



TOWN OF NORTH READING
Massachusetts

Board of Health

**'North Reading Board of Health Meeting Minutes
March 16, 2022
Teleconference/Virtual**

Members Present: Gary Hunt, Chairman
Karen Martin
Pam Vath

Others Present:

Robert Bracey, Health Agent	Stephanie Connolly
Michael Murphy	Christine Doolin
Amy DiChiara	Suresh Rao
Mary Samost	
Kathy Sumner	
Drew DePatie	

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 March 16, 2022 COVID - 19 Data

Complete total of cases as of 3/16/2022 1396

39 # of new cases at Nursing Homes (staff)

17 # of new cases residents at nursing home

774 # of new cases of unvaccinated residents

574 # of cases of vaccinated residents-Breakthrough cases

235 North Street, North Reading, MA 01864

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- 384 # of Pfizer
- 169 # of Moderna
- 29 # of Janssen

Ages - Years	Unvaccinated	Vaccinated		Comments
< 11	155	3		
12 - 15	151	19		
16 - 19	41	32		
20 - 29	118	91		
30 - 49	158	209		
50 - 64	98	244		
65 - 74	31	42		
75 and older	16	27		
Total	768	667		1435 Cases

Pam reported that the nursing home is in a transition period. Pam believes that they just hired an official Director of Nursing. Pam reports that she will get over to the nursing home and meet with the new director.

Health Director Report:

At this time the North Reading positivity rate has gone down from last week from 22.17% to 3.86%, that's greater than 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 83%, residents in the community fully vaccinated are at 75%. Individuals with at least one dose are at 46%.

Mr. Bracey reports that we are still continuing with the vaccination clinics. The turnout for the most recent clinic was only four but we will continue to provide that service to the community. There are two more clinics coming up one on April 13 and a second on May 4. Moving forward we are awaiting notification from CDC or FDA on when children age 5 and up will receive a booster shot. Pfizer has also applied for emergency use to issue a fourth booster shot for individuals 65 and older.

Testing clinics are still held on Saturdays, in addition to the Shriners regional clinic.

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We are seeing very minimal turn out, at these testing clinics and we are in communications with Curative to see where we want to go with this. There is a meeting next week to discuss how to proceed going forward.

Home test kits have been distributed throughout the community and we have made the test kits available at Town Hall for residents when they come in. We are continuing to do a lot of positive things as we continue to monitor the numbers and the data.

Public Comment:

Mr. DePatie's concern is with the confidence in statistics for policy makers and the public basing policy off of statistics. How does the over counting of COVID deaths effect anything in North Reading. Mr. Hunt stated that we rely on the data and primarily the trends in the data and the trend has been downward COVID positivity. With respect to the deaths in town, most of the deaths in the past two years have been at the nursing home and not in the general population. Mr. Bracey stated that the health department is working with the department of epidemiology on trying to get a clarification on statistics for this community. As far as how that effects the policies based on the statistics. Mr. Bracey stated that is does not affect the town of North Reading policy making because we continue to follow the DPH guidance.

Mr. DePatie asked what happens when you get bad data from the Department of Public Health and policies that you may not agree with and is there a process on bringing that to resolution?

Mrs. Vath stated in her experience not having as many deaths in the death certificate pile as they reported, Pam went back to the people at DPH and talked to the epidemiologist and the folks who are in charge of the system who report that data and what they found was that sometimes all of the information on a death certificate wasn't getting back.

Pam reported that she found a discrepancy in what was reported in Maven and what was found on death certificates. Death certificates list each active disease process at the time of death. There were no number variations that would cause us or make us look at policy or change what we were doing. The discrepancy in the data was not great enough for Pam to speak to Mr. Bracey or the board members and say we need to change this.

Mr. Hunt stated that one of the most vulnerable populations nationwide are the elderly and nursing homes. The Health Department did not agree with the actions being proposed by DPH, so the board members came up with a more proactive approach for dealing with the nursing home. Mr. Hunt stated that if we feel we need to do something more we will do it. Mr. Hunt has been on the North Reading board for 36 years and stated if we see something that isn't right we will address it at the local level.

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Mr. Bracey stated that he and the Public Health Nurse took part in weekly and sometimes twice a week DPH calls. It was at those times that local Public Health had the opportunity to speak to the policies and if they had any issues with the policies, DPH heard what local Boards of Health had to say.

Mary Samost stated the biggest thing as a registered nurse that she brought to the board was working with Mr. Bracey and trying to translate what that policy meant for the Town of North Reading and the citizens and trying to apply those policies in the most meaningful way through our community is really important.

Suresh Rao stated that usually people die of heart failure but there are lots of different conditions which can lead to that heart failure. As a result, a death certificate on its own is not necessarily the absolute way of knowing the cause of death. Usually it takes years later for the epidemiologists to look at deaths and say during this period when we had a lot of COVID, we had excess number of deaths. So getting hung up on a death certificate can get confusing in the short term.

Board of Health FY23 Budget Presentation

The Board of Health Budget was presented to the Select Board. Mr. Bracey stated that it went well and he wanted to thank our liaison Mr. O'Leary for his support. We did have some slight increases in the administrated line item, a slight increase in the mosquito control budget and also requested additional public health services in the field of environmental health. We also requested a full time support staff person to help assist us with that. Mr. Hunt asked was the new staff position, Title-5 engineer well received. Mr. Bracey stated that he believes that it was. Mr. O'Leary stated that he continues to be supportive and appreciative of all that is being done and will continue to advocate.

Food Protection Program

Nicks Pizza has opened, final inspection was done and they are in code compliance with the Health Department and they were issued a permit to operate.

China Cuisine has scheduled change of ownership next week.

The Healthy Hornet

Karen Martin reports that she continues to post the vaccine clinic announcements as well as the availability for testing through Curative. Visits and shares on the Healthy Hornet has dropped somewhat.

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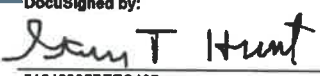
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Next Board of Health Meeting is to be scheduled for April 12, at 7:00 PM.

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

Motion seconded by Gary Hunt

Karen and Gary voted in favor.

DocuSigned by:

516423958EFC46B
Gary Hunt

DocuSigned by:

6A9AF14FEB4140B
Pamela Vath

DocuSigned by:

1820A173D476497
Karen Martin

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