

Board of Health Meeting Minutes
March 30, 2020

DATE: July 17, 2020
TIME: 9:08 AM

The Board of Health Meeting was called to order at 5:34 pm by Julie C. Lemay, MPH, Chair.

In keeping with Governor Baker's Executive Order of March 12, 2020, "Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law" – The Board of Health Meeting of March 30, 2020 was held by Remote Access through ZOOM.

Those participating were Julie C. Lemay, MPH, Chair; Donna S. David, R.N., M.N., Vice Chair; Stephen M. Fiore, Esq., Member; Wesley B. Chin, Health Director; Diana Ekman, Assistant Health Director; David Neylon, RN, CIC, REHS, Public Health Nurse; Maria Reddington, Clerk; Also participating by remote access were Patrice Garvin, Town Administrator; Jon Marshall, Assistant Town Administrator; Glenn Clancy, Community Development Director; Jessica Porter, Human Resources Director, Chief David Frizzell, Fire Department, Chief James MacIsaac, Police Department.

Several members of the public also participated by remote access.

Julie Lemay and Jon Marshall provided an overview of the rules of the Meeting.

Wesley Chin thanked Patrice Garvin, Department Heads, and the Board of Health for their support. Wesley also provided the following

- As of today's date, Belmont has 14 positive cases but he said that number is probably much higher.
- Donna David asked what types of telephone calls the Health department is receiving. Wesley said many are asking about their specific medical symptoms. Other calls include what constitutes an essential business, and many reports of large numbers of people gathering in public spaces.
Steve Fiore said he has noticed a decrease in the number of large gatherings since the Police have intervened.
- Wesley continued to provide statistics at the state level – as of today's date there were 5,752 confirmed cases, and Middlesex County ranks as number 1 in cases.
- Wes said the male to female ratio is nearly 50/50 in the U.S., which differs from other countries. Also, there are more cases of the under 60 year old age group.

David Neylon provided the following information

- David reviewed the notification process through the Massachusetts Virtual Epidemiologic Network (MAVEN). MAVEN is a secure web-based integrated disease reporting system. The Department of Public Health will "report" to Local Boards of Health, through MAVEN, of reportable infectious disease cases requiring follow-up from the Health Department.
- For COVID-19 positive individuals, the local Public Health Nurse is required to provide case follow up, including contact tracing, i.e., persons who may have been exposed to the patient..
- Donna David asked if anyone in Belmont has been hospitalized. David said there was one person hospitalized.
- David said follow up with an infected person is done by phone. David has a limited supply of personal protection equipment if needed.

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- A member of the public asked what the parameters are to be considered recovered. David said the person has to display no symptoms for 72 hours. Also, 2 negative tests, done 24 hours apart.

We reminded everyone the need for social distancing to flatten the curve. Social distancing means no group meetings, staying 6 feet apart from each other, no playdates, no dinner gatherings with people from outside your home, and don't share childcare. Essential businesses currently include landscapers and construction workers, but not home residential cleaning from a cleaning company.

Diana Ekman, Assistant Health Director talked about food establishments in Town:

- Health Department staff has provided a number of guidance documents and emails to food establishments.
- Guidance has included sanitizing procedures, how the government order applies to individual establishments, and take-out and delivery services allowed.

The following community efforts were highlighted:

- The Belmont Chinese American Association donated 75,000 masks to the community. Recipients included Belmont first responders, Belmont Manor Nursing Center, and Mount Auburn Hospital.
- Nave Niv-Vogel, Director of Belmont COA, and Roy Epstein, Select Board member, are conducting a basic needs assessment for Belmont residents aged 75 and older.
- The Belmont Food Pantry has reconfigured their distribution process in order they may continue to supply food to the community.
- Belmont Public Schools continue to provide meals for children who qualified for the free/reduced price meals program.

The following questions/comments were received from public participants:

- Dr. Alper thanked Health Department staff for the calm demeanor they have displayed in their efforts to assist Belmont residents during this pandemic.
- Dr. Alper, a member of the Massachusetts Association of Health Boards (MAHB), also reported that MAHB will distribute \$15 million to local Boards of Health, pursuant to Governor Baker's orders, for local Health Departments COVID-19 related expenditures,
- Dr. Alper also reminded everyone this virus remains on some surfaces for 7 days or more. He also believes the peak number of cases will be seen in about two weeks.
- Raveena asked if the CDC was testing for antibodies in hot spot areas. She also asked for clarification about COVID-19 symptoms, and if people were dying of the virus or from something else.
- Jennifer Fries, candidate for State Representative, asked if canvassing guidance could be issued when the isolation order is lifted.

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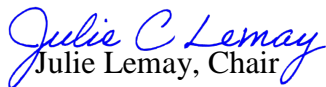
Diana Ekman talked about hand hygiene after handling mail, bringing in groceries, etc. She also reports there are no routine food establishment inspections being done at this time. Diana also shared a complaint recently received in the office from a tenant reporting their unit had no heat. Typically staff would respond to this type of complaint by confirming the absence of heat through an in-home inspection. In this case, staff was able to coordinate with the landlord by teleconference and heat was restored to the unit within 24 hours.

Donna David asked David Neylon if he knew of drugs and herbals to avoid. Donna heard that elderberry and echinasea supplements may be harmful. David said individuals need to contact their physician for guidance concerning medications and herbal supplements.

The next Board of Health meeting is scheduled for April 27, 2020 at 5:30 pm.

The Meeting adjourned at 6:32 pm.

Respectfully submitted,


Julie Lemay, Chair