

MARBLEHEAD BOARD OF HEALTH

MINUTES, December 14, 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 7:35pm.

Andrew reported that as of December 10th there are 120 active cases and a total of 1890 cases of COVID-19 in town since the beginning of the pandemic. The cases per age group are as follows:

25 - 0-11yrs of age
5- 12-19yrs of age
22 – 20-29yrs of age
15 – 30-39yrs of age
23 – 40-49yrs of age
26 – 50-59yrs of age
17 – 60-69yrs of age
4 – 70-79yrs of age
2 – 80yrs+ of age

The average daily incidence rate (last 14 days) is 47.3 and total tests given are 85464.

Mask Recommendation / Mandate Discussion

The Board had an in-depth discussion about masking in town. Joanne stated that 25,000 physicians have made the recommendation about indoor masking and would like to see the state institute this recommendation. She also spoke about hospitals needing more beds to accommodate patients. Helaine would like to see more masking in the community. Many businesses and stores in town have signs in windows and store fronts asking to please wear a mask. Todd would like to see masks taken more seriously from residents within town. The Board specifically expressed concern about wanting people masking in open and public meetings. At this point the Board agreed on stating a mask recommendation.

MOTION The Board of Health strongly recommends all persons of the age of 2 years must wear a mask or face covering, such as fabric or surgical mask, covering the nose and mouth, while indoors in any public space, including but not limited to retail establishments, restaurants, bars, performance venues, social clubs, houses of worship, personal care and fitness establishments, event spaces, and municipal buildings regardless of vaccination status. The recommendation will be effective immediately beginning at 5am on Wednesday, December 15, 2021 and remain in effect until lifted on Saturday, January 15, 2022 unless the Board decides to lengthen the time period. The mask recommendation will be reviewed at the next Board of Health meeting on Tuesday, January 11, 2022. On a polled vote the Board voted as follows: Ms. Miller, in favor; Mrs. Hazlett, in favor; Dr. Belfbecker, in favor.

MOTION The Board of Health strongly recommends to the Board of Selectmen to enforce a mask mandate in all municipal buildings. On a polled vote the Board voted as follows: Mrs. Hazlett, in favor; Ms. Miller, in favor; Dr. Belfbecker, in favor.

Helaine updated the Board on the SALT (Superintendent's Advisory Leadership Team). The vaccination clinics held at the Brown School both went smoothly. The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) issued an indoor mask mandate for all public schools through January 15, 2022 with a waiver available to middle and high schools as long as 80 percent of their students and staff have been vaccinated. Dr. John Buckey, Marblehead School Superintendent applied for the waiver but does not plan to enact it at this time. The elementary schools have assignment and homework packets available if students are absent from school. The upper grades in the Village School and high school use google classroom if not able to attend school. The custodial staff has been disinfecting schools every day. The Signs of Suicide (SOS) will have a program in January.

Joanne updated the Board on the Mental Health Task Force. The last meeting was held on Monday, December 6th. The speaker series is going to continue throughout the year. There will be different focus groups such as: parents/students and elderly thoughts and concerns on the pandemic. Also, a question and answer series will be made available. Dan Bauer, Marblehead High School Principal will be bringing on an intern to the task force.

Sustainable Marblehead – Peaker Plant will be discussed at a later time.

Director's Report

- Andrew has been with the town for 10 years. He is eligible for a step increase to 6.
- Household hazardous waste community collection day was successful. Over 120 households in Marblehead and Swampscott participated. The next event will be in March. Slight increase in prices.
- There is a high vaccination rate here in town. Take precautions during the holidays.
- Recycle Smart and Recyclepedia are two excellent resources to use for recycling questions.

MOTION to approve step increase for Andrew Petty, Director of Public Health. On a polled vote the Board voted as follows: Mrs. Hazlett, in favor; Ms. Miller, in favor; Dr. Belfbecker, in favor.

MOTION to give commendation to Andrew Petty for being Director of Public Health for 10 years. On a polled vote the Board voted as follows: Mrs. Hazlett, in favor; Ms. Miller, in favor; Dr. Belfbecker, in favor.

Todd opened the meeting to public comment period.

The next meeting is January 11th.

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

Meeting adjourned at 8:31 pm.

Andrea Flaxer
Senior Clerk

