality and well-fitting mask (ex. N95, KN95, or KF94)
- Wash their hands
- Improve ventilation and filtration
- Stay home if they are sick and/or test positive for COVID, flu, etc.
- Other winter safety tips:
 - For people:
 - Dress in layers, cover exposed skin, stay dry/avoid sweating, limit outdoor time, check on family, keep gas tank at least ½ full, add a few blankets, maintain tire pressure, get a safety kit packed, notify family if traveling
 - For pets:
 - Limit outdoor time for pets, bring outdoor pets inside, cover/check paws, check water and food, provide shelter
 - For your home:
 - Slow drip faucets, monitor furnace, use caution with indoor heaters, check heating vents for ice buildup

COMPOSTING UPDATE

- Free composting areas: at the dog park, outside the Police Station. Private subscriptions are also available through Black Earth Compost on a weekly pickup schedule for around \$100/yr
- The Town of Swampscott started the free composting areas in September of 2020. Drop off totals: 2020 total: 7.4 tons. 2021 total: 26.6 tons. 2022 total: 29.3 tons. Private pickup totals: 2020 total: 57 tons. 2021 total: 104 tons. 2022 total: 135 tons
- Sheckman asked where the compost goes. Jeff stated that the vendor brings it to a facility in Rowley
- Cilley stated that subscription members receive bags of dirt at the end of the year

HEALTH DIRECTOR REPORT

- The 2023 Trash and Recycling Guide was completed in January. It has been given to the Town Clerk's office to go out to residents with the census. It is also available on the Town website
- Hartmann stated that she sees a lot of posts from residents saying that there is a bag left behind. Jeff stated that it is often because there is an extra bag in the trash barrel preventing the trash barrel from closing or that there is an extra bag loose outside that is not in the proper type of bag. Sheckman asked if they will take the trash if it is over the 50 pound weight limit. Jeff said that they will take the trash bags out of the barrel individually and then they are not considered over the weight limit
- The Town was recently notified of an issue with the Regional Household Hazardous Waste Pick-up program with Marblehead: the contractor will no longer be doing pick-ups and does not have any weekends available for drop off. Jeff is in search of a replacement to schedule drop off events with

- The current mattress recycling program fee does not cover the cost of the program and is no longer being offset by a grant, so Jeff has spoken with the Finance Director and will be going to the Select Board to discuss an increase. Currently, it is \$20 for a set. It would be \$35 per piece to break even
- Currently, remote meeting authorization is set to expire March 31, 2023
- A regional draft to update body art regulations should be available next month
- The Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MDPH) opioid program (prevention) money will not be available until fall of next year. Jeff stated that he spoke with the Finance Director and was told that the earliest they can start buying things for the program would be after Town Meeting votes to allocate funds in May. Currently, Police and Fire respond to overdoses, but the Health department would like to work more on prevention. Hartmann stated that the Police have a Mental Health Taskforce and that she would like to have a joint meeting, potentially inviting the Town Administrator as well. Cilley stated that it is very positive that the Police and Fire Department staff carry Narcan
- Jeff stated that the Health department is doing food inspections. They recently conducted inspections for Njord Haven, Tropical Smoothie Café, Volo, Pomona, Thai-riffic by the Sea
- Neia announced that the Swampscott Health Department has been working on their Naloxone (Narcan) Distribution Program to provide naloxone, a life-saving medication that can reverse an overdose from opioids. The first two steps of the process have already been completed.

The process has been:

1. Obtain MA Controlled Substance Registration (MCSR) for Naloxone
2. Apply to be a Community Naloxone Purchasing Program (CNPP) Affiliate Program Member. Program requirements:
 - Must comply with all MA General Laws and regulations of the Department of Public Health
 - Must establish written protocols and procedures to ensure that individuals receiving naloxone kits are properly trained (must meet minimum standards)
 - Naloxone purchased through his mechanism must be provided to all recipients and no cost and not be submitted to insurance for reimbursement
 - For those approved and receiving full subsidy from the State Office of Pharmacy Services (SOPS), the CNPP Coordinator must participate in an orientation with the state's Bureau of Substance Addiction Services (BSAS)

OTHER BUSINESS/ITEMS NOT REASONABLY ANTICIPATED BY THE BOH

- None

SCHEDULE NEXT MEETING DATE

- The next meeting has been scheduled for March 7, 2023 at 6 pm

ADJOURN

- On MOTION by Sheckman and SECONDED by Cilley, it was VOTED by roll call to adjourn the meeting. Roll call: Sheckman (yes), Cilley (yes), Hartmann (yes).
- The meeting adjourned at 7:18 pm.

True Attest,

Brittney Jones