



TOWN OF NORTH READING
Massachusetts

Board of Health

**North Reading Board of Health Meeting Minutes
January 12, 2022
Teleconference/Virtual**

Members Present: Gary Hunt, Chairman
Karen Martin
Pam Vath

Others Present:

Robert Bracey, Health Agent
Steven O'Leary
Michael Murphy
Michael Gilberto
Amy DiChiara
Lisa
Vincenzo Stuto
Drew DePatie
Dianna Ploss
Donald Kelliher
Eric Evans
Linda Meade

Stephanie Connolly
Christine Doolin
Abigail Hurlburt
Mary Stamos
Gavin
Maureen
Oceanblue
Kathy Sumner

RECEIVED
2022 FEB 18 AM 10:43
TOWN CLERK'S OFFICE
NORTH READING, MASS.

7:00 PM

Mr. Gary Hunt opened the meeting.

Minutes

Previous minutes being reviewed, and will be signed and posted to the Board of Health/Health website.

Public Health Nurse Report:

July 1 to January 12, 2022 COVID - 19 Data

Total of non-nursing home related cases: 595

Total number associated with nursing home: 5 (no change) (only nursing home staff)

Complete total of cases as of 1/12/2022 1011

235 North Street, North Reading, MA 01864

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11-15 # of new cases at Nursing Homes (staff)

2 # of new cases residents at nursing home

560 # of new cases of unvaccinated residents

438 # of cases of vaccinated residents – Breakthrough cases

- 269 # of Pfizer
- 102 # of Moderna
- 22 # of Janssen

Ages - Years	Unvaccinated	Vaccinated		Comments
< 11	161	2		
12 - 15	139	16		
16 - 19	28	22		
20 - 29	90	64		
30 - 49	119	159		
50 - 64	70	109		
65 - 74	27	28		
75 and older	12	22		
Total	646	422		1011 Cases

Pam reported she has not noticed any recent clusters at the daycares and believes none of the daycares have had to shut down for more than 5 days.

Mr. Hunt asked if there was any active way to track hospitalization of infected people. Pam stated that was part of the contact tracing/notification system that was used in Maven which has been suspended in the last several months. Mr. Hunt asked is there any way to secure that data and does DPH have that data? Pam stated that yes, the DPH keeps track of that data because when someone passes, their death certificate gets sent off to the state and they may have some connection with every hospital in the state to know how many deaths are occurring and whether or not they are associated with COVID.

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Health Director Report:

Mr. Bracey reported the seven day average for deaths in Massachusetts, based on DPH data as of 1/6/2022 was 38.9%. The seven day average for hospitalizations as of 1/6/2022 was 2593. Case count numbers state wide as if 1/6/2022 was 18,959.

At this time the North Reading positivity rate as of 1/7/2022 was at 16.85%, over the two week period there was 335 positive cases. The state average is a little bit less with 15.03%

The average daily is at 143%. Vaccination rates on individuals with one dose is at 81%, individuals fully vaccinated are at 73%

Please see attached chart for the breakdown of vaccinated by age groups.

Mr. Stuto shared some percentages between cases and hospitalization. On 1/12/2021 the seven day average was 64/75 with hospitalization of 2205, which is 34% fast forward one year the seven day average 24723 and hospitalization 3087 which is 12%. The hospitalization rate is 22% lower. Mr. O'Leary stated the hospitalization rates are now higher, with over 3000 people hospitalized in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts right now. The stress on the health care system is not sustainable. Statistics are great for a percentage stand point but from an actual numerical stand point the numbers are astronomically high.

Mr. Bracey reports that the Department of Elementary and Secondary schools has extended the mask mandate for schools till 2/28/2022.

Mr. Bracey gave an update on the Public Health Region 3B Coalition/DPH and what other communities are doing as far as their increased numbers. Bob typically meets every Tuesday morning with his colleagues and reports that Reading has instituted a mask mandate town wide, the other communities in our coalition right now are just going to continue to follow the DPH advisory and guidance which is public messaging and continue to promote vaccinations. The North Reading Health Department is continuing with public messaging and continue with the COVID-19 booster vaccination clinics. As of October 2021, we have put on 10 COVID vaccine clinics. Over all since December 2020 the town has put on about 30 clinics town wide including schools. Clinics are scheduled up until the end of May and additional clinics will be held if there is a community need.

Mr. Bracey reports the town will be ordering test kits and those are about 2-3 weeks out, also trying to bring a testing center to North Reading and there will more information on that to follow in the next week.

