



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF MARBLEHEAD

OBSERVER CORPS REPORT

Board of Health: Date - 8/11/20 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 - yes via Zoom.

Summary of Agenda Items:

COVID 19 UPDATE:

Andrew read the latest Governor's order #46 "Third Revised Order Regulating Gatherings Throughout the Commonwealth" (available at www.mass.gov/doc/revised-gatherings-order-august-7-2020) The document first summarizes the general recommendations of the CDC especially for large gatherings and community events and then the initial and subsequent restrictions and then easing of non-essential person-to-person contact. The order continues with recent public health data showing "an uptick" in cases necessitating a return to reduced size allowances of outdoor gatherings. Six sections are then outlined in the order: 1) entities subjected to sector specific rules (e.g. certain brick and mortar premises); 2) gatherings for political expression and religious activities (outdoor activities are not limited by section 3 but indoor ones are); 3) otherwise applicable indoor and outdoor gathering limits (indoor 8/1000 sq. feet but ≤ 25 ; outdoor 25% of maximum permitted or 8/1000 sq ft, or ≤ 50); 4) face coverings (any gathering > 10 all must wear face covering indoors or outdoors, with exceptions for age or medical conditions); 5) legal exceptions (many are enumerated); 6) enforcement (local boards of health and agents as well as state and local police are authorized to enforce the order. Violations may result in fines up to \$500 per violation; in addition, alcohol can only be sold or served at establishments when it is accompanied by food prepared on site.)

Andrew emphasized that the major changes were that the gatherings' orders applied to both public and private areas. The alcohol provisions are for establishments licensed to sell liquor on premises and must be with food service. The food has to be prepared on site, an item per person per drink, bagged food (e.g. chips) not considered prepared food, and serving drinks stops when food service stops.

A CODE RED was sent on 8/11 to emphasize the new state initiatives above even though the case count remains low in MHD. The message underscored the gathering sizes and the need to continue social distancing and facial coverings.

Helaine noted other communities (e.g. Salem) have “eye catching” lawn signs about COVID and precautions and wondered if MHD could create/ purchase similar ones. Andrew will look into pricing and when obtained make them available for free.

The board was reminded that as of 8/4 anyone can make an anonymous complaint re COVID to the attorney general’s office. This is then emailed to the local BOH to investigate. Such a complaint was made on 8/6 and Bobby Cody (public health dept) and a police officer went to investigate the Rip Tide and Barnacle and both were in good compliance.

This week’s MHD counts are as follows: 255 confirmed cases, <5 active, 30 deaths (unchanged over many weeks.) Some confusion arises about how the case count is reported: MHD counts active cases at the moment; MA site is based on a 14-day period and in this case reported 9 active cases. The variation arises from the number that go on and then others that come off quarantine. The state has a color-coded cases density system: Red = >8/100,000 average daily count; Yellow = 4-8/100,000; Green = <4/100,000; White = <5 cases. In this format MHD is currently in the Yellow area.

REOPENING COMMITTEE

The committee meets each Monday, and the superintendent has unveiled the proposed program. There is much concern for the younger students and teachers about the return. Currently the teachers are returning on 8/31, will start remote teaching on 9/14, and hybrid teaching to begin 10/5. There will be two cohorts: A to attend school Monday and Thursday, and B to attend Tuesday and Friday. A and B will be divided by alphabet with consideration given to siblings. Mask breaks, snack time, etc. were enumerated. Further considerations are for some school “open house” times for parents, new students, kindergarteners to see the building and meet the teachers. All remote teaching for MHD will be by MHD teachers; there will be no outside vendors. A simple survey was launched to assess athletic possibilities.

Questions then followed. Hybrid learning seems to address elementary education, but what about middle and high school? All students will have a computer of some sort (chromebook). Teachers will be teaching from their classrooms so they will have their materials available. There is much concern about older ages and infection, based on the recent Georgia experience.

At the school committee meeting the night before, the question was raised what metric will be used to return to hybrid learning? The situation continues to be “fluid” and teachers need additional time to adjust. The actual metric is unknown now, but Andrew feels as though the average daily case count will be used.

Questions about attendance and when to return continue to be problematic. The lag time for testing results becomes a crucial factor. In addition Andrew pointed out that we need to pay attention to the case rates in the surrounding communities. He is hoping for more guidance from MA DPH because individual communities can’t devise protocols in a vacuum.

MENTAL HEALTH DURING COVID: resources previously mentioned were recalled (MHD counseling center, 211, call line, etc.) but there is also a possibility of being a part of a program for calling a mental health professional. Andrew noted that now with warm weather getting exercise is easier to do but was concerned what happens when it gets colder. There will be no fall sports, “so we need some other ideas.”

BEACHES: Andrew said it is hard to assess social distancing and facial covering with driving by and needs “boots on the ground.” So far social distancing seems to be good. There are concerns about boats “rafting together” and crowds at Devereaux eating facility. Water quality has been excellent all summer.

The meeting was adjourned with next meeting scheduled for 8/25/20 at 7:30 via Zoom teleconferencing.