

BOARD OF HEALTH MINUTES  
TOWN BUILDING – COUNCIL ON AGING  
April 24, 2020

The meeting was called to order at 10:00 a.m., participating by remote call are Brian McNamara (BM), Robert DeFrancesco DDS (RD), John Schuler, M. D. (JS) and Susan Green (SG) chair. Also attending are Julia Junghanns (JJ) Director of Public Health, Ruth Mori M.S.N., R.N. (RM), Public Health Nurse/School nurse Doug Levine,(DL) Board of Selectmen and Patti White Department Assistant

SG: In compliance with revised Open Meeting Law requirements, we will live stream the meeting on WayCAM, Public Comments will be received by phone at 508-358-6812 for this meeting. The phone number will be active during the public comment portion of the meeting. Thank you in advance for your patience; we intend to address all calls that come in during the public comment period.

SG: Roll call –RD- yes, BM –yes, JS – yes, SG – yes and DL (BOS) yes

JJ: This has been another very busy week, we have been contact with all 3 assisted living facilities, and today we are aware that Sunrise Assisted Living has requested the National Guard to test at their facility. I have reached out to our food establishments and other retailers by email with attachments from Center for Disease Control (CDC) and Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for food handling and recommendations for wearing surgical masks.

I have been in discussion with the District Manager and Store Manager of Starbucks; they are looking to reopen on May 7<sup>th</sup>. We are working to improve communication and business relations going forward. Their plan will be for preorder/prepay and the order would be picked up from a table, this will comply with social distancing.

We just became aware of an update from the CDC that masks are required for all pharmacy staff, I have reached out to our pharmacies, to be sure they are aware of the new mandates from CDC.

I just finished the DPH conference call this morning, most of the health departments calling in were regarding pools and camps, as of yesterday's update from Governor Baker, he feels it is too early to plan to reopen anything; we will stay tuned for updates.

I shared with the Board the president's 3 phased plan for opening up America; we expect more specific local guidance from Gov. Baker, based on what is happening in our state. The stay at home expires May 4th and today's call mentioned there will be more guidance coming soon. Schools are cancelled through 6/29, camps are not considered an essential service; we are waiting on state guidance.

There was discussion today on the conference call regarding masks; many towns are writing orders to require masks. Health Depts. are upset that the state will not write a state wide order; towns are being pressured to make the decision, causing inconsistency throughout the state. We are expecting some guidance from Cheryl Sbara of the Massachusetts Association of Health Boards (MAHB), she is leading the question being raised by communities. Cheryl feels that an order is only good as the ability to enforce it. Are towns with mask orders enforcing them? The Health Department would not be able to enforce such an order. The information coming out from the Attorney General's office seems to be more of an advisory. The office did get a supermarket/pharmacy complaint, but no other complaints regarding masks this week. We have been in touch with food handlers and local businesses, many cannot do social distancing, we are repeatedly encouraging them

to wear surgical masks or face coverings. SG: Since Brigham & Woman's hospital started requiring staff to wear masks their infection rate had decreased by half.

Doug Levine (BOS): I have done some research on mask orders, as this was discussed at the last BOS meeting and will probably be discussed later today at their meeting. Mask orders have been written by the following communities: Framingham, Medford, Beverly, Salem, North Hampton, Brookline, Westport and the entire state of Connecticut. I agree that the AG guidance is lacking, I reached out to them by email and phone call, they have not yet gotten back to me. M.G.L. Ch111 sec 104, appears to give the BOS and BOH wide authority. "If a disease dangerous to the public health exists in a town the BOS and BOH shall use all possible care to protect to prevent the spread of the infection". I agree that enforcement will be difficult, I discussed this topic with the store managers at Donelan's and Stop and Shop, they will be happy to ask employees to wear masks and will put up signs requesting shoppers to wear a mask, but they would not enforce.

JJ: I received an email from the Longfellow owner Myke Farriker who reached out regarding a Red Cross blood drive to be held at Longfellow on May 15<sup>th</sup>; Longfellow staff will not be involved.

We are waiting for helicopter larvicide spraying dates; we will get the information to the front office and our media sources.

RM: A COVID-19 case update was sent out April 21<sup>st</sup> we had a large jump in cases; 2 of our 3 assisted living facilities have been tested and results have been returned. Traditions' testing was done on April 15<sup>th</sup> and the results were returned on April 18<sup>th</sup>. They tested the full facility (both memory care and assisted living) including staff. On the memory care unit (13 residents), 12 residents were tested, one person was not tested, 6 residents tested positive.

