

DATE: February 15, 2022
TIME: 9:28 AM

Board of Health Meeting Minutes
January 10, 2022

The Board of Health Meeting was called to order at 4:34 pm by Donna S. David.

In keeping with Chapter 20, of the Acts of 2021, the extension of the remote participation portion of Governor Baker's Executive Order from March 12, 2020; - "Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law" – The Board of Health Meeting of January 10, 2022 was held by Remote Access through ZOOM.

Those present were Donna S. David, R.N., M.N., Chair; Julie C. Lemay, MPH, Vice Chair; Adrienne Allen, M.D., M.P.H., Member; Wesley B. Chin, Health Director; Diana Ekman, Assistant Health Director; Lindsey Sharp, Health Agent; Suzanne Trasavage, Animal Care and Control Officer; Maria Reddington, Clerk.

The Meeting was recorded.

The first agenda item: Discussion of the metrics for the use of face coverings:

- Lindsey Sharp reviewed data since the last BOH meeting. The case count for December was just over 500 cases. The case count is 488 through this date in January.
- The office has received several complaints concerning some businesses not wearing face coverings. Health Department staff typically call the business to resolve the concern filed by a complainant. This process has worked well thus far.
- Board members agreed the face covering mandate should not be changed at this point.
- A number of public participants spoke to the members of the Board, including requests to expand the mandate to include face coverings while outdoors at school, to consideration of students' mental health.
- Board members agreed they do not support a mandate for outdoor face covering usage. They do support continuation of the current face covering mandate (face coverings required while inside public spaces).

The next Agenda item is to discuss recommendations for quarantine and isolation periods for Belmont Public School students and staff:

- The Superintendent of Schools asked for Board of Health recommendations for the School Committee meeting to be held January 11th on the length of quarantine and isolation, whether proof of a negative test is needed to end quarantine or isolation, what type of testing is acceptable (PCR or antigen), and the risk of virus spread during days 6-10.
- Board members would recommend a negative result of a rapid test upon return to school after 5 days.
- Discussion about lunch time and recommendation for distancing, or separating returning students, during lunch time.
- Public participation comments:
 - Mr. Kasumov – 5 versus 10 days – Arlington and Lexington are 10 days. The CDC has no exceptions for lunch time.
 - Board of Health can make public health recommendations but cannot implement in the schools.

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- Mr. Whittemore said we must move away from fear and hysteria.
- Ms. Lemark supports 5 days, and test requirement for unvaccinated students/staff.
- Mr. Saeh said Belmont doesn't have testing resources. The School Committee did not request guidance, and the Board of Health should not make operational recommendations.
- Dr. Celi said we need to protect everyone, and she supports wearing masks outdoors.
- Mr. Whittemore said mandates need to be reasonable.
- Ade Baptista asked about the mental health of returning student on day 6 if they infect other students. Also, how will the students be kept 6 feet apart?
- Ms. Schmidt supports a 5 day quarantine, no outdoor masks, and also spoke about the face covering requirement for students enrolled in speech therapy sessions.
- Ms. Wall said the lunch time recommendation cannot be realized logistically. She also said parents won't test students, and cases will surge. Donna David said the lunch metric has always been in place at the school, and follows CDC guidelines.
- Ms. Mariola asked for clarification – if the 6 foot distancing cannot be followed at lunch time, can the Board of Health recommend a 10 day quarantine?
- Ms. Sanchez said Spain does not require masks and COVID numbers are the same.
- The Board of Health final recommendation to the School Committee:
 - 5 days at home, returning only when symptoms are resolved. No fever for 24 hours, without the use of acetaminophen.
 - Lunch time separation of 6 feet.
 - Negative antigen test, if possible.
 - Face covering worn at all times.

The December 6, 2021 Meeting Minutes were reviewed.

Motion: To approve the Meeting Minutes of December 6, 2021.

The Motion passed by a vote 3-0.

The Receipts report was reviewed. The Animal receipts/permit section needs to be corrected.

The Director, Assistant Director, Public Health Nurse and Public Health Agent report was reviewed.

- There have been 3 additional housing matters referred to the department. One case was an emergency condemnation. Council on Aging and Janet Amdur are working on alternate housing options for the occupants.
- Food establishment inspections update – All public and private schools have been inspected. Mojin Solutions, food inspections vendor, has almost completed inspections of each Belmont food establishment. We are pleased to report the restaurants did a great job during the last couple of years.
- Rodent complaints filed in January totaled 3. The year 2021 ended in a lower number of rodent complaints/concerns filed than in prior years.

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- The Department sent a Vaccine Flyer to residents/schools which included an incorrect link to sign up for a vaccination appointment. The error has been corrected and residents were advised. This Clinic, to be held on January 12th, will be done by the State of MA Mobile Vaccine Unit.
- Approximately 1850 COVID-19 test kits will be ordered by the Town Administrator's office.
- Booster dose vaccination data, including breakdown of age, was reviewed.

The Youth and Family Services report was reviewed. Janet Amdur was busy connecting families in need, especially during the Holiday season.

The Animal Care and Control report was reviewed. Suzanne Trasavage talked about off leash dogs at Rock Meadow. Also kennel license requirements were discussed.

The Veteran's Services report was reviewed.

The Youth and Family Services report was reviewed.

The next Board of Health meeting is scheduled for February 7, 2022 at 4:30 pm.

The Meeting adjourned at 6:26 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Donna S. David, Chair