

Marblehead League of Women Voters Observer Corp Report Form

Board of Health: 8/4/20 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 - 51 people in addition to the usual BOH and
observers were present at the meeting via Zoom.

Summary of Agenda Items:

Moment of silence for Judy Jacobi: the meeting opened with a moment of silence for recently
deceased Judy Jacobi. Helaine offered a heartfelt remembrance.

COVID - 19 Update:

Andrew updated the most recent MHD statistics: 251 total cases, < 5 active cases, and 30
deaths (unchanged over the past number of weeks.) He said that we are doing well but must
remain vigilant with mask use, social distancing, and other recommendations.

State wide: there are now no cost tests in the state in 8 communities. There are 17 test site
open to all, some by appointment and other walk up or drive through. These can be found on
the [mass.gov/stop](https://www.mass.gov/stop) website. In the state as of 8/3 there were 532 new or probable cases;
119,203 total cases, with 9 new reported deaths. The running 7 days average daily case were
432, 15 deaths per day, and 2.2% positive tests (an upward trend). Hospital capacity was at
36% with 12,000 available temporary beds.

The total cases by age are as follows:

0-19 years	7179 cases
20-29	17,467
30-39	18,607
40-49	16,782
50-59	18,632
60-69	14,990
70-79	9,857
80+	15,014

Some of the statistics for nearby towns include:

Town	Cases in 14 days	Total cases	%positive tests
Marblehead	8	251	1.77%
Swampscott	7	143	1.61%
Salem	26	663	1.97%
Peabody	32	1638	1.79
Nahant	4	44	2.79%

Over the past weeks the trends have been up. A state travel advisory was issued on 8/1 that is documented in detail on the town (marblehead.org) and state (mass.gov) websites, briefly stipulate that all persons returning to Massachusetts must fill out a form and quarantine for 14 days or provide negative COVID test results done within 72 hours of arrival (such persons must quarantine until the results are available.) The websites go into extensive detail about how to quarantine (separate bedrooms, separate bathing and toileting facilities, etc.). Failure to follow these strictures will result in a \$500 per day fine. Some questioned the utility of testing if results are taking longer than 72 hours. There is much concern about people returning from vacation or students returning to college.

With this upward trend in cases, further Commonwealth of MA guidelines covered the size of social gathering with limiting indoor activities to no more 25 people and outdoor ones, 100. As always mask wearing and social distancing remain imperative.

Mental health of residents continues to be a major concern. Resources include a call line 211, operating 24 hours a day; disaster help line; in MHD, the Marblehead Counseling Center. Regarding the counseling center, there are 293 people on the wait list, 40% are MHD residents who are getting priority. The counseling center has hired an intern to help and will be able to see children in person who would have difficulty with telehealth.

Food security: the Health department is working with the MHD Food Bank, who is providing food and serving to needy residents. There have been many donations.

REOPENING COMMITTEE

Helaine and others have been attending the school reopening committee meetings that meet each Monday. The superintendent and administrative staff have been working closely with the BOH. There have been four meeting so far with 27 people on the committee, representing a diverse group - teachers, parents, nurses, custodians, etc. The committee has a number of subcommittees that are also meeting frequently. The deadline for submission of the plans to the DESE (Department of Elementary and Secondary School Education) is 8/10. It is likely there will be 3 different plans - remote, in-school, and hybrid.

A myriad of questions and concerns remain. Some of these include:

1. Different recommendations from the CDC and MA DPH versus DESE (e.g., distancing 6 feet vs 3 feet; return to school in 14 days vs 4-5 days after a negative test, etc.).
2. Masks and breaks: it is recommended that all children >2 should have a mask. But, how long should they wear these before taking a break? Clearly KG-1 would need more frequent breaks; can 2-6th wear for 4 hrs?; 7-12th grade could wear > 4hrs. Where are breaks taken - inside, outside? How are breaks used - stretching, yoga, etc.? How do you schedule breaks so classes are not breaking at the same time? What happens in the 7-12 grades for safely changing classes during the day? (As a perspective of possible problems, 20 students could potentially interact with 165 others during the school day.) What happens during lunch times? Clearly "one size does not fit all". Concerned were raised about the quality of masks which varies. All using N95 masks is not feasible. What about the combined use with face shields?
3. Responses after positive cases: to date there are no guidelines from the State. How many positives before the school is shut down? If a child in one class is positive, then current work guidelines would dictate that the classmates would have be out for 14 days. How is home

quarantine monitored? Honor system? The logistical problems of identifying positives mount when other viral respiratory illnesses (e.g., the flu) have similar symptoms to COVID (coughing, headache, sneezing, etc.)

4. Testing: beside the delays in the results, the cost of testing currently is prohibitive. For example, if all the students and teachers ~3500 were tested just ONCE at a cost of \$180 per test would cost \$630,000. Much discussion ensued about the use of rapid tests (that have 30% false positive and negative rates), spit tests, batch testing, etc.

In concluding this lengthy discussion, the Board of Health voted to “follow the CDC and Massachusetts DPH guidelines for MHD school department” in particular social distancing, return to school guidelines, etc. in contrast to those of the DESE. This motion was passed.

OTHER BUSINESS: a rebate for an unused transfer station sticker was granted; minutes from four earlier BOH meetings were approved; MHD transfer station thanked the BOH members for the coffee and muffins for their work; there has been one case of EEE identified in Plymouth County. As a reminder this is expected to higher prevalence year.

The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, August 11, 2020 at 7:30 PM via Zoom telecommunications.