On the assisted living side, 48 to 50 residents were tested, 2 residents were positive, 1 resident was not able to be tested. Testing was done for 25 staff, 4 staff were confirmed positive through lab testing. All residents of the memory care side are being handled in full PPE and being cared for as positive. On the assisted living the 2 positive residents are actually asymptomatic. These individuals do not require assistance in their apartments, if they were to enter, staff would be wearing full PPE to enter their apartments.

All 3 assisted living facilities are fully isolated, all 3 have memory units and due to levels of dementia may not be able to comply, Staff are working to redirect residents back to their apartment.

Carriage house did resident testing on their memory side, due to a number of staff who were confirmed positive (5 memory staff were positive), we requested further testing to be performed, they received test kits and had private company come in on April 18<sup>th</sup> and results were received on April 20<sup>th</sup>. 27 residents were tested on the memory unit and 26 were from memory care with 9 testing positive and one person on the assisted living side was tested and was negative. All 3 facilities are working to keep staff from crossing from memory to assisted living sides of the facilities in an effort to prevent cross contamination. There was a cross over staff member, who was tested.

JS: Are all residents healthy? RM: There are residents who may have been asymptomatic (very low threshold for older persons) we were informed that one individual has recently passed at one facility since testing, and some residents have been transported to hospital. There are residents that tested positive that have not become symptomatic, we are getting updates from all 3 facilities either every day or every other day. Sunrise Assisted Living is being tested today and we will have the results by Sunday. All facilities are doing temperature checks

on staff daily and residents are being tested twice a day, anyone with any non- typical complaints are being forwarded to a nurse for assessment. Dr. Schuler, I discussed your suggestion to be pro-active with potential use of antivirals or chloroquine, but was told that was not possible, as those are part of trials only offered in hospital settings. JS: Unfortunately, more evidence is coming out that both are not showing significant effectiveness.

As of Tuesday's updates we have 48 confirmed cases, the state number is 50. We are pleased with how close the numbers are, we are working with DPH and we expect there may be possible duplicates.

Community Health Nurses are doing (virtual) weekly meetings, with school announcement that there will be no further school within buildings. Schools have asked about plans for families to do a medication pickup as some may still be viable. When this started, daily medications were returned to families, there may be additional meds (epi pens, etc.) so we are asking Dr. Unobskey to develop a plan to be sure they have them, we do not want our families to incur financial issues replacing items. They are hoping to do a drive up program to hand off bagged medications.

JS: what is state guidance with follow up for these assisted living patients? RM: They can choose from 2 test methods or use clinical guidance; there is clinical guidance for general population and there is separate guidance specifically for staff working in assisted living or first responders, if there are not adequate staffing levels, if asymptomatic, they can return to work.

JJ: I will forward any info from Cheryl Sbara or our state contact regarding masking, she is working on this and will keep this a priority. Local public health departments want a blanket masking statement from the state. We have strongly recommended to retailers and food handlers; we have also recommended this to the general public as well.

JS: Are there adequate PPE for office staff? JJ: Thanks you we have PPE's for working in the office if we go out in the public, we have PPE to wear, we are practicing social distancing and disinfect the office each morning, spray and wipe. We received a donation of surgical masks to distribute to retailers, we now believe that most persons should be able to purchase them online.

JS: Has the staff been tested? JJ: We are all feeling well and we have not initiated this for ourselves, we feel we have not exposed ourselves. We have a staffing schedule to keep social distancing at all times, we are wearing masks in the office, and public exposure is limited to emergencies and complaints. Currently we are all handling public work with email and phone calls.

### **General Business**

There were no invoices to approve

Next meeting will be Friday May 1<sup>st</sup> at 10a.m.

### **10:45 a.m. Public comments**

**The phones are open for public comment; resident may call in at 508-358-6812. No calls were received, public comment is closed.**

Doug Levine BOS, just to clarify, all comments I previously made are speaking on own behalf, they have not been discussed with the Board of Selectmen; they will be meeting later today.

Rm: I has received requests to publicize information regarding the assisted living facilities, even if we added them to current reporting, we can say #confirmed, depends on number tested, we have chosen to provide info to the Board, numbers are in report, not defining by each facility, may not properly reflect, as not all residents and employees have been tested. JJ: I had heard that assisted livings will be required to publicly make their numbers available, not certain where I heard this.

JS: In regard to Doug Levine's comments regarding signage for wearing masks in stores. Can we ask these closed environments to post notice that we strongly recommend they have a face mask when entering. JJ: We currently do not have an order or mandate, if we head that way, we would have to have a meeting to discuss, I expect guidance from Cheryl S soon. Cheryl is our liaison to the state

Next week, Friday May 1<sup>st</sup> 10am.

SG: Motion to adjourn, second Dr. D. Roll call: RD yes, BM: yes, JS: yes, SG yes.

Respectfully submitted  
Patti White  
Department Assistant  
Health Department  
04242020minutes  
Approved 06222020