

MARBLEHEAD BOARD OF HEALTH

MINUTES, August 30, 2021

Present: Chm. Todd Belfbecker, Helaine Hazlett, Joanne Miller, Andrew Petty, Director
Also Present: Dr. Tom Krueger (League of Women Voters)

Web-based video conferencing meeting of the Board of Health via Zoom.

Meeting called to order at 7:30pm.

MOTION to approve meeting minutes of August 10th as corrected. On a polled vote the Board voted as follows: Mrs. Hazlett, in favor; Ms. Miller, in favor; Dr. Belfbecker, in favor.

Andrew reported that as of August 27th there have been a total of 1437 cases of COVID-19 in town with 20 active cases. The vaccination rate in town has been excellent with 87% (14,555) of residents' fully vaccinated and 1975 people who have received the first dose. The cases per age group are as follows:

- 11- 0-19yrs of age
- 2 – 20-29yrs of age
- 5 – 30-39yrs of age
- 5 – 40-49yrs of age
- 2 – 50-59yrs of age
- 4 – 60-69yrs of age
- 1 – 80yrs+ of age

The average daily incidence rate (last 14 days) is 15 and total tests given are 66397.

On 8/25 DESE (Department of Elementary and Secondary Education) issued a directive that all public school students and staff age 5 and above are required to wear masks while indoors (except to eat, drink, or breaks), as well as all visitors. The exceptions are for those who can't for medical or behavioral reasons wear a mask. This will be in effect until October 1, 2021. Masks will be worn on buses. In addition to the mask requirement, schools are to maintain a robust plan for COVID testing, both diagnostic and screening. DESE also has contact tracing and quarantine protocols.

Andrew stressed three important points to control COVID - get vaccinated, continue contact tracing and quarantining, and surveillance by testing. If you have symptoms, get tested. Recent increases in testing have been the result of summer travel.

Helaine updated the Board on back to school re-entry. Assigned seats will be given in classrooms and buses. Windows will be opened when possible for ventilation and students will be 3 feet apart from each other. Teachers are encouraged to sign up for pool testing. There will be no remote learning.

Andrew once again reviewed symptoms suggesting COVID infection and warranting testing. These included fever > 100.3, chills, shortness of breath, fatigue, aching and muscle pain, cough, headache, loss of taste or smell, etc. - especially in conjunction with other symptoms.

On August 13th the CDC recommended a third dose of the Moderna or Pfizer vaccine for individuals who are moderately or severely immunocompromised due to a disease or treatment. This third dose is not a booster. It is given to those who may not have developed sufficient immunity to the two-dose schedule.

The Board had an in depth discussion about possibly instituting indoor mask mandates in response to the more contagious Delta variant. Some communities are requiring masks be worn in public buildings.

MOTION to hold a public hearing for recommendation of mask wearing in public buildings and businesses. On a polled vote the Board voted as follows: Ms. Miller, in favor; Mrs. Hazlett, in favor; Dr. Belfbecker, in favor.

There are 20 active cases at this time Andrew stated to the Board and the prevalence is only 0.1%. He asked the Board about challenges and risks etc. A suggestion was then made to have the Board of Selectmen consider a mask mandate in public buildings.

MOTION the Board of Health makes the recommendation to the Board of Selectmen to require masks in public buildings. On a polled vote the Board voted as follows: Ms. Miller, in favor; Mrs. Hazlett, in favor; Dr. Belfbecker, in favor.

MOTION to rescind vote on the public hearing. On a polled vote the Board voted as follows: Ms. Miller, in favor; Mrs. Hazlett, in favor; Dr. Belfbecker, in favor.

Joanne gave a report on the work of the Mental Health Task Force. The task force has been collecting information to build a website. The website is being patterned to be similar to the town of Lexington. A speaker series is being reviewed with many interested groups from COA, schools, Female Humane Society. The new police chief, Dennis King attended the last meeting and will be working with the task force.

Andrew reached out to the architects about redesigning and getting revised estimates for the transfer station building. He hopes to have the information back in two weeks.

Director's Report

Andrew stated the last day for water samples will take place on September 15th.

Household Hazardous Waste Day will be Wednesday, September 15th. This is a pre-pay event that residents will sign up for online at marblehead.org. It is opened to 100 residents in Marblehead and Swampscott. Items for pickup must be left on the porch or near the garage of the residence.

Todd opened up the meeting to public participation.

MOTION to close meeting. On a polled vote the Board voted as follows: Ms. Miller, in favor; Mrs. Hazlett, in favor; Dr. Belfbecker, in favor.

Meeting adjourned at 8:37 pm.

Andrea Flaxer
Senior Clerk