

Board of Health: Date - 6/23/20 League Observer - Thomas Krueger  
Members in Attendance via Zoom - BOH : Andrew Petty, Todd Belf-Becker, Helaine Hazlett,  
Michelle Gottlieb,

Meeting Posted 48 hrs in advance

Meeting held in a Handicapped Accessible Location - not applicable

Public allowed to Participate in the Meeting

Summary of Agenda Items:

Reorganization: in the recent town elections, Todd Belf-Becker was re-elected to the Board of Health. This prompted a reorganization of the roles of the members. First, Helaine wanted to thank all the member of the board as well as the department of health with a special thanks to Andrew for all his efforts. The second order of business was the nomination of chairperson - Todd was nominated and elected. Helaine was nominated and elected vice chair. Michelle was nominated and elected communications officer.

COVID update: Andrew stated that the total number of cases in MHD from the beginning until now has been 228. There are less than 5 active cases currently. There have been no recent deaths. On a state wide basis the availability of testing was open on 6/17 for anyone attending a large gathering. On 6/17 17,000 were tested, and on 6/18, 15,000 tested. The positive test rate is running at 2.5%. (Of note, local testing can be performed in the Vinnin Square urgent care site with both PCR and antibody tests available. To be tested one needs to be referred by a medical provider or can request via the MHD BOH. If the antibody test is done and is positive, a PCR test is performed. If both are positive, then the individual is retested. If the PCR test is positive, the individual will need to be in quarantine.)

Other developments:

Park and Rec has replaced the trash barrels at Devereaux that had previously been removed.

A number of MHD restaurants have open for outdoor dining and with the use of 30 jersey barriers are able to have safe seating while allowing for vehicle access. In phase 2, part 2 reopening of restaurants there can be indoor dining with the caveat of 50% capacity. Outdoor dining is being encouraged except for inclement weather. As before dining parties are being kept 6 feet apart.

Statewide, MA is doing well with cases, etc. but as all are aware there is a large uptick in cases in 25+ other states.

As the weather has improved there is concern about exposure at the beaches and other outdoor activities. It is still very important to follow prudent guidelines: social distancing, hand

washing, facial covering, “safer at home”, etc. One need to be vigilant. For those coming or returning from out of state, they are urged to quarantine for 14 days.

Mental health concerns were again acknowledged.

The “reopening committee” has met three time with all the participants very responsive. There has not been a meeting in the past 2 weeks.

Andrew has met with the school department about the opening of school in the fall and especially the need for PPE (personal protective equipment) for the students and staff. The need will be large and expensive with \$374,000 anticipated for masks and shields. There is always the concern about the actual availability of these items. Andrew orders mask via a coalition of health departments and MIT will be testing these masks to be sure that they meet the necessary requirements. (The concern for safe PPE is highlighted recently by the FDA warning that a number of hand sanitizers are actually toxic - they contain menthol which is toxic if inhaled or absorbed through the skin.)

Retail establishments - some merchants are doing OK, but this is a challenge. People encouraged to shop local. There have been discussions of side walk sales and/or perhaps a “farmers market” like experience for retail. Some merchants are using paper bags and others, plastic. (The governor relaxed the ordinance regarding plastic bags.)

Other issues: with the change in polling places, one resident voiced a complaint about the last town election. She said that a number (12-15) sign holders were standing in front of her property, some smoking, and making it difficult for her husband to do his lawn work. She hoped it would be different the next election. It is noted by the board that citizens have a right to hold signs and not to wear mask.

Helaine presented to the finance committee a warrant that the department be level funded and this was accepted.

Town meeting will be held on 6/29 at 7PM outdoors at the Veteran Middle School. The quorum is 30. There will be two tents and an overflow area. Seating will be 6 feet apart. Two more meetings will walk through the logistics. Check-in will be via the town clerk’s department. Andrew noted that in other recent town meetings in the area up to 80% of the quorums have attended - if this happens in MHD, there would 240 people. The meeting will not be on Zoom as it is outside, but will be available on MHTV the next day.

The meeting was adjourned with the next meeting planned for 7/7/20 at 7:30 PM via Zoom teleconferencing.