



## OBSERVER REPORT

**BOARD OF HEALTH:** 8/30/21 LWVM Observer - Thomas Krueger

Members in Attendance via Zoom :Andrew Petty, Todd Belf-Becker, Sec. Andrea Flaxer, Joanne Greer Miller, 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

Minutes of 8/10/21 amended and then accepted

### COVID UPDATE

Andrew discussed the case report from 8/27 - (the report is available in detail on the town website ([marblehead.org](http://marblehead.org)), CaseReporting75.doc.) In brief the total case count to date is 1437 (on 8/20 1421), active cases 20, deaths to date 31 (unchanged). The cases per age groups are 11 0-19 year-olds; 2, 20-29; 5, 30-39; 5, 40-49; 2, 50-59; 4, 60-69; 1, 80+. The average daily incidence (last 14 days) = 15 (unchanged), total tests = 66,397, tests in past 14 day = 2, 077, percent positive tests = 2.55% (down from 2.86% previous week).

Regarding vaccinations, 14,555 are fully vaccinated, and 1,975 one dose away. This represents 82% and 4.81% of the total population of MHD (19, 036). The sum is, therefore, 87% of the population. Approximately 11% can't be vaccinated yet (children under 12). He would like to see the total of those who can be vaccinated at 89%.

On 8/25 DESE (Department of Elementary and Secondary Education) issued a directive that all public 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 at least October 1,2021. Masks to 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.

Ms. Hazlett, the BOH member on school task force SALT, reported from a recent meeting. Dr Bucky said that pool testing was not as successful last year due to students who did not participate. He encouraged all to participate. In the new school year, students will have assigned seating, so that they will use the same seat each day. When possible windows will be open for ventilation, students will be at least 3 feet apart. If cases occur and parents refuse testing and the student is unvaccinated, the student will be out for 10 days. 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 8/13 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.

One of BOH members brought up for discussion possible indoor mask mandates in response to the more contagious delta variant. At this time Salem has instituted an indoor mask mandate effective 8/23-11/15 as a precaution to their high-volume tourist season and relative low vaccination rate. Other towns have instituted mask mandates for town public buildings. A long discussion of the pros and cons ensued, including rationales, time lines, process, etc. At this time with 20 active cases in MHD, the prevalence is only 0.1%. It was suggested the Board of Selectmen could consider a mask mandate for town public buildings.

## MENTAL HEALTH TASK FORCE

Joanne reported much progress since the last meeting. A resident of MHD volunteered to create the website pro bono. This is to be patterned after a very successful one used in Lexington. The volunteer said that the website could be created in a few days once started. Numerous contacts with interested groups (COA, schools, Female Humane Society, etc.) have been giving input. Funding for a speaker series is being sought from various organizations. It is hoped the speakers would address mental health awareness, mitigating any stigma that might be associated, and would be able to speak to different populations (young, school, older, seniors). The new police chief, Dennis King, was welcomed by group, and is eager to help.

## TRANSFER STATION

Andrew had little to report since the last meeting. The architects are going to be using the past estimator to ascertain the costs to finish all of the construction as well as smaller projects. He hopes to have this information back in 2 weeks.

## DIRECTOR'S REPORT

The last beach testing will be on 9/15, meaning three more samplings which occur on Wednesdays.

On 9/15 household hazardous waste will occur. The process is as before with online registration, payment, and pickup by garage or porch, not curbside.