



OBSERVER CORPS REPORT

Board of Health: 9/8/20 LWVM Observer: Thomas Krueger

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

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.

Summary of Agenda Items:

Meeting Minutes: corrections were made to the 8/11/20 minutes as follows: Chromebooks were NOT given to all students; lawn signs are NOT for all. The minutes were amended and passed.

COVID 19 UPDATE:

Andrew gave the most current update on the MHD case load: 264 total cases, <5 active cases, ~ 30 deaths; the average daily incidence is 1.12/100000; total tests in MHD = 7076, with 1039 in the past 14 days; the positivity rate = 0.38%. Travelers from other states must self-quarantine for 14 days EXCEPT for travelers from Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Vermont and West Virginia.

Andrew pointed out that there is a rise in mental health issues. He suggested going to the website:

<https://mass.gov/resources/maintaining-emotional-health-well-being-during-the-COVID-19-outbreak> This website/webpage has numerous options and suggestions for coping as well as links to Massachusetts 2-1-1, MassSupport - Free COVID-19 Counseling and Supporting.

REOPENING (SCHOOLS)

Much discussion was about the school committee's policy about face masks. Previously the BOH had recommended not allowing (or strongly recommending) the use of masks with valves (MWV) .(Note: these mask may protect the wearer, but the valve allows respiratory droplets or smaller to escape, thus potentially spreading virus from a wearer to others.) The supposed advantages of the masks with valves are they are cooler and less moist on the inside. (From the CDC website is the following: "CDC does NOT currently recommend using masks for source control if they have an exhalation valve or vent." (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cloth-facial-cover-guidance.html>)

The Board then discussed how to inform the school committee (MHD-SC) again that masks with valves or vents (MWV) not be allowed, as this recommendation has already been given. Andrew suggested that the BOH strongly recommend the SC prohibit these types of masks. A community member opined that although

there are many other mitigation strategies, this is a very big one. The CDC does say that to use such a mask ANOTHER mask would need to worn over the masks with vents. Another resident, who is a nurse with 35 years experience and has been taking care of COVID patients since February, urged the BOH to more concrete and move from strongly recommend to prohibiting the use of MWV, asking for the BOH to take leadership on this issue. Further discussion came up about the jurisdiction of the BOH versus the SC, specifically the BOH does not have the power.

In further discussion of MWV, another resident (a nurse with 25 years of experience) was concerned about allowing MWV at other sites where children will be - YMCA (which is actually in Salem) , JCC, after school facilities, etc. One board member suggested issuing similar guidance to these facilities. There was some concern from another board member that representatives from these facilities should be heard first. The BOH finally moved and passed with 2 yeas, 1 present, for a statement strongly recommending prohibiting MWV at school another after school facilities.

The discussion went further to consider whether the BOH should issue an ORDER to this effect town wide. The process involved in this action would be to advertise a hearing for this issue as well as other facial coverings, usually allowing 14 days, but could be shorten if it is an emergency order, and then if passed would require ENFORCEMENT. If adopted, this order would supersede that of the SC. This was moved and passed unanimously. Andrew will post the preceding.

OTHER

A) Senior flu clinic - this will be a drive through process, scheduled for 9/30. All the slots have already been filled. The entire process will be done as an emergency dispensing site drill so many additional steps will be taken - gown, mask, emergency personnel, police department, etc. No additional doses of the high dose vaccine will be coming.

For those wishing flu vaccination, they should reach out to their PCP, CVS, or like.

Also noted was that school children will need to have the flu vaccine by 12/31/20.

B) The school reopening committee did not meet last week and is likely to meet on an ad hoc basis, usually later in the day.

C) Lawn signs regarding COVID have been ordered and will be distributed around town

D) Hazardous Waste Event - Andrew reported that it went very well, although some hazardous waste was not picked up that day, but the next. He has received lots of positive feedback and read one of the responses, noting that it is easier, one does not have to be at home, etc. Already he is thinkING about future dates, possibly in November, and perhaps as often as 3-4 times a year.

E) Beach sampling went well this past year, and the last was today, with results tomorrow.

The meeting was adjourned and the next planned for 9/15/20 at 7:30 pm, via Zoom Teleconferencing.