

Marblehead League of Women Voters Observer Corps Report Form

Board of Health:5/14/20 League 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

Summary of Agenda Items:

File permits - Two MHD residents filed for permits to have chickens on their property. In each case the resident has had all neighbors and abutters "sign off"; they will have only hens, no roosters; the town reserves the right to inspect; and the permits are annual permits. Both were voted on and passed.

Coronavirus - COVID 19 update

The public health nurse, Tracy, was invited to present her work to the Board. The board first acknowledged all of her hard work. Tracy then explained the process: a tracking system using the MAVEN website app has all positive tests in MA logged, and then each town is given its information. Tracy then follows up whether at home or in the hospital, contacting the cases, identifying all contacts, and has the cases isolate/quarantine. She proceeds to follow them throughout the duration of the infection. This week a new step is happening: when a person is positive, all household contacts are now tested. Tracy noted that all residents have been very cooperative.

The majority of the MHD cases are from the long term care facilities, residents and staff: 36 at Lafayette, 43 at Devereux. Each week the National Guard goes to the facilities to test. A number have been asymptomatic, accounting for the increase each week. (In the greater MHD community there has only been a single new case in the past week.) Tracy was asked about the contact tracing load, and so far she is able to handle this. School nurses have been helping in some cases. (The Partners in Health tracing service is just getting started because of some technical difficulties, but will be available in the future if needed.) In regards the National Guard testing, they are only testing the people who are at the residence the day they come. Workers who are not there are not currently being tested. If all asymptomatic people were tested, the number would be higher than 82. (The governor has pledged that by 7/20, 45,000 tests a day would be done, and up to 75,000 per day by the end of the year.)

In regards to her work load, Tracy's day is "all day COVID" - many phone calls, numerous meetings (especially at the state level), dealing with MAVEN updates (this app was never designed to deal with volume that COVID has required), etc. Although just part time, Tracy is

working many hours beyond her normal commitment, up to 40-45 hours a week - these extra hours are being funded by the state.

Questions followed:

1. What about normal flu shots? Tracy has already placed an order for these in pre-filled syringes. All the public health nurses in our region help each other out with the administration of the shots.
2. What test is the National Guard using? They are using one that has a turn around time of 24 hours.
3. What about testing for schools? Andrew stated that they will be getting guidance from the State, so that each town is doing the same thing.
4. Who oversees the care at the long-term care facilities? The State has epidemiologist at the MA DPH as well as working with another agency (health, quality, and safety) who go to the facilities regularly.

Andrew then went on to talk about the current status of COVID in MHD. There are 161 cases, 108 active in quarantine, and there have been 16 deaths. 53 have completed monitoring. 49% of the 161 cases have been at the LTCF.

As far as “reopening” parameters, there is a continuing decrease in positive cases, all trending down. There will be four phases in the process, and all are awaiting the particulars. The process will be gradual, and if there is “uptick” in cases, the current phase will be stepped back, i.e., if in Phase 3 and there is an increase, then we will revert to phase 2. All the transitions will be based on metrics. The overarching concern will be for all to be able to feel safe.

In regards the upcoming Farmer’s Market, same type of guidelines as grocery stores will be in place. The opening is slated for May 30th, but a number of logistics need to be worked out - including the use of paper money. The vendors are not being tested.

In regards MHD High School Senior graduation, Andrew has met with the principal, Dan Bauer, about a proposed plan. This will be a “virtual graduation”: each student will come to the site in a car with the parents, be given a cap and gown and drop off books, then will walk across a stage, spaced 12 minutes apart, receiving a diploma in a diploma case. All contact surface will be wiped down between each student. Each student’s ceremony will be video taped, and all the videos will be spliced together, providing what would seem like a continuous procession. Given these time parameters the “graduation” will be over 4-5 days.

Questions were raised about local options when the governor decides to “reopen”. Andrew said that whatever decisions in this regard will be made at a regional level. There have been few social distancing complaints. Andrew reminded all to use masks and avoid problem areas.

Miscellaneous: there will be no CODE RED this week; recycling of boat shrink wrap at the Transfer Station is available starting 5/16. Please compact as tightly as possible.

The meeting was adjourned. Next meeting 5/21/20 at 4PM via Zoom.