

**TOWN OF NORTH READING**  
*Massachusetts*

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**Board of Health**

**North Reading Board of Health Meeting Minutes  
February 10, 2022  
Teleconference/Virtual**

**Members Present:** Gary Hunt, Chairman  
Karen Martin  
Pam Vath

**Others Present:**

Robert Bracey, Health Agent  
Steven O'Leary  
Michael Murphy  
Mary Samost  
Amy DiChiara  
Kathy Sumner  
Drew DePatie  
Dianna Ploss  
Eric Evans

Stephanie Connolly  
Christine Doolin  
Abigail Hurlburt  
Maureen Doherty  
Suresh  
Dave

**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 February 10, 2022 COVID - 19 Data

Complete total of cases as of 2/10/2022 1302

35 # of new cases at Nursing Homes (staff)

15 # of new cases residents at nursing home

744 # of new cases of unvaccinated residents

633 # of cases of vaccinated residents-Breakthrough cases

235 North Street, North Reading, MA 01864

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### Board of Health

- 365 # of Pfizer
- 154 # of Moderna
- 29 # of Janssen

Ages - Years	Unvaccinated	Vaccinated		Comments
< 11	144	2		
12 - 15	150	18		
16 - 19	40	30		
20 - 29	116	85		
30 - 49	150	197		
50 - 64	99	239		
65 - 74	31	38		
75 and older	14	24		
Total	744	633		1302 Cases

Pam reported there has been a reduction in the number of patients this week at 22, last week was 41 so the numbers are coming down.

Mr. Hunt asked if Pam would give an update on the nursing home. Pam reported that there are about 35 staff and 15 residents that tested positive.

According to the new manager they are still following the guidelines that the Health Department set up last year. Mr. Hunt asked Pam if she could go over to the nursing home and get an assessment of what's going on.

### Health Director Report:

At this time the North Reading positivity rate has gone down from last week from 14.98% to 11.59%, that's a 10% decrease in the positivity rate over the last three weeks. The two week average for cases in North Reading is down 416 cases from about three weeks ago. Mr. Bracey reports the numbers are starting to trend downward, which is a positive sign.

Vaccination rates on individuals with one dose are at 82%, residents in the community fully vaccinated are at 74%. Individuals with at least one dose are at 44%.

The next vaccination clinic is on February 23 from 4-7pm. There will be other clinics scheduled up until June.

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

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Mr. O'Leary asked about the positivity rate with the other surrounding communities because last week North Reading was higher. Mr. Bracey stated those numbers came out and North Reading was at 11.5%, Lynnfield was at 11.6%, Andover and North Andover was around 8.8% and 8.6% these averages are declining.

Mr. Bracey was pleased to announce that North Reading was able to have their first COVID-19 testing site at the Town Hall. There were about 35 to 40 folks and Mr. Bracey anticipates those numbers will increase especially with February vacation coming up and then April vacation. There will also be a regional clinic that will be held at the Shriners Auditorium in Wilmington beginning February 16, that will be the Emergency Preparedness Coalition Group of Andover, Haverhill, Lynnfield, Methuen, Lawrence, North Andover, Reading, North Reading, and Wilmington. Shriners testing site will be Monday thru Saturday from 8:30 to 4:30 by appointment and Saturdays at the North Reading Town Hall from 10:00 to 1:00 by appointment only. The information can be found on the Town Website under the Health Department. Mr. Bracey reports that the Town Hall has received some test kits and through the Town Administrators office and the Director of Public Safety there will be a plan put in place to distribute the kits.

Mr. Bracey reported that the Governor came out the other day and said as of February 28, there will no longer be a mask mandate within the schools. Dr. Daly provided Mr. Bracey with a brief statement that he could read regarding the avenue schools are going to take with the end of the mask mandate.

*The mask mandate will end on the February 28, and those who choose to still wear a mask can do so. It still be strongly recommended that unvaccinated and required on school busses and those returning to school from positive COVID-19 situations.*

**Environmental Health Program:** Alternative Innovative Systems update. Mr. Bracey reports that he had sent out a few emails with the information request from the board and have not heard back from the representatives of Geo-Mat systems. Mr. Bracey reports he will continue to keep the lines of communications open to get that information the board requested.

**Food Protection Program:** Nicks Pizza had a preoperational inspection done this week and everything was in code compliance and they were issued a permit to operate on February 10.

### Public Comment:

Eric Evans asked does the Board of Health have jurisdiction over the schools or not? Mr. Hunt responded with yes we do. Eric asked does the Board of Health modify their policy schools because ultimately you tell the schools what to do not the other way around? Dr. Daly already

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sent an email out saying as of February 28, there will no longer be the mask mandate in school, how does that impact that was policy with town buildings? Does that split your policy in half some town buildings will have a mask policy and some won't? Mr. Bracey stated that the school department is under the jurisdiction of DESE so those guidelines and regulations come down from DESE and school districts and school have to follow those. The town wide mask mandate has been implemented by the Town Administrator. The Board of Health continues to support and follow the state guidelines on what mask mandate is at this time. Mr. Evans stated that's confusing, if there is a mask mandate for all town buildings how can you not have the mask mandate for the schools. Mr. Bracey stated because the school mask mandate was governed by DESE, the local Board of Health did not implement any additional local regulations. Mr. Hunt stated that he believes the Town Administrator will review all of the data that was presented at the meeting and we will look into that discrepancy and see if it needs to be addressed. Mr. DePatie stated we have multiple health policies making bodies in town.

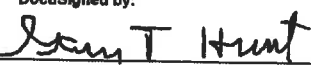
Dianna Ploss asked how much was money a factor to the town when they made the decisions to mask. Did they say you're going to get x amount of money if you get 75% of the people in the town to comply. Was there any of that, Dianna stated that she knows that other towns and cities got money through the Cares Act was that a factor in any of the choices coming from the Town Administrator putting pressure on the Board of Health because of the money that was at risk. Mr. Hunt stated that the Town Administrator never puts pressure on the Board of Health. Mr. Bracey stated that he took the initiative to put on vaccination clinics in North Reading, we've done over 30 clinics and I also took the initiative to bring regional and localized testing to the town.


Next Board of Health Meeting is to be scheduled for March 16, at 7:00 PM.

**Karen Martin motioned** to adjourn the meeting at 8:00 pm.

**Motion seconded by Gary Hunt**

**Karen and Gary voted in favor.**

DocuSigned by:  
  
518423905EFC489  
Gary Hunt

DocuSigned by:  
  
8A9AF14FEB41498  
Pamela Vath

DocuSigned by:  
  
1920A173D478497  
Karen Martin

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