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Public Comment:

Mr. Kelliher stated that the most recent development with the transmissibility of the Omicron virus, the report was that within the first 5 minutes of being exposed to it you have the greatest likely hood of contracting the disease. Mr. Kelliher is wondering why we are not talking about making and a mask mandates.

Mr. Bracey stated that we have followed the DPH guidance and continue with the public messaging, vaccination and testing. The schools have a mandate right now under DESE and are required to wear a mask. EEC has guidance where all health care facilities have to wear a mask, public transportation you have to wear a mask.

Mr. Kelliher stated that our major super market in town, many are unmasked and the local hardware store in town none of the folks working there wore a mask. If you put a policy in place many would use that as a means of telling their employees that you have to wear a mask. Mr. Stuto stated a couple of towns that did a mask mandate very early on, not once did he see a mask mandate enforced.

Mr. DePatie asked about the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education extended the mask mandate for schools, does a local elected body actually have to vote on that? Mr. Bracey stated that the mandate is given to school districts.

Mr. DePatie asked how does a mask mandate get passed?

Mr. Bracey stated that in the past the governor issued an emergency declaration, which triggered the Board of Health to issue an emergency declaration for the community. When the governor issued a mask mandate state wide, it basically trickles down to the local regulatory authority, then the local regulatory authority issues its own order based off of the state's order.

Mr. Bracey stated that the continuous feedback from business owners that if the Town of North Reading did a mask mandate that would force the business owners to lose customers.

Lisa Johnson stated she has looked over the literature for the Board of Health and I see shots not vaccinations, MRNA emergency use authorization verbiage is not included and is there any concern with liability in following compliance to make it something you would want to put up at the top of the Board of Health information.

Mr. Bracey stated the vaccinations are voluntary.

Pam Vath stated that she was not sure about the liability issue.

Mr. Hunt asked Mr. Bracey and Pam if they could look into the liability question.

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Mr. Bracey said he would double check, but he was pretty sure that has been disclosed on the disclosure form.

Abigail Hurlburt stated as far as she knows that the CDC and FDC have given full authorization to the vaccines, they are no longer under temporary order.

Mr. Hunt stated that the more recent guidance from DPH, from a booster stand point Moderna and Pfizer have been authorized but not Janssen.

Mr. O'Leary stated that the businesses who are mostly effected by mask mandates is the restaurants. I respectfully disagree with the guidance that is being put forth this evening.

Mr. DiPatie stated that there are no studies that show that unvaccinated people transmit COVID more so than vaccinated people.

Board of Health FY 22 Budget

Mr. Bracey reported that he did submit the Heath Department Budget and will be working with the Director of Public Safety and the Town Administrator and will keep the board updated.

Mr. Murphy stated that he has reviewed the budget and supports what Mr. Bracey submitted. Mr. Gilberto stated that he is aware of the critical role that the Title-5 work that the board does and plays in the community and residents, so that will be taken into consideration as we evaluate the request during the course of the FY 23 budget process.

Title V-Petition of the Board update

Renewal of North Reading License Installers- all renewal applications have been received and all are in compliance. Mr. Bracey asked the board to approve all 19 of the installers that have renewed at this time.

Mr. Hunt motioned to approve all Installers that are on the approved list

Motioned seconded by Karen Martin,

All members voted unanimously in favor.

Mr. Hunt asked what the status is regarding installer's petition that was submitted to us months ago. What has been the correspondence back to installers so they know where they stand? Mr. Bracey stated that he has spoken to a few of them periodically and expressed that during budget process he will be meeting with the Director of Public Safety and the Town Administrator to go over and access the needs of the Health Department. Mr. Bracey has explained the procedural process to the petitioners that have reached out. Mr. Hunt asked if the installation season closed.

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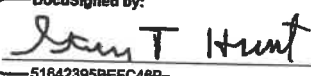
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Mr. Bracey stated yes, everything is shut down for the winter months, except for emergency repairs.

Healthy Hornet Facebook: Mrs. Martin reports she continues to make posts and with the last vaccine clinic noticed when she logged on there were still several appointments available. Mrs. Martin reports that she put another post out regarding the clinic and by end of day, all the appointments were filled.

Next Board of Health Meeting is to be scheduled for February 10 at 7:00 PM.

Karen Martin motioned to adjourn the meeting at 8:40 pm.
Motion seconded by Gary Hunt
Karen and Gary voted in favor.

DocuSigned by:

51642395BEEC48B
Gary Hunt

DocuSigned by:

6A8AF14FEB41408
Pamela Vath

DocuSigned by:

1920A173D476467
Karen Martin

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