

MARBLEHEAD BOARD OF HEALTH

MINUTES, January 05, 2021

Present: Chm. Todd Belfbecker, Helaine Hazlett, Michelle Gottlieb, Andrew Petty, Director
Also Present: Dr. Tom Krueger (League of Women Voters)

Web-based video conferencing meeting of the Board of Health via Zoom.

Meeting called to order at 7:30pm.

MOTION to approve meeting minutes of November 24th as amended. On a polled vote the Board voted as follows: Mrs. Hazlett, in favor; Ms. Gottlieb, in favor; Dr. Belfbecker, in favor.

MOTION to approve meeting minutes of December 8th as submitted. On a polled vote the Board voted as follows: Ms. Gottlieb, in favor; Mrs. Hazlett, in favor; Dr. Belfbecker, in favor.

Andrew reported on meetings that took place on 12/30/20 and 1/4/21. They were convened by the mayor of Salem, Kim Driscoll, and included mayors, town administrators, health directors, from the communities of: Gloucester, Peabody, Beverly, Marblehead, Salem, Swampscott, Nahant, Lynn and Danvers to discuss the possibilities of a regional approach to “roll backs.” This is in response to the surge of COVID cases and lack of availability of hospital beds. The presidents of Northshore and Beverly Hospitals reported that their ICU’s on 12/30 were at 93-95% capacity with Beverly having 62 patients and Salem 60 patients in ICU beds. Salem has been able to transfer some of the sickest COVID patients to Boston hospitals, but these hospitals will soon be at capacity. The hospitals are at their breaking points, and this affects or will affect the care for conditions other than COVID. The towns need to change behavior so that the hospitals can run smoothly. Not all the regional towns are in the same position so that some advocated for extreme roll backs (restaurants, schools, etc.) while others are not. A letter was drafted to be signed by representatives of these communities. The Board agreed to sign the letter.

MOTION to authorize Chairman Todd Belfbecker to sign regional rollback letter on behalf of the Board of Health. On a polled vote the Board voted as follows: Mrs. Hazlett, in favor; Ms. Gottlieb, in favor; Dr. Belfbecker, in favor.

Andrew told the Board the case count from January 4th was 735. The active cases at this time are 121 and there are 31 confirmed deaths of COVID-19. The number of tests taken in the past 14 days was 4047, with a 3.98% positive rate which represents 20% of the population in Marblehead. The health department has been dealing with a huge amount of cases. This could be a result of holiday travel and not properly quarantining. He reminded everyone to continue to wear a mask, socially distance and wash hands often.

First responders (police, fire, EMT) will be the first to be vaccinated next week. The vaccination rollout will be distributed in three phases. Refer to mass.gov to see which phase applies to each individual. It will be required for individuals to preregister online by appointment to obtain a vaccination.

Helaine met with the Reopening Committee on January 4th. The superintendent reported that all went well returning to school after vacation. She discussed the concern about winter sports. There will only be two household members of an athlete allowed to attend an indoor game. When hockey is played, if a player tests positive for COVID-19, the entire team must quarantine. Basketball is being reviewed at this time.

Curbside collection of Christmas trees will continue until January 15th. Afterwards the trees can be brought to the transfer station.

MOTION to close meeting. On a polled vote the Board voted as follows: Mrs. Hazlett, in favor; Ms. Gottlieb, in favor; Dr. Belfbecker, in favor.

Meeting adjourned at 8:23pm.

Andrea Flaxer
Senior Clerk