



## OBSERVER REPORT

Board of Health - 6/8/21 League Observer - Thomas Krueger

Members in Attendance via Zoom - Andrew Petty, Todd Belf-Becker, Sec. Andrea Flaxer, Michelle Gottlieb, Helaine Hazlett

Meeting Posted 48 hrs in advance

Meeting held in a Handicapped Accessible Location - not applicable

Public allow to Participate in the Meeting - yes via Zoom.

### AGENDA

Prior to the opening of the meeting, Michelle Gottlieb, a member of the BOH for 12 years, and who will not be running this time, was lauded by each BOH members and the director for her service, expertise, teamwork, etc. She will be missed.

### COVID UPDATE

Andrew related that the last positive case in MHD was on 5/25, and hoped this trend would continue. Initially, he had thought about stopping the weekly report, but reconsidered it as it could be important for those unvaccinated to know what the case load is in MHD. This way those could make informed decisions about precautions. The report will be "pared down" to the essentials.

The vaccination rate in MHD is excellent: 68% are fully vaccinated, and 14% have received the first dose. In two weeks, therefore, 82% of MHD residents will have been vaccinated. In the greater North shore area of 10 communities (MHD, Beverly, Salem, Gloucester, Hamilton, Nahant, Peabody, Swampscott, and Danvers) the rates are 59% and 68%, respectively.

There is an initiative to work with businesses to display signs/posters that (paraphrased) say have a safe summer by wearing a mask or be fully vaccinated. A number of local businesses have volunteering to participate.

Andrew read the latest guidelines (that follow CDC recommendations) for summer activities and camps. (See <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/school-childcare/summer-camps.html>). For day camps and activities, those who are fully vaccinated do not need to wear masks, social distance, or quarantine if exposed to a case unless they show symptoms. For those not fully immunized, the recommendations are 3 feet of physical distancing, masks while indoors, cohorting of children, limiting of nonessential visitors, etc. Counselors who are fully vaccinated do not need to wear masks, but may do so to set an example for younger campers. MHD will have four camps open this year.

Another change - if one who is unvaccinated is having dinner OUTDOORS with an individual who becomes positive, the unvaccinated one is no longer considered "a contact".

Questions: 1) given that the 0-19 age group in MHD is ~4500, the high vaccination rate in MHD suggests that most of those >12 have been vaccinated. 2) Can the School Committee mandate vaccinations for the students? This has not been looked into yet and would require state and legal guidance. Of note, many colleges in MA are requiring it students to be vaccinated.

#### MENTAL HEALTH TASK FORCE

Michelle, who chairs this group, said that the group met last week. They are still reviewing resource mapping, how to collate the information, and make it available to the community. The group members each bring their expertise and perspectives, but as a group they lack technological know-how. The group watched an excellent 16-minute video done by MHD high school students about the effects of COVID on them. A few take-always included: a) concern about how some students during the past year had a lack of connection with an individual teacher or mentor, b) some encouraging results with many doing okay, able to connect, and felt hopeful about the future. The MHTF doesn't have the results from the middle school. The next MHTF meeting is on 6/14 and will focus on events and activities to foster improved mental health. (A brief discussion followed about who would chair this task force when Michelle leaves. It likely the new BOH member will, and Michelle as a citizen is happy to help with the transition.) Helaine praised the HS video and thought it was pertinent to the whole community, and suggested that with student and advisors' permission this could be shown more widely.

#### DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Andrew reported that two different grants had been applied for. One to DEP which in the past was awarded with \$16,000 and could be used for a cardboard compactor, recycling bins, etc. The second grant that five Northshore communities would share in is a 3-year service grant from state, totaling \$300,000. This grant could be used to hire an epidemiologist, grant coordinator, inspector, social media, contact tracing, etc.

The Health Department participated in a meeting at the high school, Planning for Success, where ideas from each of the town department were brought and shared with the superintendent to answer the question, "What would we like to see by 2026?" From the health department's perspective these include: health and wellness counselor, resource specialist, composting in all the schools, getting rid of the styrofoam trays, dishwashers in each school, internet access across all of MHD, etc. Michelle wanted to make sure that "green cleaners" (cleaning agents) be kept on the radar, as healthy schools help students stay healthy.

Juneteenth is a state holiday and falls on Saturday, 6/19. The HD office will be closed on 6/18 as well as the transfer station. Regular curbside trash and recycling will continue. The transfer station will be open the usual hours on 6/17 and 6/19.

Household hazardous waste pick up is to occur on 6/9 and is fully subscribed. The next event will occur in September, date to be posted.

Miscellaneous: 1) Pizza boxes WITHOUT any food can now be place in the recycle bins.  
2) Beach testing has not started yet. There is concern about red algae appearing on the beaches. The red algae can emit a strong odor. This has been a problem in Lynn, and they had to resort using a front loader and hauling it away.

The meeting was adjourned. The next meeting is 6/29/21 at 7:30pm